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**Prevention of violence
against women and girls**

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*The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Developing a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the challenging task of promoting families, communities and States that are free of violence against women is necessary and achievable.

Beijing Platform for Action, Article 119

1.1. Background, objectives and scope of this paper

Ending violence against women and girls remains one of the most serious and ongoing challenges for the international system, Governments and civil society worldwide. The long-term efforts and advocacy of women's and children's organisations have helped place the issue high on national and international human rights and development agendas, and considerable progress has been made worldwide over recent years, particularly on improving justice and service responses for survivors. However interventions focussed on the aftermath of violence against women and girls, while essential, can only have limited impact on reducing violence itself – strategies are also urgently needed to stop such violence from occurring in the first place. Preventing such violence is a human rights obligation and an achievable goal, but one which requires sustained, coordinated and systematic action by Governments, the international community and civil society.

This Background Paper was prepared to inform discussions at an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on prevention of violence against women and girls, convened for 17–20 September 2012 in Bangkok, as part of the preparations for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).¹ It analyses global progress, challenges and gaps in prevention of violence against women and girls, and identifies key guiding principles and promising practice examples.² It makes initial indicative recommendations for international, regional and national stakeholders – particularly Governments as they have the primary responsibility for prevention of violence against women and girls – for further discussion and finalisation at the EGM itself.

The Paper focuses on emerging evidence and practice for the development of holistic, multidimensional and long-term approaches to prevention, and highlights the responsibility of States to strengthen and invest in such approaches as part of their human rights obligations towards women and girls. Strategies for prevention of violence against women and girls in situations where States are not functioning effectively, are fragile or are in transition, including conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings – while having some commonalities with the practices referred to here – will necessarily be of a different order, and may be driven by different actors (e.g. humanitarian relief agencies). There is very little research and practice to draw upon regarding effective prevention of violence against women and girls in such settings,³ and the need for further work in this area is identified as a key gap in this Paper. Therefore, the bulk of the practice, evidence and recommendations referred to here is for stable situations where the State is in a position to lead long-term, multi-sectoral policy and programming.

¹ The fifty-seventh session of CSW will be held in February 2013, with a focus on two domains: 1) improving multi-sectoral, integrated *responses* to violence against women and girls, especially services to victims/survivors; and 2) strategies for holistic and multi-sectoral *prevention* of violence against women and girls. It was recognised that the two domains are mutually-supportive and equally crucial components of an overall human rights based approach to the issue of violence against women and girls. Two separate streams of work will be undertaken to inform and support CSW on these domains. This paper focuses on the second domain.

² Rigorously and positively evaluated examples have been sourced wherever possible.

³ See for example Ward J (forthcoming) *Conflict/Post-conflict Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, and the pending systemic review of interventions for primary prevention of conflict related violence by the World Health Organisation.

1.2. Costs and consequences of violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive and systemic human rights violations in the world. Up to seven in ten women⁴ in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime, and up to 50 percent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16.⁵

What is violence against women and girls?

Violence against women and girls is ‘any act of gender-based violence¹ that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.’¹ Girls and young women under the age of 18 years are further subject to violence when they suffer the ‘neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation’¹ that is part of the broader definition of violence against children.¹

Violence against women and girls is manifested in a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring forms, encompassing, but not limited to:

- a. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women and girls, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
- b. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and girls, and forced prostitution of women and sexual exploitation of girls;
- c. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

Excerpted from the Declaration for the Elimination of Violence against Women

The UN Secretary General’s Study on All Forms of Violence against Women of 2006 notes that ‘forms and manifestations of violence against women vary depending on the specific social, economic, cultural and political context. Some forms of violence may grow in importance while others diminish as societies undergo demographic changes, economic restructuring and social and cultural shifts [...]. Consequently no list of forms of violence against women can be exhaustive’¹ A comprehensive analysis of the different forms and manifestations of violence against women and girls – and the impact of intersecting disadvantage and discrimination – is beyond the scope of this paper, but can be found in the Secretary General’s Study, section IV.

All forms of violence against women and girls potentially reinforce a range of known determinants of overall health, including poor mental health status, gender inequality, social isolation and economic disadvantage. Violence diminishes women’s and girls’ ability to gain an education, earn a living and participate in public life, and has significant health impacts, including psychological consequences, physical injuries, sexual/reproductive health issues and death.⁶ Violence severely restricts women’s ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, with grave consequences for sexual and reproductive health. Violence is one of the drivers of HIV/AIDs, and women living with HIV or AIDS can be the targets of further abuse and stigma.

⁴ Between 15% and 76% of women in different countries

⁵ World Health Organisation (2002) *World Report on Violence and Health*, cited in United Nations Population Fund (2005) *State of World Population 2005*, p.66. It should also be noted that the experience of abuse as a child is also a risk factor for later perpetration by men of violence against women and girls, - approximately 5–10% of men report being sexually abused as children, while 25–50% of all children report being physically abused: World Health Organisation (2006) *Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence*.

⁶ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General*, A/61/122/Add.

1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Factors ‘such as women’s race, ethnicity, caste, class, migrant or refugee status, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or HIV status will influence what forms of violence they suffer and how they experience it.’

Girls and young women may be at higher risk of many forms of gender-based violence because their young age increases the relative power of their abusers, and it can contribute to life-long inequality that decreases their opportunities to access resources and sources of support. Harmful practices such as child marriage can result in early and unwanted pregnancies that pose life-threatening risks for adolescent girls. Studies in some countries show from a quarter to a third of girls report experiencing sexual assault or rape at school or en route, with many changing or leaving school as a result of hostility after they reported the violence.⁷ Gender inequality and discrimination can place girls at increased risk of death from maltreatment.⁸

Children who witness violence against their mothers or other female care givers are at significantly higher risk of health problems – including depression, anxiety and low self-esteem – poor school performance and behavioural disturbance.⁹ The experience of witnessing or living with violence against a mother or female care-giver has been shown to have impacts on children and young people that are indistinguishable from those of direct violence¹⁰ and exposes them to relationship models that can – especially in the absence of effective support, early intervention and prevention strategies – influence their own behaviour and limit their capacity to imagine alternatives, potentially increasing the risk of future perpetration.¹¹

The social and economic costs of violence against women and girls are severe, from those related to reduced human capital and productivity, to service and criminal justice responses, and those associated with political and social instability.¹² Violence against women and girls also hinders broader poverty reduction efforts and has inter-generational consequences. The UN Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality recognized that ending violence against women and girls is one of seven strategic priorities needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that violence hinders progress towards a number of these goals, including those on education, HIV/AIDS, maternal health and child mortality.¹³

The costs of violence against women and girls are carried differently depending on the extent and effectiveness of the State response, which itself depends on the resources the State and/or development agencies have invested. Where there is limited investment in building effective service, police and criminal justice systems, the majority of the direct costs of violence are borne by individual victims/survivors and those in their care (health costs, lowered educational and professional opportunities, etc). However this does not mean there are no costs to the State – the indirect costs of such reduced human capital is nevertheless borne by society at large in terms of decreased productivity, exacerbated social inequalities, lowered overall educational outcomes, and broad strains on public services.

⁷ In a study in Ethiopia, for example, 23 percent of girls reported experiencing sexual assault or rape en route to or from school; in Ecuador, adolescent girls reporting sexual violence in school identified teachers as the perpetrator in 37 percent of cases; in South Africa, 33 percent of reported rapes of girls were perpetrated by a teacher. Many girls changed schools or left school as a result of hostility after they reported the violence: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>, citing primary sources.

⁸ World Health Organisation (2006) *Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence*.

⁹ In Nicaragua, for example, 63 percent of children of abused women had to repeat a school year and they left school on average 4 years earlier than other children: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>, citing primary sources.

¹⁰ Flood M and Fergus L (2009) *An Assault on Our Future: The Impact of Violence on Young People and Their Relationships*, White Ribbon Foundation.

¹¹ Surveys in Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Philippines, Poland and Switzerland revealed that boys who witnessed their father using violence against their mother were 3 times more likely to use violence against their partners later in life: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>, citing primary sources.

¹² United Nations General Assembly (2006) *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General, A/61/122/Add. 1*; and Bott S, Morrison A and Ellsberg M (2005) *Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in middle and low-income countries: a global review and analysis*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3618.

¹³ See <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>, citing primary sources.

1.3. What do we mean by prevention?

While it is essential to continue working on a better response to existing violence against women and girls, it is also necessary to work to ‘stop it before it starts.’ Prevention is about identifying and addressing underlying causes of a problem, rather than focussing on its results or ‘symptoms.’¹⁴ We now know that – as prevalent and serious as violence against women and girls is – it is also preventable. This, as the World Health Organisation has noted, is not ‘an article of faith, but a statement based on evidence.’¹⁵ Although it may cut across geographical, socio-economic, age, cultural and religious boundaries, the rates at which violence against women and girls occurs – and its manifestations – varies between countries and communities. The prevalence of intimate partner violence alone can range between 15 and 71 percent measured comparatively in different countries.¹⁶ This tells us there is nothing inevitable about violence against women and girls. Its levels and dynamics are not fixed and can be altered – and Governments, organisations, communities and individuals can make a difference.¹⁷

Work to prevent violence against women and girls aims to promote shifts in the social environment to ultimately reduce the number of new incidences of violence.¹⁸ Such a transformative agenda engages all levels of the socio-political system, from policy and legislative development, to the development and delivery of programmes and services ‘on the ground’, and the capacity building of the institutions responsible for implementation. Above all, prevention of violence against women and girls is about the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, and must address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage that place women and girls at risk of violence.

1.4. Prevention and response: a holistic system

Efforts to prevent violence against women and girls cannot be separated from service provision, including police and criminal justice responses to existing violence. Prevention and response strategies should be developed and implemented as a holistic and integrated system that upholds the human rights of girls and women to live in societies, communities and families that are free of such violence. Given women and girls are likely to identify violence in their own lives as a result of the awareness-raising elements of prevention activity and therefore seek assistance, effective and adequately resourced services need to be available to respond to their disclosures that may arise.

When adhering to good practice standards and processes, prevention activity reinforces response activity and vice versa, each increasing the effectiveness of the other. For example, the provision of services to victims/survivors, and an effective justice response, conveys the social unacceptability of such violence and so has a whole-of-population (prevention) impact. Direct relationships have been shown between the availability and quality of services and levels of violence against women and girls, as ensuring response services that are

¹⁴ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*.

¹⁵ World Health Organisation (2010) *Violence Prevention: The Evidence*, p.3.

¹⁶ World Health Organisation (2005) *Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women’s Responses*.

¹⁷ Similarly, the United Nations General Assembly (2006) *Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children*, A/61/299, notes that ‘all violence against children is preventable’ (p.5)

¹⁸ While there is no globally-adopted definition, terms for ‘prevention’ derived from the public health field are in common international usage: Primary Prevention: reducing the number of new instances of violence by intervening before any violence occurs, i.e. building societies, communities, organisations and relationships where violence is less likely to occur (e.g. by challenging attitudes, behaviours and practices which justify, excuse or condone violence); Secondary Prevention: mitigating the immediate consequences of abuse by providing already-abused women and girls with services and supports (e.g. emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylactic-PEP, psychosocial support and counseling); and preventing recurrence/repeat abuse (timely protection and safety for domestic violence survivors, removal of perpetrator from the household, orders of protection); and Tertiary Prevention: longer-term care for survivors and perpetrator rehabilitation/behaviour change programmes (see World Health Organisation (2005) *Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women’s Responses*). Under this conceptualisation, the focus in this Background Paper is on primary prevention, given – under the above definitions – most secondary and tertiary prevention activity can be conceptualized as a *response* to existing violence, and will be considered through a separate work stream at CSW.

acceptable, appropriate and accessible for different communities and groups of women and girls is a way of conveying the message that violence is not excused or justified in that society.

Similarly, prevention activity can raise awareness of laws against violence and the services that are available to victims/survivors, encouraging them to report incidences, and helping break the ‘culture of silence’ that can otherwise hamper an effective response. Prevention strategies to change violence-supportive or excusing attitudes, behaviours and practices are also essential to creating quality services, including non-threatening environments where women and girls know that they will be understood and not judged or re-victimized. Longer term responses are equally important and linked to prevention. Where victims/survivors are not re-empowered to act as full participatory subjects in social, economic and political spheres, they are locked into conditions of isolation and disempowerment that present risk factors for further violence.

Structural imbalances of power and inequality between women and men are both the context and causes of violence against women. [T]he elimination of violence and discrimination against women in all spheres requires a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained effort. It requires action in different arenas, including legislation; the criminal justice sector; economic and social policies; services; awareness-raising and education.¹⁹

Secretary General’s In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women (2006)

Every society, no matter what is cultural, economic or social background, can and must stop violence against children now. This requires a transformation of the ‘mindset’ of societies, and the underlying economic and social conditions associated with violence.²⁰

Secretary General’s Report on Violence against Children (2006)

While actual activities and strategies for responding to existing violence are out of scope for this Paper,²¹ the role of such strategies in preventing the *recurrence* of violence is acknowledged, and connections to these strategies must be envisaged as prevention strategies are developed. Schools-based prevention programmes, for example, must give schools the capacity to identify and respond appropriately to children and young people currently living with violence and make the appropriate referrals. Likewise, workplace-based programmes to prevent sexual harassment must also have effective systems in place to respond to sexual harassment if it occurs.

¹⁹ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General*, A/61/122/Add. 1.

²⁰ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children*, A/61/299, p.6.

²¹ So, for example, programmes engaging men and boys in awareness-raising or community mobilization activities that challenge gender discrimination and stereotyping are in scope as prevention initiatives, but ‘after-the fact’ programmes for identified perpetrators are out of scope, and considered in separate work on service and justice responses to existing violence against women and girls.

2. GLOBAL PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND GAPS IN PREVENTION

2.1. *Advances against human rights obligations*

The international community is committed to eliminating violence against women and girls²² and has recognized – in various global and regional legal and policy instruments – the important role of prevention towards this end. State responsibility for prevention of violence against women and girls through social and behavioural change is supported by the foundational treaty on women’s human rights, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), which establishes signatories’ legal obligation to take ‘all appropriate measures [to] modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.’²³ General Recommendation 19 of the CEDAW Committee establishes the obligation of States to act with ‘due diligence’ to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. The further responsibilities of the State to prevent violence, abuse and neglect of girls are supported by the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, requiring States parties to ‘take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse’ including ‘forms of prevention,’²⁴ along with its two Optional Protocols.²⁵

The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, building on the CEDAW requirement, provided guidance on strategic objectives and actions for the prevention of violence against women and girls, including awareness-raising and information campaigns, educational programmes, community mobilization and promotion of the role of the media. The Platform identified violence against women as one of the twelve critical areas of concern requiring urgent action if the goals of equality, development and peace were to be achieved. During its five, ten and fifteen year reviews, the call for such preventive action was re-iterated.

Other major treaties and conventions similarly uphold the right of women and girls to live free from violence, such as the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability*, Article 6 of which notes the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women and girls with a disability and the obligation of States to take appropriate measures addressing this, and Article 16 of which notes the gender-based aspects of violence and abuse experienced by people with a disability and places an obligation on states to ‘prevent the occurrence of all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse.’²⁶

²² States’ obligations are elaborated in international and regional human rights treaties, documents emanating from United Nations conferences and summits, as well as resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies.

²³ *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) GA res. 34/180, art 5(a). Similar requirements exist in the *Beijing Platform for Action*.

²⁴ Article 19

²⁵ *United Nations Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* (2002) A/RES/54/263, and *Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict* (2002) A/RES/54/263.

²⁶ *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability* (2008) UNTS 2515/3.

The Beijing Platform for Action

The Beijing Platform for Action's critical area of concern on violence against women established three strategic objectives:

- taking integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women
- studying the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures
- eliminating trafficking in women and assisting victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

Within these objectives, the Platform for Action sets out a series of concrete actions to be taken by Governments, including implementation of international human rights instruments; adoption and periodic review of legislation on violence against women, access to justice and effective remedies; policies and programmes to protect and support women victims of violence; and awareness-raising and education.

Many regional instruments have also identified the requirement for preventing violence against women and girls, including the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003) (The Maputo Protocol);²⁷ the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* (1999);²⁸ the *ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*;²⁹ the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (the Convention of Belem do Para) (1994);³⁰ and the *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (2011) ('the COE Convention');³¹ and the *Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* (2010) ('the Lanzarote Convention').³²

Intergovernmental bodies have also themselves placed an increasing focus on prevention of violence against women and girls. Through all its resolutions on the intensification of efforts to eliminate violence against women over 2006, 2007 and 2008, the General Assembly has called on Governments to 'take positive measures to address structural causes of violence against women and to strengthen prevention efforts that address discriminatory practices and social norms,'³³ and in 2010 again renewed its call for an increased focus on prevention, recognizing the important role of the family, the community and civil society in the efforts to eliminate and prevent violence against women and girls.³⁴ The Commission on the Status of Women addressed the need for prevention initiatives in its agreed conclusions of 1998 on violence against women,³⁵ and its agreed conclusions of 2007 on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.³⁶ An in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women, issued by the UN Secretary-General,³⁷ further stressed the important role of prevention, which was identified as a main area in the framework for action of his campaign *UNiTE to End Violence against Women*. Similarly, The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children stressed that all violence against children was preventable and recommended the prioritisation of prevention activity.³⁸

Finally, global and regional policy is increasingly recognizing the need for States to underpin their work on prevention (as well as response) with national action plans, in order to provide the institutional mechanisms, resourcing and monitoring necessary to effectively address such a deeply-entrenched problem. The *Beijing*

²⁷ *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (2003).

²⁸ *African Charter on the Welfare and Rights of the Child* (1990) OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49.

²⁹ *Association of Southeast Asian Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region* (2004), Articles 4 and 6.

³⁰ *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (Belem do Para) (1994), Articles 7 and 8.

³¹ *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (2011) CETS 210, Chapter 3

³² *Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* (2010) CETS 201.

³³ United Nations General Assembly (2007) *Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women*, A/RES/61/145, art 8(f).

³⁴ United Nations General Assembly (2010) *Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women*, A/RES/65/187.

³⁵ E/1998/27-E/CN.6/1998/12.

³⁶ E/2007/27-E/CN.6/2007/9.

³⁷ United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (2006) *Ending Violence against Women: From Words to Action*.

³⁸ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children*, A/61/299.

Platform for Action, for instance, urged Governments to formulate and implement, at all appropriate levels, plans of action to eliminate violence against women,³⁹ and this has been reiterated by the General Assembly and international and regional treaty bodies.⁴⁰ The former Commission on Human Rights called on States in 2003 and 2005 to formulate, implement and promote, at all appropriate levels, plans of action, including time-bound measurable targets where appropriate, to eliminate violence against women and girls,⁴¹ and its successor, the Human Rights Council, noted in 2010 that effective prevention of violence against women and girls requires action at all levels of government, the engagement of several actors and the adoption and implementation of multifaceted and comprehensive approaches that promote gender equality and empowerment of women.⁴²

Importantly, then, prevention of violence against women and girls does not represent a ‘new demand’, but is rightfully claimed and fully acknowledged in the international and regional legal and policy frameworks. The *Beijing Platform for Action* expounds that the achievement of equality between women and men is ‘a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice [that] should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue,’⁴³ and the prevention of violence against women and girls is itself both a prerequisite for, and outcome of, such equality, and similarly fundamental.

However, the former UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, noted in her 2006 report that ‘relatively little work [has been] done on the [...] obligation of prevention.’⁴⁴ She stressed that the obligation of States to exercise due diligence encompasses prevention, including the obligation to address the root causes of violence against women. The Rapporteur suggested that despite the longevity and clarity of the CEDAW obligation, the guidance of the Beijing Platform, and numerous regional agreements, few governments worldwide have taken a sustained and systematic approach to promoting gender equality and non-discrimination, or addressing the ‘social and cultural patterns of conduct’ and the ‘practices based on [...] stereotyped roles for men and women’ that contribute to ongoing violence against women and girls. The current Special Rapporteur is analysing interpretation and implementation of the due diligence obligation by States on this issue for her 2013 thematic report, and this is expected to provide clearer and further guidance on State obligations to prevent violence against women and girls under international law.⁴⁵

Two major Secretary General’s studies were released in 2006, the first on violence against women and the second on violence against children. Each reiterated the immense scale, costs and consequences of the violence, and regretted the lack of commensurate action on the part of States to undertake comprehensive prevention measures. The former noted that ‘progress in the development of international legal norms, standards and policies has not been accompanied by comparable progress in their implementation at the national level, which remains insufficient and inconsistent in all parts of the world. [...] Lack of political will is reflected in inadequate resources devoted to tackling violence against women and a failure to create and maintain a political and social environment where violence against women is not tolerated.’⁴⁶ The latter noted that ‘efforts to address violence against children are frequently reactive, focusing on symptoms and consequences and not causes. Strategies tend to be fragmented, rather than integrated, and insufficient resources are allocated to measures to address the problem. In addition, international commitments to protect

³⁹ Paragraph 124(j).

⁴⁰ For example, the experts of the Mechanism to follow-up the Convention Belem do Para (MESECVI) have adopted a set of indicators on national action plans for the implementation of article 8 of the treaty, under which States Parties agree to undertake a range of specific measures, including programmes, to prevent, violence against women. See also Council of Europe Recommendation Rec (2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the protection of women against violence; CEDAW/C/HTI/CO/7 para.25, A/57/38 para.332, A/55/38 para.70; and CCPR/C/AUS/CO/5, para.17; CCPR/C/SDN/CO/3, para.14.

⁴¹ Resolutions 2003/45 and 2005/41, on the elimination of violence against women.

⁴² A/HRC/14/12 on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: ensuring due diligence in prevention

⁴³ Article 41.

⁴⁴ Ertürk Y (2006) *Integration of the Human Rights of Women and the Gender Perspective: Violence against Women – The Due Diligence Standard as a Tool for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, E/CN.4/2006/61, para 14.

⁴⁵ Manjo R (pending in 2013) *State responsibility for eliminating violence against women*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences.

⁴⁶ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General*, A/61/122/Add. 1.

children from violence are often not translated into action at the national level,⁴⁷ and called for States to prioritise allocation of resources to prevent violence before it occurred.⁴⁸

Therefore, while the normative framework has clearly developed an obligation for States to take comprehensive, strategic and well-resourced action to prevent violence against women and girls, and while States have increasingly ratified the relevant treaties and in some cases brought these obligations into their legal frameworks, much work remains to be done before the normative obligations will be fully implemented. Gaps remain in terms of resource allocation, legislative and policy development, and systems and mechanisms for coordinated and sustained action. These shall be further discussed in section 2.3.

2.2. Developments in theory and practice for prevention

The development of the normative framework on prevention has been accompanied, and in some cases driven, by developments in theory and practice around prevention. For decades, women's organisations have advocated for not only a better response to violence against women and girls, but for its *elimination*, encompassing its prevention. Just as the first crisis centres were started by women's organisations, so too were some of the first prevention activities – schools-based programmes, awareness raising campaigns, and empowerment initiatives, to name a few. Many of these have encompassed activity to prevent various forms of violence against girls, additionally or specifically. Similarly, children's organisations and those working at the 'coal face' of child protection have advocated for more policy and programming attention to prevention of violence, abuse and neglect of children (and discrimination against girls) before it occurs or becomes entrenched in families, and to shift societal and community norms contributing to such violence.

Feminist theorisations are at the origin of, and continue to inform, collective understandings of violence against women and girls as an abuse of power, and one that is facilitated by, and reinforces, gender inequality and stereotyping. Women's organisations, particularly those working with victims/survivors were the first to call for the accountability of perpetrators for forms of violence previously constructed as 'private' (especially domestic/intimate partner violence), and to challenge the victim-blaming surrounding sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls. Children's organisations have similarly worked to break the silence around the hidden and normalised abuse of children, and the differential treatment of girls, and to promote the rights and voice of children. These organisations developed rights-based guiding principles for their work that have informed prevention activity, such as respecting the decisions and confidentiality of women and girls; and constructing services and programmes in a way that is ethical, culturally and gender sensitive, accountable, participatory, and sustainable.

Crucially, such understandings have entered the work of other civil society and nongovernmental organisations and the international human rights framework itself, and are now central concepts to prevention of violence against women and girls. The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, for instance, defines violence against women as a form of discrimination and manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, and noted that the effectiveness of prevention strategies depends on them recognizing and responding to the deeply gendered dynamics of violence. The Secretary Generals' In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women notes that:

The recognition of violence against women as a form of discrimination and, thus, a human rights violation, provides an entry point for understanding the broad context from which such violence emerges and related risk factors. [...] The human rights-based approach reveals the scope of women's inequality and points to the linkages between violations of a range of women's human rights, including

⁴⁷ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children*, A/61/299, p.24.

⁴⁸ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children*, A/61/299, p.26.

violence against women. It highlights the link between the realization of women's rights and the elimination of power disparities. Vulnerability to violence is understood as a condition created by the absence or denial of rights.

Various approaches to the issue have built on such gendered human rights understandings over the years, with research and programming emerging from fields as diverse as criminology/crime prevention, sociology, psychology and development. All have added value to collective understandings and built the evidence and practice base, and all have their own strengths and limitations. One discipline which has been particularly influential on research, policy and programming for prevention of violence against women and girls is public health. Over recent years, the methodologies of public health theory and practice have begun to be applied to the issue of violence against women and girls, building on the learnings and principles established by feminist and human rights based approaches above. This approach has provided the 'added value' of an evidence and population-based way of defining the 'problem' of violence against women and girls: identifying various contributing or 'risk' factors; exploring ways to prevent it; evaluating effectiveness; and sharing knowledge gained.⁴⁹ The approach has enabled clear gains in policy and programming for prevention, providing unprecedented practical frameworks for advancing the recognized right of women and girls to live free from violence, as well as sound evidence and analyses for renewed advocacy in the field to Governments, development agencies and other key funders and stakeholders.

There have been calls to recognise where the usefulness and limits of strictly evidence-based public health programming methodologies are reached when it comes to an issue, which – unlike smoking, obesity, alcohol abuse and other practices with health impacts – is above all an abuse of human rights and in many cases, a crime. As such it imposes a higher and more immediate obligation upon states to take action, and brings an urgency to policy and legislative development. Therefore, while there is great potential in harnessing the methodologies of the public health discipline in the prevention of violence against women and girls, care must be taken to do so within a sound gendered and human rights based framework of analysis and practice, and the evidence-based demands of the discipline must not be used by Governments or donors as a justification for avoiding investment or innovation in policy and programming for prevention.

In the last five years or so, theoretical and programmatic developments have also improved understanding of the dynamics of social norms which are central to violence against women and girls. Generally understood to be social rules, a state-of-the-art operational definition specifies that a behaviour or practice is a social norm if individuals believe that most people in the social network follow it (empirical expectations) and if they believe that most people in the social network expect them to follow it (normative expectations), with or without sanctions. Therefore, changing social norms entails changing societal expectations, including individuals' beliefs about how others expect them to behave.⁵⁰

Theory and practice on the prevention of violence against women and girls has therefore developed considerably over the last decade. However key gaps in Government action, and challenges at all levels remain, and these shall be discussed in the next section.

2.3. Key challenges and gaps

The human rights obligations on States to invest in comprehensive, multi-sectoral and sustained strategies for prevention are clear, and the benefits of doing so significant, yet investment commensurate with the scale of the problem, and policy and programming reflecting its complexity, remains rare. Currently, few Governments worldwide have committed to undertaking any sustained, holistic and coordinated prevention activity. A 2011 review of National Action Plans on Violence against Women found that most policies were limited to responding to existing violence. Those that did contain specific prevention actions largely focussed on raising awareness of new laws or where to access services, with some containing one-off or single-sector prevention

⁴⁹ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, p.2.

⁵⁰ Bicchieri C (2006) *The Grammar of Society: the Nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*.

activities such as social marketing campaigns or schools-based programmes. Only one plan took a long-term, multi-sectoral and holistic approach to prevention, with appropriate institutional support mechanisms and commensurate investment.⁵¹ Similarly, the most recent report of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children notes that while States have made important efforts to improve their child protection response, 'less than 20 per cent of Governments indicate in their replies that they have a comprehensive agenda for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against children.'⁵²

The most significant challenge to preventing violence against women and girls undoubtedly remains the reticence of States to take their full responsibility for sustained, systematic and coordinated policy, programming and investment that such transformative social development entails. Most prevention activity worldwide continues to be driven by women's, children's and other civil society organisations, with limited resources. While such organisations have helped build the practice and evidence base for prevention programming, they have themselves highlighted the time, money and workforce constraints that can prevent many good programmes from being implemented or evaluated more extensively. Often there is a lack of time or resources for professional development and little opportunity for workers to share information and strategize for the future. Moreover, the current global fiscal crisis has posed severe challenges in accessing an already limited budget portfolio. The lack of resources and reach of most civil society organisations to share knowledge and skills beyond their own geographical areas is such that much good practice can be lost as funding disappears or key workers move on. Even where civil society organisations have a broader reach, and can undertake prevention activity at national or regional levels, it is only through Governments taking a leadership role that such work can be systematised into policy and practice across sectors and over time.

The impacts of the Global Financial Crisis, the economic pressures on Governments to reduce funding to social services and programmes, and the ongoing resource constraints faced by developing countries, all risk limiting or reducing the investment States will make in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls. However, violence against women and girls actually 'reduces productivity and rains public budgets.' It is only by lowering the incidence of violence against women and girls, preventing recurrence, and responding effectively to existing violence to minimise ongoing impacts, that the overall costs of such violence to any economy will be reduced.⁵³ It is essential that States and their development partners continue to invest both in strengthening service provision, through the provision of protection, justice, care and welfare responses to women and girls currently being victimised, while at the same time investing in holistic prevention strategies to ultimately ease the burden on, and cost to, the State of such responses.

But the challenges are not only financial. Prevention of violence against women and girls through addressing underlying structural causes remains a poorly understood concept across sectors and stakeholders. Prevention is often conflated with early intervention or the response to existing violence, or else limited to awareness raising or social marketing campaigns. Simplistic analyses and programmes aimed at single-cause factors such as alcohol abuse, or placing the responsibility to prevent violence on women and girls themselves (such as self-defence programmes) can in some cases do more harm than good, and are not uncommon. Cynical perceptions that violence against women and girls is somehow an inevitable part of society, and that efforts to prevent it are well-intentioned but ultimately ineffective, are also widespread. There is therefore a need to build not only evidence, but shared understandings of the complexity and causes of violence against women and girls, and of how it can be effectively prevented. Better advocacy, and 'plain language' materials and tools to support such advocacy, are needed to help promote the fact that violence against women and girls can be reduced and ultimately eliminated – and that well-planned, coordinated and sustained interventions have been shown to make a measurable difference.

⁵¹ UN Women (2010) *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women*, citing Government of Victoria (2009) *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020*.

⁵² Santos Pais M (2012) *Third annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children to the Human Rights Council*, A/67/230.

⁵³ An Australian study, for example, calculated that for every woman whose experience of violence can be prevented, AUD\$20,766 in costs can be avoided: National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2009) *The Costs of Violence against Women and their Children*, Commonwealth of Australia.

A related challenge lies in the necessarily long-term nature of the ‘prevention project’ itself. The impacts of many prevention interventions may not be apparent until long after the action has been taken, as the complex dynamics between attitudinal change, changes in social norms, behaviour change, and ultimate reductions in perpetration of violence against women and girls may take years to emerge. Yet the constraints of electoral and funding cycles can place demands on States and donors for ‘quick fixes’ and the demonstration of results in shorter time frames. There is therefore a need to build indicators for shorter-term, measurable impacts of prevention programming that may reasonably be assessed to contribute to longer term impacts on perpetration, whether at the individual level, such as attitudinal change within society (as with changes in social norms) or at the system level (such as changes to institutional practices or policies). There is a further need to establish confidence in such indicators by building evidence on links between such changes and reduced perpetration, recognising that not every programming action can be accompanied by longitudinal and randomised controlled evaluations of eventual impact on perpetration.

The development of monitoring and evaluation tools that are practical and feasible for small-scale organisations and in low resource settings is a related necessity, as is the need to build innovative and sensitive evaluation tools capable of capturing the complexity of multi-sectoral social transformation initiatives from a policy level. While participants in individual prevention programmes (e.g. in schools or communities) may demonstrate changes in behaviour and attitudes during or directly after a programme, longer-term reductions in actual perpetration or victimisation at scale typically requires changes in social norms which can be assessed by measuring changes in social expectations regarding specific behaviours and practices. Assessment of longer-term change also requires follow-up longitudinal evaluation methodologies. A serious obstacle to progress is the inadequate and uneven data on various forms of violence against women and girls and on how they affect different groups of women. The lack of data to evaluate the measures taken impedes informed analysis and policymaking, which are critical to developing the most effective interventions. Donors and States need to develop programming and investment strategies that recognise the complex and long-term nature of prevention, accompanied by performance monitoring frameworks with the sensitivity to capture short (as well as mid and long)-term results.

Challenges (and opportunities) for prevention also lie in the current and emerging development paradigm. Continuing violence against women and girls has been found to hinder progress towards many if not all of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are due for review in 2015. While the third MDG goal is the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, its related target is limited to eliminating ‘gender disparity in primary and secondary education,’ which, while crucial, can in itself only contribute in a small way towards the broader goal. Violence against women and girls is often spoken of as the ‘missing target of the MDGs, and it will be important to ensure targets relating to the prevention of (and response to) violence against women and girls are explicitly identified and well situated in the post 2015 development framework.’⁵⁴

Finally, prevention strategies go to the heart of constructions of gender roles, gender stereotyping and discrimination, and the unequal power between men and women that flows from, and contributes to, such constructions. In addressing such deeply-entrenched and long-standing constructions, prevention work can therefore challenge those who would see aspects of gender discrimination and inequality retained in the name of tradition or religion. A major challenge to advancing the socio-cultural transformation necessary to prevent violence against women and girls was identified in the 2006 Secretary General’s Study as the ‘emergence in many places of a backlash against advances in the status of women.’ The Study noted that in some contexts, ‘organized political forces, including different forms of cultural or religious “fundamentalisms”, have put pressure on Governments to reverse advances in women’s rights’ and progress previously made on women’s rights is stalled, regressing or under threat in various countries around the world.’⁵⁵ A recent study by the United Kingdom Department for International Development noted, however, that such backlash can itself be interpreted as ‘a sign that prevailing power dynamics are being challenged.’ Rather than taking backlash as a

⁵⁴ See for example, UNIFEM (2009) *Making the MDGs Better for Women*, and ActionAid UK (2008) *Hit or Miss? Women’s Rights and the Millennium Development Goals*.

⁵⁵ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General*, A/61/122/Add. 1.

justification for inaction, the study encourages States to consider it an indicator of progress, and provides strategies for managing backlash as part of policy and programming.⁵⁶

In addition to the financial, leadership, implementation, advocacy, and evaluation challenges above, there are also significant gaps in knowledge and practice for prevention of violence against women and girls. One of these, alluded to in the introduction, is the lack of documented prevention strategies for humanitarian, conflict or post-conflict settings. While there is some emerging work ‘building prevention in’ to early intervention and response strategies in humanitarian settings;⁵⁷ or linking prevention to post-conflict interventions such as the engagement of women and girls in peace-building, or disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR),⁵⁸ there is clear potential for more comprehensive work to be done. A final, but significant, gap lies in the availability of tools and strategies for prevention in very low resource/low infrastructure settings. Much of the existing evidence on ‘what works’ for prevention has been gathered from interventions in high or middle-income countries, and transferability to low resource settings is far from guaranteed.

3. KEY ELEMENTS OF PREVENTION POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Based on the international legal and policy framework, and emerging evidence and practice insights, Governments, international organisations, funders and research institutions have begun establishing key elements of effective strategies for the prevention of violence against women and girls. These apply at every level (international, regional, national, local) and across every setting and sector. Below is a synthesis of such elements from several sources.

3.1. *The State has primary responsibility for preventing violence against women and girls*

The State has primary responsibility for prevention of violence against women and girls, established under international law (see section 2.1).⁵⁹ Development agencies, donors, regional and international institutions and civil society organisations can also play key roles in supporting States to implement integrated prevention programming – for example through the provision of technical assistance, resources and training especially where states lack institutional capacity – but ultimate accountability for such policy and programming to prevent violence against women and girls always rests with Governments.

In addition to their international legal obligations, the mandate of the State reaches across all sectors. To maximise effectiveness, evidence has shown that prevention work must happen across a variety of settings – such as schools, workplaces and other institutions, the health and social welfare sectors, local communities, and the media – in a coordinated and strategic way, and that it needs to target whole communities and broad social norms, as well as individuals. Only Governments have the authority to develop, coordinate and monitor such complex initiatives.

⁵⁶ United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1, p.11.

⁵⁷ See for example Ward J (forthcoming) *Conflict/Post-conflict Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) GA res. 34/180.

; United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1.

To date, while much progress has been made in state responses to violence against women and girls, few if any states have fully realised their responsibility to take positive, multi-sectoral and sustained measures aimed at changing the practices, attitudes and behaviours that cause and contribute to violence.

3.2. Action should be informed by evidence, and work to build it

Prevention strategies must be both evidence-based and evidence-building – research and evidence (including practice learnings) should inform the development and implementation of programmes, strategies and policies. This includes drawing from the evidence to identify and address the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, assessing the particular context in which prevention policy and programming is to take place, and developing and adapting strategies accordingly, and including in-built monitoring and evaluation throughout.

3.2.1. Identify and address underlying causes

While the causes of violence against women and girls have been examined from various theoretical perspectives (see section 2.2), all ‘have concluded that no single cause adequately accounts for violence against women. Such violence arises from the convergence of specific factors within the broad context of power inequalities at the individual, group, national and global levels.’⁶⁰ The Secretary General’s In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women emphasizes that ‘acts of violence against women cannot be attributed solely to individual psychological factors or socio-economic conditions such as unemployment. Explanations for violence that focus primarily on individual behaviours and personal histories, such as alcohol abuse or a history of exposure to violence, overlook the broader impact of systemic gender inequality and women’s subordination. Efforts to uncover the factors that are associated with violence against women should therefore be situated within this larger social context of power relations.’ The human rights based analysis of the causes of violence against women and girls undertaken through the Secretary General’s Study can be found in the box below.

A human-rights based analysis of the causes of violence against women and girls

The central premise of the analysis of violence against women within the human rights framework is that the specific causes of such violence and the factors that increase the risk of its occurrence are grounded in the broader context of systemic gender based discrimination against women and other forms of subordination. Such violence is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men reflected in both public and private life.

Historically, gender roles — the socially constructed roles of women and men — have been ordered hierarchically, with men exercising power and control over women. Male dominance and female subordination have both ideological and material bases. Patriarchy has been entrenched in social and cultural norms, institutionalized in the law and political structures and embedded in local and global economies. It has also been ingrained in formal ideologies and in public discourse. Patriarchy restricts women’s choices but does not render women powerless, as evidenced by the existence of women’s movements and successful claims by women for their rights. [...]

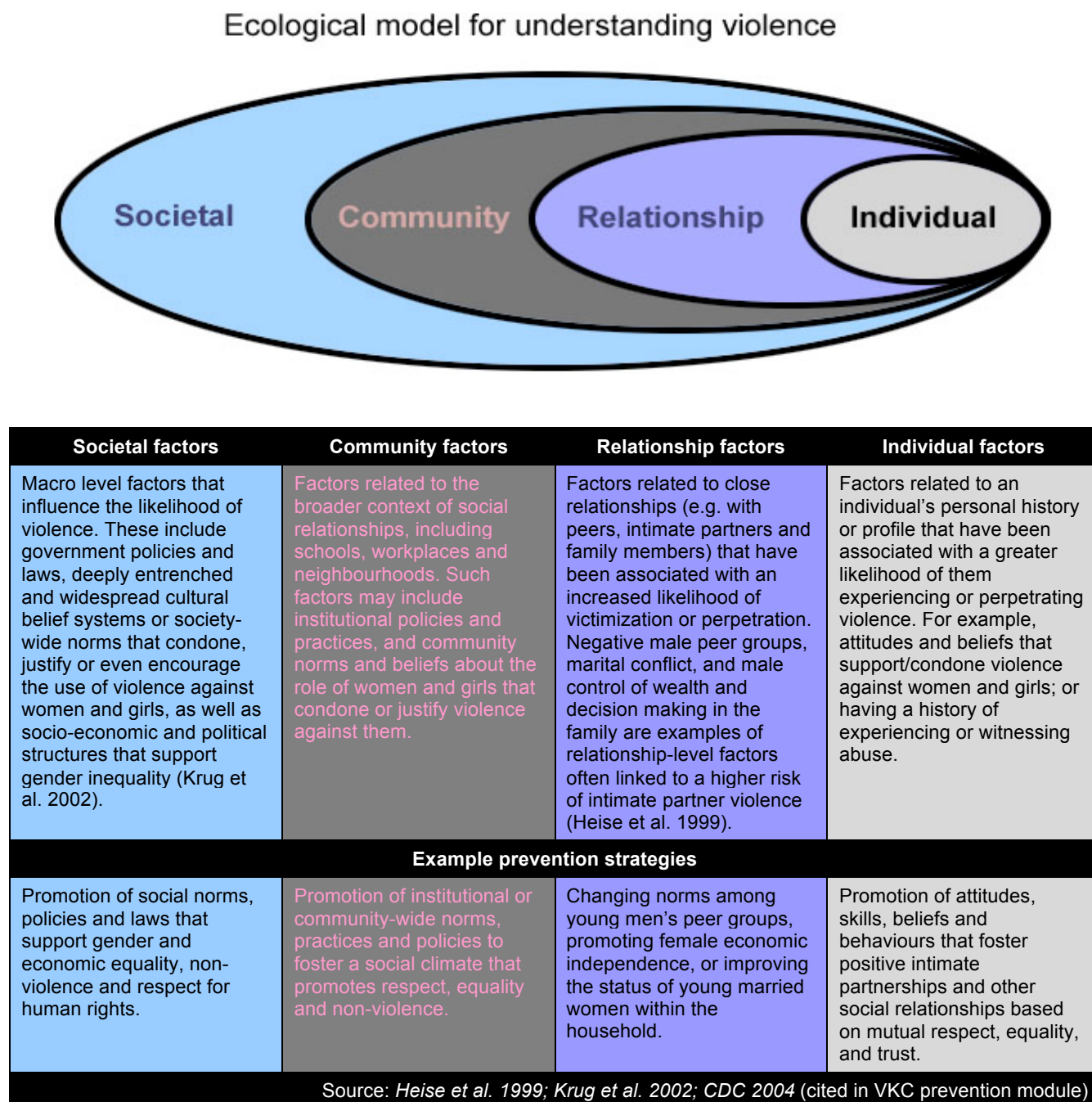
⁶⁰ United Nations General Assembly (2006) *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General*, A/61/122/Add. 1, para 67.

Violence against women serves as a mechanism for maintaining male authority. When a woman is subjected to violence for transgressing social norms governing female sexuality and family roles, for example, the violence is not only individual but, through its punitive and controlling functions, also reinforces prevailing gender norms. [...] Violence against women also operates as a mechanism for maintaining the boundaries of both male and female gender roles. The norms governing these roles may be expressed in moral codes or in widely held social expectations. According to a WHO assessment on intimate partner violence and HIV/AIDS, “men use violence against women as a way of disciplining women for transgressions of traditional female roles or when they perceive challenges to their masculinity.” Intimate partner violence is significantly correlated with rigid gender roles that associate masculinity with dominance, toughness, male authority in the home and threats to male authority.

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Public health approaches, building on this human rights based analysis, have developed an ‘ecological model’ for understanding the complex and intersecting factors contributing to violence against women and girls, as embedded in the social practices and cultural values of broader society. The model identifies contributing or ‘risk’ factors that contribute to perpetration of violence at various ‘levels,’ as well as the inter-relationship between the risk factors.

Figure 1 – an ecological model for understanding violence against women and girls⁶¹



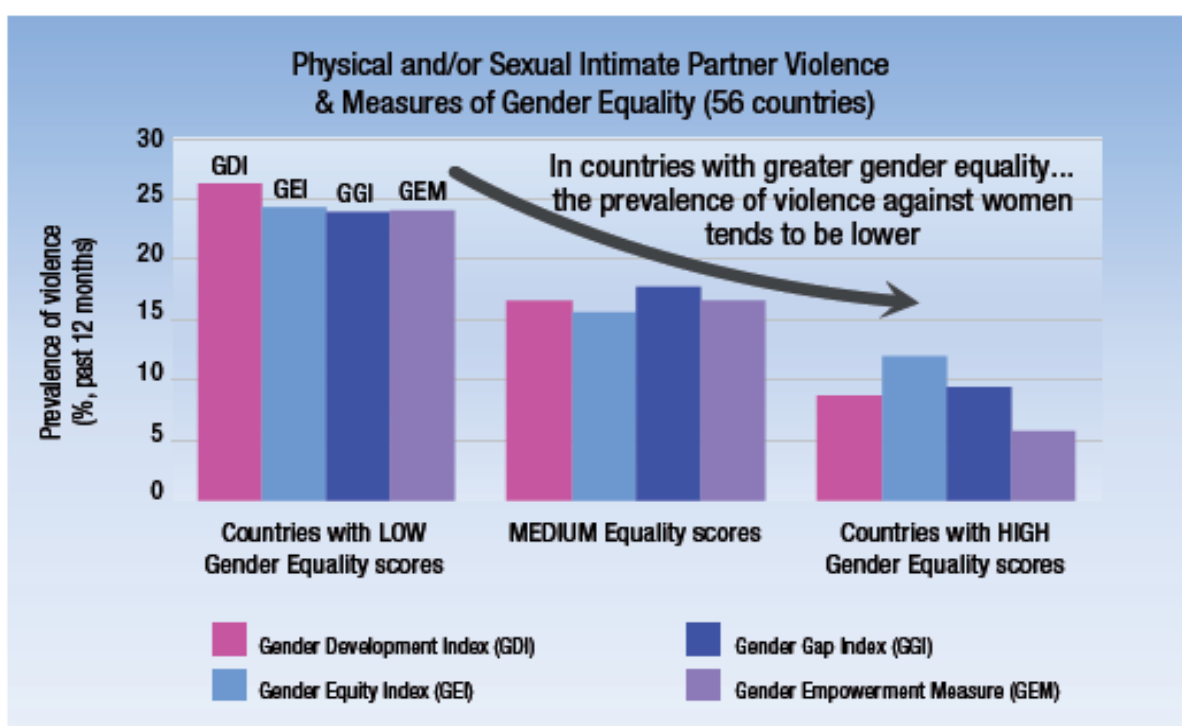
The largest or all-encompassing circle represents the societal level. At this level, there is now established consensus in the research that many of the underlying risk or contributing factors to violence against women and girls relate to the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, and social and cultural norms that support violence, reflecting gendered patterns in the prevalence and perpetration of violence. Societies that value women's participation and representation, and where there are fewer economic, social or

⁶¹ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, citing Krug et al. (2002).

political differences in power between men and women, have lower levels of violence against women and girls.

Broad social norms such as those granting men control over female behaviour, acceptance of violence as a way to resolve conflict, notions of masculinity tied to dominance, honour or aggression and rigid gender roles all contribute to higher risk of violence against women and girls. Other risk factors at the societal level include limited economic opportunities for women and girls; women's insecure access to and control over property and land rights; and lack of safe and supportive spaces for women and girls (allowing free expression and communication and the development of friendships and social networks).⁶² On the other hand, strategies to promote women's economic autonomy and access to skills training, credit and employment; encourage girls' completion of secondary school; delay age of marriage to 18; and ensure women have their rights respected as to when and whether to marry and have children – are all 'protective factors' against violence against women and girls at the societal level.

Figure 2 – As gender equality improves, the prevalence of intimate partner violence against women is lower⁶³



The full gamut of strategies, policies and programmes to promote gender equality and empower women is beyond the scope of this paper. The important point however, is that without a concerted effort to reduce power differentials between men and women and eliminate sex discrimination at the socio-structural level – linked to broader policies aimed at reducing poverty and other inequalities (see section 3.4.1) – programmatic efforts to prevent violence against women and girls cannot be effective in any sustainable way. Prevention strategies must therefore above all promote gender equality and empower women and girls, but a myriad of complex and intersecting factors at other levels also need to be taken into account.⁶⁴

⁶² Bott S, Morrison A and Ellsberg M (2005) *Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in middle and low-income countries: a global review and analysis*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3618.

⁶³ Graph from UNIFEM (2010) *Investing in Gender Equality: Ending Violence against Women*.

⁶⁴ Heise L (2011) *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence – An Evidence Overview*, STRIVE; World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*.

At the community level, for instance, other risk factors begin to emerge compounding those at the societal level. At this level, risk factors include isolation of women and family from support mechanisms, and community norms and beliefs about the role of women and girls, or practices that condone or justify violence against them. For example, norms that ‘foster secrecy and silence in cases of abuse and discourage witnesses and bystanders from intervening, such as the belief that neighbours should not intervene when a wife is being beaten because that is a “private” matter, or the belief that reporting that a daughter was raped would bring shame to the family.’⁶⁵ Broader discriminatory or gender-stereotyping norms – for example supporting male dominance or entitlement – are also associated with attitudes tolerant of violence against women and girls, such as attitudes and practices that reinforce female subordination (e.g. dowry, bride price, child marriage); and the normalized use of violence and aggression within the family or society to address conflict.⁶⁶ Such factors can also be reflected in peer groups and organisational cultures, for instance, where risk factors for violence against women and girls by men include ‘male dominance and gender segregation, higher levels of hostility towards women, peer support for violence, norms of sexual conquest and the denigration of women.’⁶⁷

Women themselves may be conditioned by these social norms to accept violence. Surveys conducted in various countries show that in many contexts women will report that violence is justified in a number of cases. Prevention strategies need to be cognisant of the particular norms operating in different communities, neighbourhoods or organisations, and should seek to target those that tolerate, excuse or minimize violence and discrimination against women and girls.

At the level of a relationship or family, one of the strongest risk factors for violence is male control over social and economic decision-making.⁶⁸ Other factors include justification of male use of violence against women and girls in the family, such as the belief that husbands have the right to physically ‘discipline’ their wives under certain conditions; and placement of individual and family privacy and honour above the safety and wellbeing of girls and women who experience violence.⁶⁹

At the individual level, ‘the most consistent predictor of the use of violence among men is their agreement with sexist, patriarchal and/or sexually hostile attitudes.’⁷⁰ Other contributing factors have been identified relating to age, level of education, and anti-social behaviour.⁷¹ Studies on partner violence in particular cite the harmful use of alcohol as presenting a more complex contributing relationship to violence against women and girls, potentially exacerbating and increasing the severity of violence, as well as the first time perpetration of sexual assault.⁷² Personal childhood exposure to, or experience of, violence is one of the strongest risk factors for later perpetration,⁷³ but this is by no means inevitable and is affected by other social, educational and psychological factors. Importantly, individual life histories, attitudes and behaviours are only one part of the ecological model – and they are continually influenced by factors at all other levels.

⁶⁵ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, citing Krug et al. (2002).

⁶⁶ See: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/300-causes-protective-and-risk-factors-.html>

⁶⁷ VicHealth (2010) *National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence against Women 2009*, Commonwealth of Australia.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, citing Krug et al. (2002), citing Jewkes, 2002; Cohen et al. 2005; Davis et al. 2006; Parks et al. 2007.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Heise L (2011) *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence – An Evidence Overview*, STRIVE, p.7.

⁷³ And there exists another ‘layer’ of risk factors for violence against children, including persistent social acceptance of physical, sexual and psychological violence as an inevitable part of childhood. The United Nations General Assembly (2006) *Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children*, A/61/299, further notes that “laws in a majority of States still condone ‘reasonable’ or ‘lawful’ corporal punishment and reflect societal approval of violence when it is described or disguised as ‘discipline.’ Corporal punishment and other forms of cruel or degrading punishment, bullying and sexual harassment, and a range of violent traditional practices may be perceived as normal, particularly when no lasting visible physical injury results’ (p.10).

Comprehensive literature reviews and meta-analyses on risk/contributing and protective factors for various forms of violence against women and girls

World Health Organisation (2010) [*Prevention Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*](#)

Lori Heise (2011) [*What Works to Prevent Partner Violence – An Evidence Overview Working Paper*](#)

VicHealth (2007) [*Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*](#)

Carol Hagemann-White *et al* (2010) [*Review of Factors at Play in Perpetration*](#)

3.2.2. Assess and adapt to context⁷⁴

Prevention strategies should be informed not only by an understanding of underlying causes of violence against women and girls and the risk and protective factors at individual, relational, community and society levels, but also by an analysis of the particular factors affecting violence against women and girls in a specific context.⁷⁵ Women's experience of violence is shaped by the social, historic, cultural, economic and political contexts in which they live. Comparable data across different countries shows not only do overall prevalence rates of violence against women and girls vary from country to country, but different forms of violence are more or less common, and are perpetrated in different ways (for example, the WHO multi-country study found that while 1 percent of sexual violence was perpetrated by a stranger in Ethiopia and Bangladesh, this figure was 10-12 percent in Peru, Samoa and urbanized Tanzania⁷⁶). Research in different contexts has also revealed variations in contributing or risk factors for the same forms of violence.⁷⁷

Displaced women and girls, and/or those living in situations of armed conflict or in post-conflict environments experience violence very differently (and often at higher rates) than women and girls living in politically stable environments. Even within stable political environments, some women and girls may be living with higher levels of community violence (e.g. gang warfare), which may increase levels of some forms of gender-based violence. In low-resource socio-economic environments, women's and girls' access to systems of support may be diminished in the absence of adequate investment in public infrastructure, contributing to the risk factor of weak community sanctions for violence.

Patriarchy has had different historical manifestations and it functions differently in specific cultural, geographic and political settings. It is intertwined with other systems of subordination and exclusion. It is shaped by the interaction of a wide range of factors, including histories of colonialism and post-colonial domination, nation-building initiatives, armed conflict, displacement and migration. Its expressions are also influenced by economic status, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, religion and culture. Analysis of the gender-based inequalities that give rise to violence must therefore take into account the specific factors that disempower women in a particular setting.

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⁷⁴ The term 'context' is used here to refer to factors at the national or sub-national level such as a country's socio-economic strength, political stability, presence of conflict, and existence or threat of environmental or other crises. This is to avoid confusion with the use of the word 'setting' elsewhere in the document referring to places where prevention activity takes place (such as schools, workplaces or local communities).

⁷⁵ United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1.

⁷⁶ World Health Organisation (2005) *Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses*.

⁷⁷ International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Instituto Promundo (2010) *International Men and gender Equality Survey*.

It is important to recognise that most existing ‘high-quality’ evidence comes from wealthier countries,⁷⁸ and there is a need to build evidence alongside innovative practice for prevention in low and middle income countries, and in humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict environments. Different contexts generate unique social norms, behaviours and practices contributing to violence that need to be recognised and addressed, and strategies that have been effective in one context may not necessarily be transferable to another. States will need to formulate prevention strategies in a way that responds most effectively to the particular forms of violence against women and girls in their territories and their unique national contexts. As countries undergo demographic, economic, social or cultural shifts, the relative prevalence and nature of different forms of violence against women and girls may also change and development of prevention strategies needs to be responsive to such evolution.

3.2.3. Evaluate progress and build knowledge

Given that prevention of violence against women and girls addresses a complex array of factors, assessment of the effectiveness of strategies in any one context is necessary in order to continuously improve and mitigate the unintended consequences. To this end, situation analysis and baseline studies, data collection, evaluation and monitoring are central to prevention. An important feature and ‘added value’ of the public health approach is that it relies ‘upon the use of population-based data to describe the problem, its impact and associated risk and protective factors, while drawing upon scientific evidence for effective, promising and theoretically indicated prevention strategies. Part of the approach is to ensure that all policies and programmes include in-built monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.’⁷⁹ Developing programmes and strategies based on what is already known about risk factors and about effective interventions, is the best way of ensuring that they have the desired impacts. It is also necessary to generate further evidence on what makes successful strategies, as risk factors may vary from setting to setting and for different groups of women and girls or forms of violence.

Evaluations in the field of prevention of violence against women and girls typically assess progress or impact in a range of areas. The most rigorous study design for having confidence in effectiveness of interventions involves Randomized Control Trials (RCT)⁸⁰ with violence perpetration or victimization as the primary outcome of interest, which can be complex, require significant resources and skills in implementing such studies. Partnerships between research institutions, state agencies, donors and civil society can be established to share expertise and maximize resources for such evaluation. However, even with less rigorous study designs (quasi-experimental methods), there is a need to have evaluations built into interventions with adequate pre and post intervention data collection and a control group in order to identify promising prevention strategies.

Most prevention evaluations assess changes indirect outcomes that are assumed, on the basis of other evidence, to have an impact on actual prevalence of violence against women and girls. These include measuring changes in attitudes, behaviours, practices or systems related to gender equality or tolerance/support of violence, whether at the individual, community or organisational level.

However, while certain attitudes, behaviours and practices have certainly been correlated with higher levels of violence against women and girls, more research is required to further develop understanding of the process of change of social norms related to violence against women and girls, including the establishment of new social rules that make such violence unacceptable within social groups. In this context, there is need to collect data on empirical and normative expectations beyond individual attitudes, as these may be even more powerful

⁷⁸ According to the World Health Organisation, ‘high quality’ studies in this field include ‘systematic reviews and large studies with good methodologies such as the use of randomized-controlled trials.’ It notes that most such research currently comes from the United States and ‘may not always be directly transferable to a low-income setting.’ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, p.9.

⁷⁹ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, p.2.

⁸⁰ Randomized control trials involve such features as measuring baseline levels, having an intervention and a control with populations randomized to each in order to minimize bias, then measuring changes from the baseline at regular intervals over time in both the control and test groups to identify any differences.

predicators of behaviour than attitudes. For example, UNICEF'S Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Three⁸¹ looked at attitudes towards violent discipline of children and found that violent discipline continued to be practice by those who believed it was not necessary. Further research could determine whether this discrepancy between attitude and behaviour corresponds to where normative community or social expectations regarding needing to use violence in child discipline are strong.

To date, most evaluations of prevention programmes and strategies have been conducted in high income countries and may not be directly transferable to low and middle income countries. It is important that strategies adapted to new contexts include in-built evaluation to assess what works and what doesn't. Further, most research on contributing or risk factors has been limited to intimate partner and sexual violence,⁸² although a recent study for the European Union undertook a broader sweep and analyzed 'factors at play in perpetration' for rape, sexual coercion and sexual assault; intimate partner violence and stalking; honour-based violence and forced marriage; trafficking; and sexual harassment – as well as various forms of violence against children.⁸³ While some risk factors identified may well be shared across all forms of violence against women and girls (especially those related to unequal power between men and women) it is equally certain that some factors may not be shared, and that there may be additional risk factors to consider for other forms. There is an urgent need to identify contributing/risk and protective factors for other forms of violence against women and girls. There is also a need to further identify risk and protective factors for certain groups of women and girls who may be at increased risk (for example, women and girls with a disability) or for those who may be living in conflict, post-conflict or transitional environments, and similarly for different groups of men who may be at higher risk of perpetrating violence (such as those experiencing violence in childhood).⁸⁴

Because many prevention programmes that have been implemented and evaluated to date have been undertaken in isolation of an overall framework or systemic approach, there is a critical need for more research, monitoring and evaluation of programs in relation to the short, medium and long term impacts. What might not work in isolation might work in the context of holistic approach, or vice versa, or can work over different timeframes. It is necessary to develop evaluation methodologies that can deal with the complexities of multi-dimensional issues and multi-sectorial approaches, and sustain a resource and political commitment to evaluation and monitoring over the mid to long-term.

3.3. *Holistic, multi-sectoral and sustained strategies are necessary to achieve results*

The ecological model and the interplay of multi-level risk factors together demonstrate that the prevention of violence against women and girls is a complex problem and as such requires a holistic and multi-dimensional approach. Strategies across a broad spectrum and at different levels – and the activities and programmes which are implemented across the spectrum – must be linked to a prevention framework which is coordinated to ensure that all levels are appropriately engaged. This is also a requirement the *Beijing Platform for Action*, which calls for 'a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the challenging task of promoting families, communities and States that are free of violence against women.'

⁸¹ The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is an international household survey programme developed by UNICEF. MICS data are collected during face-to-face interviews in nationally representative samples of households, generating one of the world's largest sources of statistical information on children and women.

⁸² World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, p.9; Heise L (2011) *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence – An Evidence Overview*, STRIVE, p.7.

⁸³ Hagemann-White et al (2010) *Factors at play in the perpetration of violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence*, European Commission.

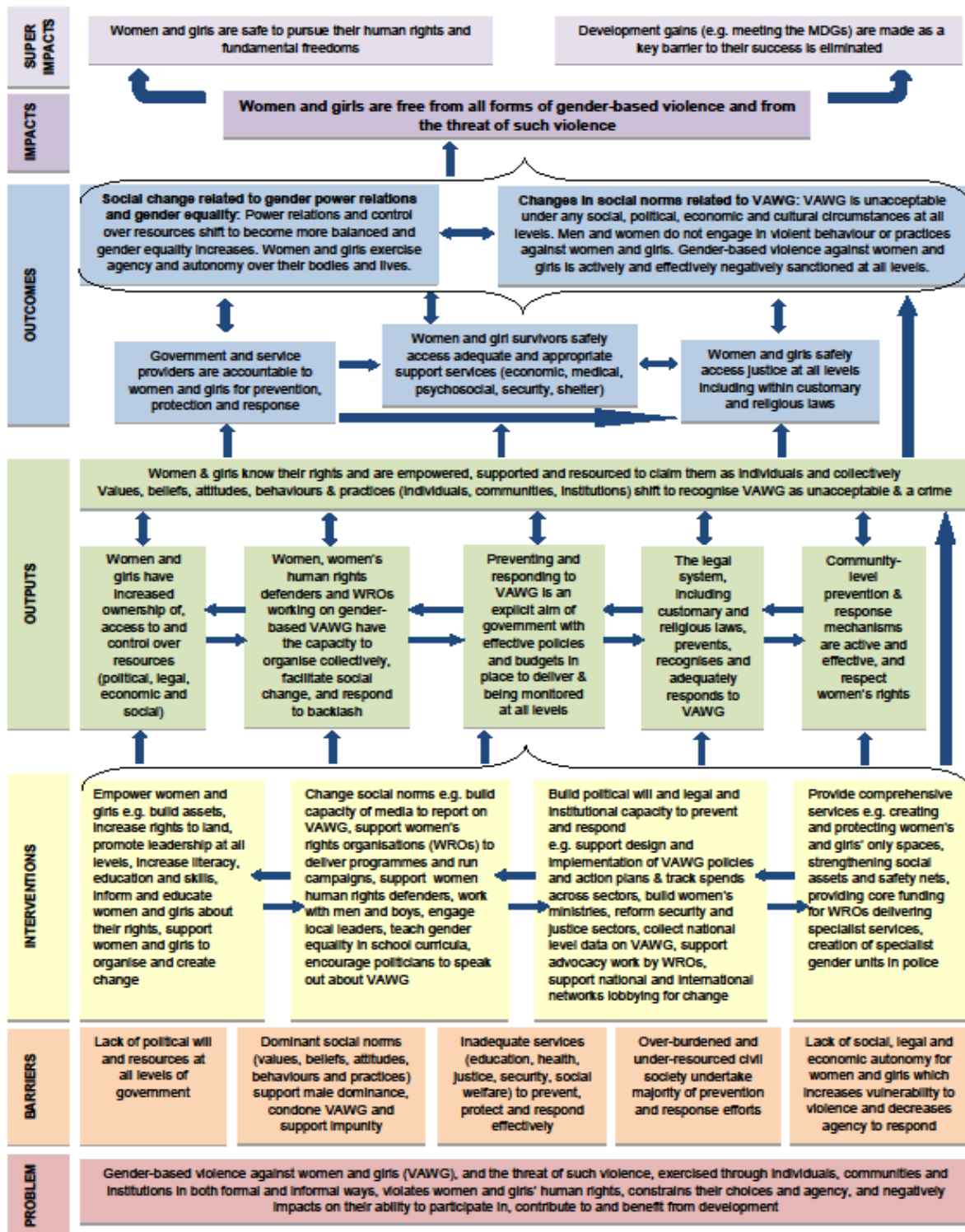
⁸⁴ Surveys in Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Philippines, Poland and Switzerland revealed that boys who witnessed their father using violence against their mother were 3 times more likely to use violence against their partners later in life: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>, citing primary sources.

3.3.1. Adopt a theory of change

Theories of change are a way of defining the ‘building blocks required to bring about a given long-term goal,’⁸⁵ usually represented by a schematic or ‘map’. Theories of change usually include information on the assumptions held by programme designers and stakeholders, as well as envisaged barriers to progress, the logic for choosing particular interventions, and expected short, mid and long term outcomes. Adopting or developing a theory of change is an important first step in ‘mapping out’ what is known, assumed and envisaged as part of the design process of a holistic and multidimensional strategy, and can help in the prioritisation of investment and action, the definition of roles and responsibilities, and the building of robust performance monitoring frameworks. For example, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID) developed the following *Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls* (Guidance Note 1 2012)

⁸⁵ www.theoryofchange.org

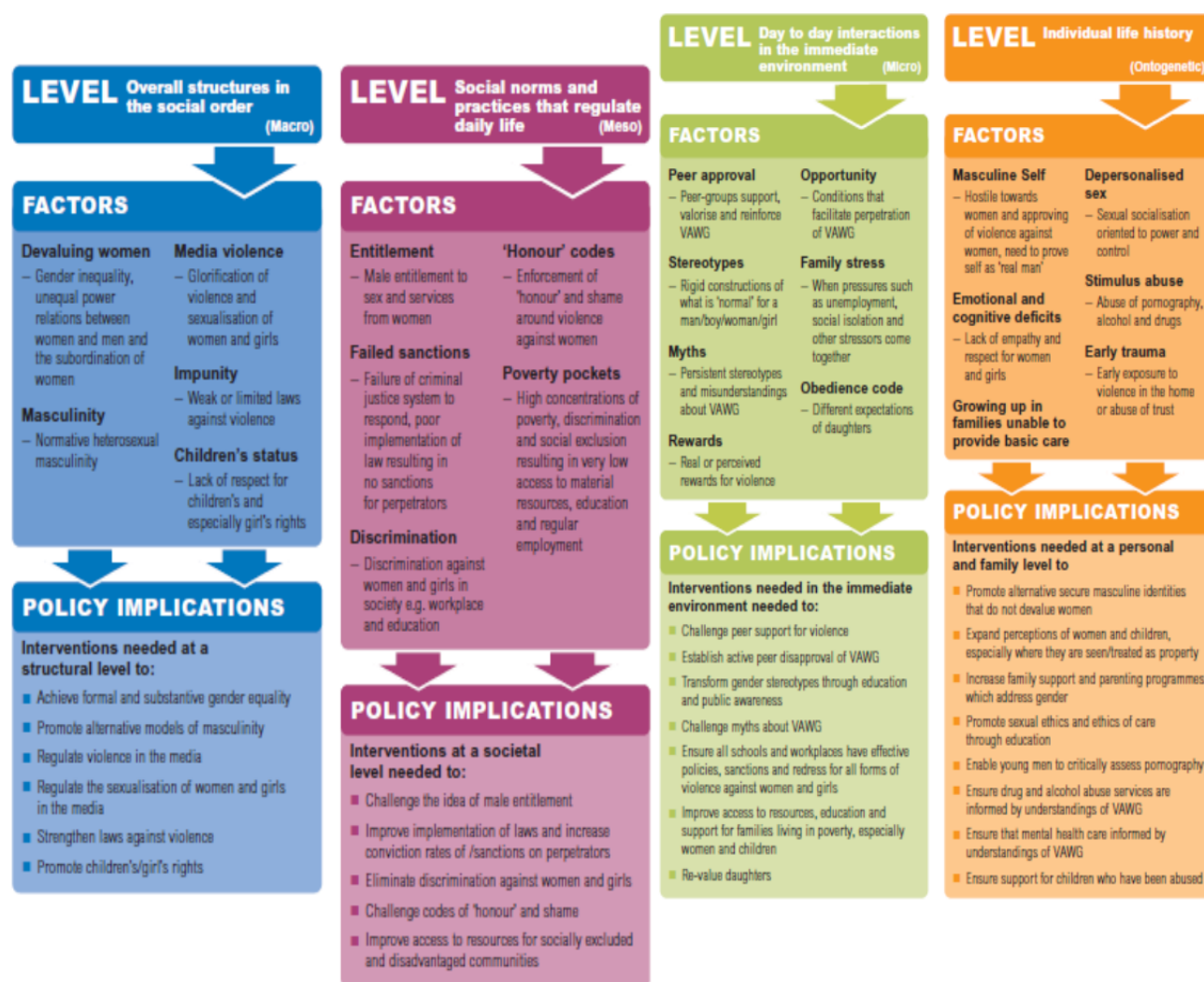
Theory of Change on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls – Diagram



The DfID Theory of Change also covers responses to existing violence against women and girls, and is one of the first to fully envisage comprehensive, sustained and multisectoral prevention strategies within a holistic model.

3.3.2. Work across multiple levels and sectors/settings

The ecological model referred to in section 3.2.1 above identifies contributing, risk and protective factors for violence against women and girls at several ‘levels’ – the societal, community and organisational, relationship and individual levels. It is the way in which different factors combine and operate at the different levels that lead to the probability of violence occurring, with no single factor necessarily sufficient for violence to occur.⁸⁶ In policy and programming terms, this means avoiding simplistic or ‘single level’ strategies (such as limiting work to interventions with individuals) and instead designing coordinated initiatives across the different levels, so that they reinforce each other. For example, the European Commission developed an interactive online model with four levels of contributing/risk factors and three dimensional models illustrating the varying strengths (based on evidence to date) and interactions between these factors.⁸⁷ The United Kingdom End Violence against Women Coalition⁸⁸ drew on this model to develop the policy implications associated with each level:



⁸⁶ Heise L (2011) *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence – An Evidence Overview*, STRIVE, p.7.

⁸⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/funding/daphne3/multi-level_interactive_model/understanding_perpetration_start_unix.html

⁸⁸ Ending Violence against Women Coalition (2011) *A Different World is Possible: A call for long-term and targeted action to prevent violence against women and girls* (adapted from *Factors at play in the perpetration of violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence*, developed by Hagemann-White et al in 2010 for the European Commission)

In addition to working across multiple levels, holistic prevention strategies also need to target people across the multiple settings where they interact, such as schools, workplaces, health and social services, sporting clubs and faith institutions. The factors contributing to or perpetuating violence against women and girls exist across the many sectors and environments in which people conduct their everyday lives, and opportunities for prevention also exist in these settings. However the evidence has shown that single-setting activities when undertaken in isolation have at best a limited effect on the attitudes, behaviours and practices contributing to violence against women and girls. Broad and sustainable change is only achieved when such activities are implemented in a long-term and cumulative way, mutually reinforced across various settings. Therefore, just as strategic, multi-sectoral and long-term programmes of work are a feature of recent policy aimed at better *responding* to violence against women and girls, the evidence is showing that a similar approach needs to be taken to *prevention*, if levels of violence against women and girls are ever to be reduced.

Those governments that have engaged in true multi-sectoral or ‘whole-of-government’ prevention strategies have found it useful to organise strategies through sectors that align with government work areas (i.e. ministries and agencies), as these provide established avenues for generating political and departmental will/responsibility, setting up implementation mechanisms, building sectoral capacity and distributing funding. For example, Governments rarely have a policy work area for ‘engaging men,’ nor any service delivery system associated with this population group. However, strategies for engaging men and boys can be developed in sectors such as social services (e.g. fatherhood programmes), sports and recreation (e.g. ‘coaching boys into men’) or education (e.g. schools-based respectful relationships programmes, with single sex sessions).⁸⁹

Examples of promising practices in different settings or sectors can be found in section 4.

3.3.3. Use a variety of coordinated interventions and strategies

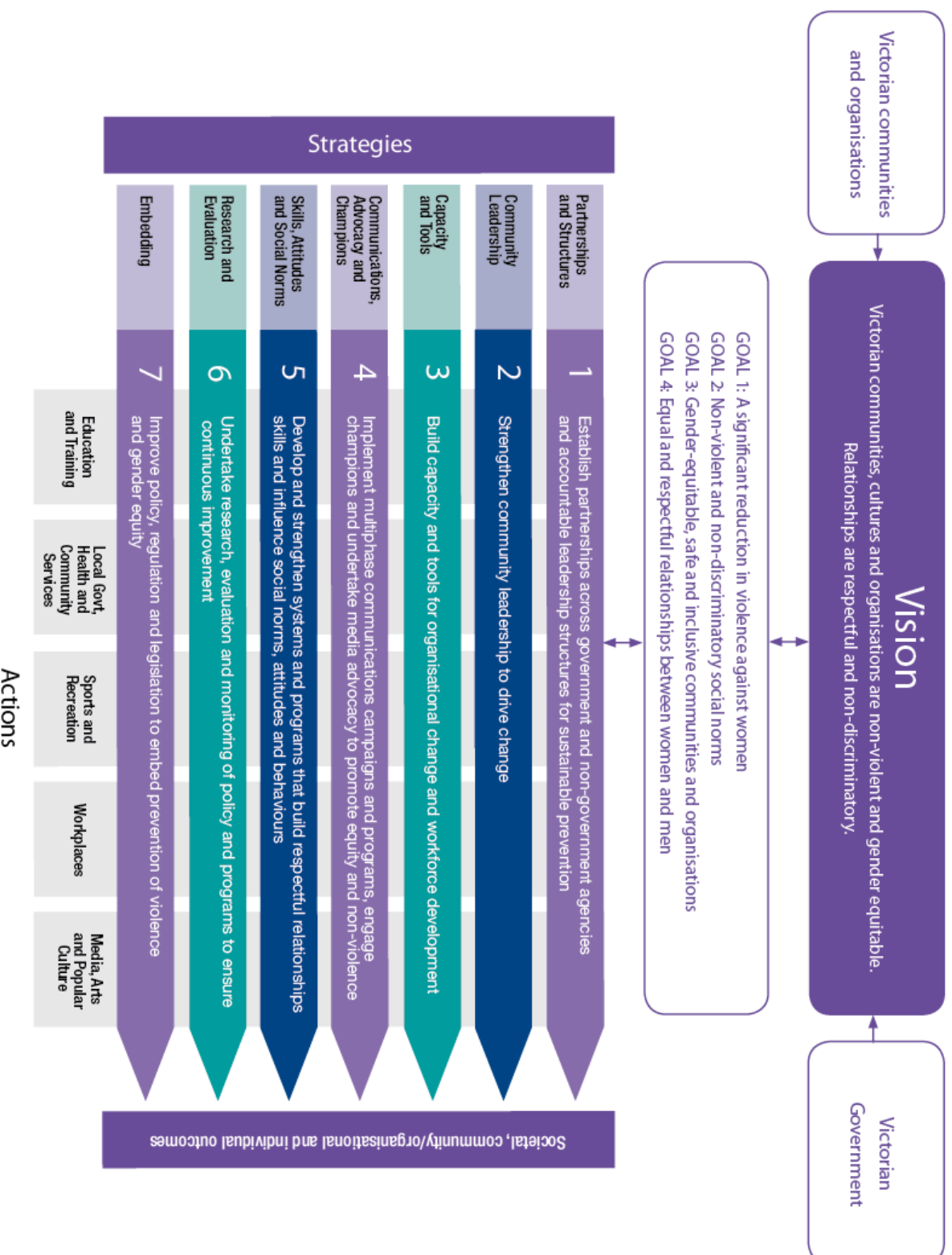
A variety of interventions, strategies and programming methodologies have been found to be effective in prevention violence against women and girls, such as community mobilization, skills building of individuals, social marketing and communications, institutional transformation, and the fostering of coalitions and networks.⁹⁰ Importantly however, the evidence again suggests that when implemented in isolation, no single intervention or strategy is enough to prevent so deeply entrenched a problem as violence against women and girls. One-off interventions, while they may have some effectiveness for participating individuals, are unable to change social norms at the community or society level and decrease prevalence of violence against women and girls across society as a whole.

Therefore, in addition to working across multiple levels and settings for action, it is also essential to deploy a variety of interventions or strategies that can mutually reinforce each other to maximise effectiveness. It is particularly essential that all strategies and interventions are supported by policy and legislative reform that promotes gender equality, challenges discrimination, and provides an effective response to existing violence.

For example, the Government of Victoria, Australia, used seven key strategies from the policy to programming levels to drive action across a variety of settings (A Right to Respect: Victoria’s Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020):

⁸⁹ One area where ministerial portfolios are often found directed at a particular population group is in the area of early childhood. As the evidence above shows, this is a highly important group for prevention of violence against women and girls. However, while an early childhood ministerial portfolio or government work area may play an important policy development and coordination role, most of the opportunities for action will be found in particular sectors, such as health (e.g. maternal and child health nurse visitation programmes) or community services (e.g. positive parenting programmes in childcare facilities). Similarly, sometimes ministerial portfolios or work areas will be found for other population groups, such as for young people, immigrant or refugee populations, or people with a disability. Again, these government work areas can play important and leadership and coordination role for prevention of violence against women and girls in those groups, but most opportunities for prevention *activity* itself will still require the engagement of the major service agencies.

⁹⁰ See Prevention Institute, http://www.eatbettermovemore.org/pdf/1PGR_spectrum_of_prevention_web_020105.pdf



Examples of interventions and strategies that have been found effective to prevent violence against women and girls when implemented as part of a holistic and coordinated programme of work include:

- **Direct participation and individual skills-building**

The direct participation of individuals is an important part of prevention strategies. These may aim to build skills of individuals, or within communities or organisations, to identify risk factors for violence against women and girls and respond appropriately, such as providing support for victims/survivors (e.g. believing, affirming, referring to services), or responding to situations of identified risk (e.g. building the skills of those in a workplace to respond effectively to a colleague making a remark that is sexist or excuses violence). These may be a component of whole population programmes, or designed to build the skills of designated individuals within a community or organisation.

Building capacity of ‘bystanders’ to intervene safely and effectively in the face of violence-supportive attitudes, practices and behaviours is an emerging area of evidence-based practice.⁹¹ Working with traditional or religious leaders, public or private sector decision-makers, celebrities or athletes as ‘gatekeepers’ to cultural change is another – as the behaviours, decisions and commentary of such individuals can both reinforce or challenge violence-supportive attitudes.

Individual skills-building is often about engaging men and boys, and it is crucial that men engaged in prevention efforts are not simply ‘against violence’, but committed to challenging its underlying causes, including assumptions about masculinity and gender stereotypes. However, research also shows that women and girls can themselves hold attitudes and justify behaviours and practices that contribute to violence,⁹² and so should also be targeted in attitudinal change and skills-building interventions (see section 4 for examples).

- **Community strengthening and mobilization**

Communities are particularly important for successful prevention of violence against women and girls, as the most immediate contexts for the expression of social norms, attitudes and behaviours in people’s daily lives. Community strengthening and mobilization initiatives may include a combination of many of the strategies discussed elsewhere (skills building of individuals, social marketing, working with media, capacity building of key institutions, engaging men and young people, etc). Many community-based projects have tried to combine prevention of violence against women and girls with prevention of HIV or other sexual and reproductive health objectives.

Raising Voices (Uganda) has developed one of the best known and evaluated approaches to community mobilization in developing countries. The following box provides a brief overview of the phases and strategies used by their model programme in Uganda and elsewhere.

⁹¹ See, for example Sonke Gender Justice’s One Man Can initiative: <http://genderjustice.org.za/issue-1/resources/sonke-newsletter/issue-1/issue-1-articles/case-study-one-man-can-campaign>; and VicHealth (2012) *More than Ready: Bystander Action to Prevent Violence against Women in the Victorian Community*.

⁹² United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1, p.11, World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, p.28; Partners for Prevention (2012) *The Change Project: Understanding gender, masculinities and power to prevent gender-based violence – Project Overview and Summary of Preliminary Research Findings*.

Five phases of community mobilization – developed by Raising Voices

1. **Community assessment:** to gather information on attitudes and beliefs about domestic violence, begin to build relationships in the community, and prepare staff for the project.
2. **Raising awareness** within the general community and professional sectors (i.e. social and health services, law enforcement, teachers, religious communities, etc.) of domestic violence and its negative consequences on women, men, families and community life.
3. **Building networks of support** within the general community and various professional sectors that empower and enable individuals to take action and make change.
4. **Integrating action** against domestic violence into everyday life and systematically within institutions.
5. **Consolidating efforts** of programmes and activities working against domestic violence to ensure their sustainability, continued growth and progress.

Five strategies and suggested activities

- Develop learning materials such as booklets, posters, stickers, story cards, information sheets, and murals.
- Strengthen capacity of staff, the community and professional sectors, through a Community Activism Course, training of community volunteers and professionals, and structured, on-going dialogues with various decision-makers.
- Carry out media and public events that create public forums for exploring ideas and values, such as community theatre, radio, newspaper, exhibitions, and media collaborations.
- Conduct advocacy that focuses attention on women's needs with specific groups, including NGO collaborations, professional sector partnerships and community leadership forums.
- Conduct local activism that engages community members to prevent domestic violence in their community by joining community volunteer networks, domestic violence watch groups, newlywed mentoring, community action groups and ribbon campaigns.

Source: Michau L, Naker D (2003) *Mobilising Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence: A Resource Guide for Organisations in East and Southern Africa*. Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices. Available at: <http://www.raisingvoices.org/publications.php>.

• Transforming institutions

When institutions – whether in the public sector (e.g. schools, health and social services, legal and justice institutions, residential and alternative care institutions, etc), the private sector (e.g. workplaces and businesses) or civil society (e.g. women's and children's organisations, faith institutions, sporting clubs, etc) – are 'insensitive to the implications of gender power imbalances or not committed to the safety and wellbeing of women and girls who experience violence, then these key institutions will not be able to contribute to prevention of violence against women and girls.'⁹³ Building the capacity of institutions to implement activity to prevent violence against women and girls involves first challenging some of the embedded policies and practices that may in fact be contributing to such violence.

'Transforming institutions' means building the capacity of the whole institution to promote gender equality, empower women and challenge social norms supportive of violence against women and girls. Rather than superficial policy changes or one-off training programmes, a comprehensive package of institution-wide reforms would deploy the strategies such as (adapted from Bott and Guedes et al *Prevention Module* UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls):

- review and if necessary, revise the organisation's mission statement, values and policies against discrimination and sexual harassment;
- ensure the support of senior leadership for addressing violence against women and girls;
- examine the workplace culture and organisation to assess the level of respect and freedom from harassment shown to subordinate;
- sensitize and train staff about gender, human rights and violence against women and girls;

⁹³ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

- build alliances and partnerships with other organisations working on violence;
- strengthen the overall capacity of the organisation to carry out high quality work;
- ensure that programmes and policies integrate attention to violence against women and girls in all aspects of their work.⁹⁴

- **Social marketing and communications**

Social marketing is ‘the application of the concepts and tools of commercial marketing to the achievement of socially desirable goals’⁹⁵ Well-conceived social marketing campaigns can target the social and cultural norms which tolerate or excuse violence against women and girls, and have been positively evaluated in creating attitudinal change. Such campaigns should not only raise awareness of what constitutes violence and its unacceptability, but transform assumptions about relationships, sex and gender that support it. While many awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women and girls entail large scale social marketing initiatives, grassroots local actions are also important and effective, and can align with existing events or special dates. Several States have partnered with women’s groups and crisis services as well as creative professionals to develop effective messages and campaigns that accurately reflect the nature and dynamics of violence against women and girls.⁹⁶ It is also essential that campaigns are inclusive of diverse groups and do not reinforce, for example, race or class-based stereotypes.

Social marketing campaigns are often an attractive option for funders or Governments seeking to implement a ‘one-off’ and ‘glossy’ prevention activity with broad reach. It is therefore particularly important to note that even well-conceived social marketing campaigns have very limited effectiveness or lasting impact if not supported by legislative and policy reform (including an effective system response sanctioning existing violence), and a range of reinforcing initiatives and strategies across different settings.

A 2005 review of social marketing campaigns on violence against women recommended policy-maker and programmers:

- *Beware of unintended negative consequences - mitigate through formative research on message materials and on-the ground strategies to manage any negative impacts*
- *Mass media advertising and media advocacy strategies should be integrated and mutually reinforce on-the-ground activities assisted by inter-agency/inter-network partnerships, and where applicable, by policy/legislative changes – part of holistic approach*
- *Include media advocacy strategies that obtain free media coverage and which influence unhelpful ongoing representations of violence against women and girls (see next section)*
- *Find ways to sustain the campaign beyond a single ‘dose’*
- *Generate public will to support one or more calls to action based on specific behavioural objectives – e.g. telephoning a hotline or intervene when a friend or neighbor is perpetrating violence against women and girls (establishes norm that intervening is the ‘right thing to do’, and so opens door for broader change)*
- *Conduct thorough formative research*
- *Base interventions on comprehensive theoretical models of health promotion and social marketing*
- *Ensure political support*

Rob Donovan and Rodney Vlais (2005) *VicHealth Review of Communication Components of Social Marketing/Public Education Campaigns Focusing on Violence against Women*

⁹⁴ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

⁹⁵ Donovan R and Vlais R (2005) *VicHealth Review of Communication Components of Social Marketing/Public Education Campaigns Focusing on Violence against Women*, p.4.

⁹⁶ See for example Ecuador’s *Machismo es Violencia* campaign: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTxUWQ2IE6s>, and Scotland’s *Zero Tolerance* campaign: <http://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/>

- **Fostering coalitions for advocacy and knowledge management**

Coordinated advocacy is central to holistic prevention – it builds ‘collective activity and mobilisations to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women and to encourage governments, organisations, corporations and communities to take action on factors contributing to the problem.’⁹⁷ Coalitions and networks can drive advocacy, as well as coordinate research and programming on prevention. They can function as knowledge management hubs, collating and contributing to the evidence base on effective programming at the national and international levels, and building capacity among partner organisations for development, implementation and monitoring of innovative prevention activity. Fostering coalitions through, for example, supporting coordination, providing web platforms or opportunities for information sharing, should be factored into the development of holistic prevention strategies.

3.3.4. Link to related areas of work, while ensuring distinct action

Prevention of violence against women and girls is a discrete area of activity, aiming to address clearly-defined contributing or risk factors which are largely associated with societal conception of gender roles, unequal power between men and women and sex discrimination (see section 3.2.1). However, it intersects with and reinforces a number of other areas where it addresses common risk factors or has a shared impact.

- **Violence against children**

One of the most important of these is the prevention of, and response to, violence against children (of both sexes). First, the experience of violence as a child (especially sexual abuse) is a strong contributing/risk factor for future intimate partner and sexual violence (particularly perpetration).⁹⁸ Therefore programmes aiming to prevent sexual and other forms of violence against children are in scope, to the extent that they contribute to prevention of violence against women and girls. While *all* programmes and activities aiming to prevent violence against children should obviously not be subsumed under strategies for prevention of violence against women and girls (or vice-versa), the intersections between the two areas should be recognized and strategies envisaged as mutually-reinforcing.

Second, the experience of witnessing violence, whether in conflict settings, community/urban settings or in the home, has been shown to have impacts on children and young people that are indistinguishable from those of direct violence.⁹⁹ In some jurisdictions, exposure to intimate partner violence is defined as a form of child abuse in itself.¹⁰⁰ Therefore preventing intimate partner violence in turn contributes to the prevention of this form of child abuse. Further to this point, children and young people living with violence against their mothers or other female care-givers are exposed to relationship models that can influence their own behaviour and limit their capacity to imagine alternatives. Boys and young men in this group, particularly, are up to three times more likely to perpetrate violence in their own intimate relationships than those who have not been exposed to violence,¹⁰¹ and there is also evidence to suggest that girls and young women in this group may be more likely in adulthood to hold attitudes that excuse or condone violence [ref]. Therefore, programmes aimed at preventing childhood exposure to violence, and to provide counseling and skills-building for children and

⁹⁷ From VicHealth (2007) *Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper Guiding the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*.

⁹⁸ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*.

⁹⁹ Flood M and Fergus L (2009) *An Assault on Our Future: The Impact of Violence on Young People and Their Relationships*, White Ribbon Foundation.

¹⁰⁰ See for example the *Family Violence Protection Act 2006*, Victoria, Australia.

¹⁰¹ Surveys in Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Philippines, Poland and Switzerland revealed that boys who witnessed their father using violence against their mother were 3 times more likely to use violence against their partners later in life: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>, citing primary research.

young people who have been exposed to such violence, are necessary in preventing violence against women and girls.¹⁰²

In all the above cases, it is important to recognize that the so-called ‘cycle of violence’ (i.e. future perpetration/victimization) is by no means inevitable and can be broken by social, educational and psychological factors which reinforce the resilience and capacity of children and young people. Early intervention strategies targeting young children exposed to violence are essential to promote these protective factors and mitigate the impacts with regard to brain development and toxic stress.¹⁰³ Victimized children are not ‘the problem’ (any more than victimized women), and ultimately it is the behaviour and attitudes of perpetrators that can and must be changed (while addressing broader violence-supportive norms at the social and community levels). However, there is a clear logic to making targeted early intervention programmes for children and young people living with, or who have experienced, any form of violence an essential component of any holistic strategy to prevent violence of women and girls. The challenge for policy makers and programmers is to ensure these conceptual links are made while ensuring the gendered dynamics and nature of the key contributing factors for violence against women and girls are considered when designing interventions.

- **Other forms of inequality and discrimination**

Prevention of violence against women and girls also overlaps with the prevention of other forms of inequality and discrimination. First, prevention of violence against women and girls involves reducing inequality and discrimination on the basis of gender, and so has positive broader impacts on community development related to gender equality. By the same token, violence affects some women and girls disproportionately or in specific ways, such as women and girls with a disability, indigenous women, women from minority ethnic groups, adult sex workers and girls exploited in prostitution, and women and girls living with HIV/AIDS. Therefore, reducing the inequalities and disadvantages faced by particularly vulnerable communities also enables strategies for the prevention of violence to be more effective for all groups of women and girls. Many factors associated with violence against women and girls are closely interlinked with other health and social problems. For example, violence can put women and girls at higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, and women living with HIV or AIDS are often the targets of abuse and stigma.¹⁰⁴ As noted above, violence can severely limit women’s sexual and reproductive health rights and impact on their maternal health. Violence may be exacerbated or intensified by alcohol and substance abuse.¹⁰⁵ Numerous factors such as low access to systems of support and low educational achievement can interact to put women living in poverty at greater risk of violence. While comprehensive analysis of these related social and health issues is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important that prevention of violence against women and girls is integrated with strategies to address these related issues, so that they are mutually supporting. Such inter-linkages are discussed in more detail in section 4.2.

- **Other forms of violence**

Finally, prevention of violence against women and girls overlaps with the prevention of other forms of violence, again in ‘both directions.’ First, higher levels of some forms of collective or interpersonal violence (e.g. armed violence, urban and gang violence) can increase the risk of violence against women and girls, therefore prevention activities targeted at the former can have an impact on the latter. Second, there can be shared risk factors for different forms of violence, for example, alcohol and drug abuse has been correlated

¹⁰² World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*; Flood M and Fergus L (2009) *An Assault on Our Future: The Impact of Violence on Young People and Their Relationships*, White Ribbon Foundation.

¹⁰³ See World Health Organisation (2006) *Preventing Child Maltreatment: A Guide to Taking Action and Generating Evidence*. The Report notes that ‘Where maltreatment has already occurred, there is some evidence that intensive, early intervention can help minimize the long-term effects of this trauma on the development of the brain. However, while early intervention with maltreated children can minimize the effects of abuse and neglect, it is considerably more beneficial to prevent maltreatment before it occurs,’ (p.8)

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html>

¹⁰⁵ See http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/4th_milestones_meeting/publications/en for alcohol reduction interventions

with increased street violence, and has also been shown to have an exacerbating or intensifying effect on intimate partner violence, and on first-time sexual assault perpetration. Importantly, however, while there are some overlapping risk factors across several forms of violence (e.g. abuse of alcohol and drugs), they have different ‘strengths’ as risk factors for different forms of violence, and interact in different ways. Each specific causal matrix requires equally specific approaches, strategies and frameworks for prevention.¹⁰⁶ Section 3.2.1 provides an outline of risk factors contributing to violence against women and girls, including those listed above.

Thus, while prevention of other forms of violence is out of scope here, strategies to prevent violence against women and girls – because they address risk factors that may be shared by other forms of violence – is likely to have a positive effect on activity in these other areas.¹⁰⁷ The inverse is also true – good practice interventions to reduce harmful use of alcohol, for instance, are likely to have a positive effect on prevention of violence against women and girls in societies where alcohol is accepted and its over-consumption is an issue. The same is true of strategies to reduce access to small arms, or levels of street and urban violence. Strategies to prevent violence against women and girls should align with strategies to prevent other forms of violence where they address shared risk factors. It is worth re-emphasizing, however, that the effectiveness of strategies to prevent violence against women and girls depends on them recognizing and responding to the deeply gendered dynamics of violence, and this endeavour cannot be simply subsumed – in policy or conceptual terms – under strategies to address violence more generally.

3.4. Development, implementation and monitoring should be based on human rights principles and norms

Prevention strategies should be developed, implemented and monitored through processes that affirm and uphold human rights, as such processes will ‘inevitably determine the success, utility and acceptance of the outcome.’¹⁰⁸ Human rights based processes recognise every human being as a rights holder who should be empowered to act as a key actor in processes and decisions that affect them. Principles such as meaningful participation of stakeholders, accountability, non-discrimination and equality of outcomes for different groups, empowerment of women and girls, and linkages to international human rights standards are central to a human rights based approach.¹⁰⁹

A rights-based approach to preventing domestic violence is empowering to women and the community. It uses the broader framework of human rights and justice to create a legitimate channel for discussing women’s needs and priorities and holds the community accountable for treating women as valuable and equal human beings. It challenges community members to examine and assess their value system and empowers them to make meaningful and sustainable change. Without this foundation, projects tend to appeal to the goodwill or benevolence of others to keep women safe.

Lori Michau and Dipak Naker (2003) *Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence*

¹⁰⁶ It is obvious, for example, that the perpetrator of intimate partner violence is motivated by different factors than the perpetrator of a mugging, and while both forms of violence stem from a profound disregard for the victim’s physical integrity and disrespect of their rights, any attempt to prevent either form of violence must take into account the more specific causes and motivations of the perpetrator, on the individual and socio-structural level.

¹⁰⁷ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, p. 12: ‘Different forms of violence have common underlying risk factors, which include certain social and cultural norms, social isolation, the harmful use of alcohol and income inequality. Prevention efforts that address these common factors thus have the potential to decrease the occurrence of multiple forms of violence.’

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Population Fund UNFPA (2006) *Human rights-based programming: what it is/how to do it*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

3.4.1. Empower women and girls

One of the strongest risk factors for violence against women and girls at all levels is unequal power between men and women. Addressing unequal power through economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls is one of the main responsibilities for Governments within the spectrum of prevention. This includes strategies to increase women's participation in all aspects of public life, and the development and implementation of laws and policies to ensure that women and girls have equal rights to education, social security, work, political participation and an adequate standard of living.¹¹⁰ Strategies for women's economic empowerment have shown some of the best-evaluated outcomes in terms of reducing participating women's future experience of violence (see section 4.3).

An important caution is that some studies have found periods of transition – where women's rights are being recognised and historical power differentials between men and women are being reduced – can also be times of societal 'backlash' and even increased risk of violence against women and girls. Some researchers have attributed this to the notion that when women's social and economic status is extremely low, men may not need to use violence to enforce rigid gender roles, but, 'as women begin to challenge traditional levels of oppression, conflict in the household may increase until women reach sufficiently high levels of education, income and social status to provide protection from violence.'¹¹¹ Those involved in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women and girls can also be at risk – 'because they are challenging deeply-felt traditions about gender roles'.¹¹² It is therefore important that strategies to minimize the risk of backlash are undertaken alongside efforts to promote gender equality and empower women.

3.4.2. Enable meaningful participation of stakeholders

A necessary part of the process for developing and implementing holistic, multi-sectoral and sustained prevention strategies is generate a shared understanding of the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls and agreement on social rules that make it unacceptable. This requires the engagement of entire communities nation-wide, though such full engagement may require initially working with sub-groups within the communities. It is also particularly important to engage those entities and professionals who will (or should) be involved in implementing prevention strategies and programmes – to build not only this shared understanding and agreement, but also ownership of the broader prevention project.

- **Civil society, particularly organisations working for women and girls**

Civil society representatives and other stakeholders¹¹³ have a unique knowledge-base and experience invaluable to the development, implementation and monitoring of prevention strategies. The expertise of the sectors undertaking specialist work to end violence against women and girls are particularly central to the success of prevention efforts.¹¹⁴ The *Beijing Platform for Action* notes the 'strength of the non-governmental sector, particularly women's organisations and feminist groups, [as] a driving force for change'.¹¹⁵ Women's

¹¹⁰ World Health Organisation (2007) *Expert Meeting on the Primary Prevention on Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence – Meeting Report*, May 2-3, p. 35.

¹¹¹ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, citing Heise and Garcia Moreno 2002; Jewkes 2002

¹¹² United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1, p.11

¹¹³ Civil society and other stakeholders include, but are not limited to: women victims/survivors; non-governmental organisations experienced in addressing violence against women and girls; grassroots women's organisations; women and men from marginalized groups; service providers; police and prosecutors; legal aid; the judiciary; public and commercial media; health sector; HIV and AIDS prevention and response programmes; education sector; the private sector; international and/or regional organisations.

¹¹⁴ Government of Victoria (2009) *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020*.

¹¹⁵ Article 26

rights organisations in particular have long developed and delivered programmes to prevent violence against women and girls, and supporting them to build strong and inclusive social movements, is one of the most effective mechanisms for ensuring sustainable change in the lives of women and girls.¹¹⁶ Their expertise, commitment and long experience in communicating issues of violence against women and girls, creating and strengthening partnerships with generalist agencies, and translating specialist knowledge into ‘mainstream’ models of practice is invaluable to broader prevention efforts. It is essential that women’s and civil society organisations already engaged in activity to prevent violence against women and girls are supported and have their capacity built so that they can train others in ‘newer’ sectors and advocate for prevention.¹¹⁷

Children’s rights organisations, including those involved in child protection and welfare, have similarly invaluable experience and expertise in initiatives to prevent violence against children, including girls (and intervene early). Other civil society organisations are also involved in work to prevention of violence against women and girls, including those working on HIV/AIDs or sexual and reproductive health. More recently, some ‘mainstream’ community organisations have begun to work on promotion of gender equality and prevention of violence and discrimination, such as religious, community or sporting organisations. Ensuring meaningful participation from these groups enables their knowledge and expertise to be harnessed and also serves to build partnerships, shared understanding, and broad capacity for the implementation of the strategy’s actions.

The establishment of ongoing formal structures and partnerships with civil society is a way of maintaining meaningful participation over the mid to long term. Building trust and transparency in relationships between government and civil society is particularly important and beneficial to this effort, and often requires specific actions or concerted effort. The full and meaningful participation of stakeholders through such structures requires that the bodies be invested with power and resources to influence direction and decision-making, although this needs to be balanced against ensuring civil society organisations retain their independence and capacity to hold government accountable.

- **Implementing institutions and agencies**

Civil society alone cannot be expected to drive prevention work. Comprehensive and holistic approaches to prevention involve a range of institutions and agencies implementing various components, across public and private sectors, as well as civil society. The various groups and actors that will be involved in implementation should be engaged right from the development stage, to help build shared understandings and a sense of joint ownership of the prevention effort. Prevention needs to be embedded as the core work of public institutions such as schools and universities, health and social welfare sectors, police and courts, and structures for the representation of such sectors in the development, implementation and monitoring of comprehensive prevention strategies should be established (or existing cross-government structures engaged). It is also essential to engage non-public institutions such as the private sector, philanthropic agencies, faith institutions, arts and cultural institutions, and so forth.

- **Men and women**

Non-violent men have a positive and active role to play in helping prevent violence against women and girls, and in shaping respectful, gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours among peers, colleagues, children and friends.¹¹⁸ While most men do not perpetrate violence against women and girls, it is perpetrated mostly by

¹¹⁶ United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1.

¹¹⁷ United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1, p.11

¹¹⁸ Greig A, Basnyat A and Lang J (forthcoming) *Men and the Prevention of Gender-based Violence: A Conceptual Framework for Policy Change*, Partners for Prevention.

men. Supporting men to challenge unequal gender power relations, sex discrimination and gender stereotyping are an essential component of any prevention strategy.¹¹⁹

A range of programmes have been developed, from community mobilization, to public/legal advocacy and social marketing/social change organising.¹²⁰ Women's and civil society organisations can identify and engage men to act as advocates or 'ambassadors' for prevention of violence against women and girls (e.g. White Ribbon). Such a process, however, should ensure that potential 'ambassadors' they have the capacity to effectively convey messages of equality and respect between men and women in social networks, educational or work environments and/or at public events. Training and support should be provided, informed by the expertise of specialist women's services. Skills building of men as 'active bystanders' can engage men even earlier to address attitudes of discrimination and/or those attitudes that perpetuate negative gender stereotypes with their friends and peers. Programmes that engage men and boys often address multiple topics jointly, such as HIV/AIDS and violence prevention. Although some programmes work with adult men, many focus on adolescent males or younger boys, recognizing that gender norms and attitudes may be more easily shaped or transformed during this time rather than later in life.¹²¹

However there are several caveats. The engagement of men and boys must ultimately address the risk factor of unequal power between women and men, promote women's rights and support the empowerment of women and girls. In all such engagement, men should be engaged in challenging constructions of masculinity that contribute to violence against women and girls, including male dominance or control of wealth in relationships; masculine orientation or sense of entitlement, and weak support for gender equality. UN Habitat and Raising Voices study of gender based violence prevention in the Horn, East and Southern Africa found that:

*There is a need for clarity of intent and approach when working with men to avoid marginalizing women, especially on an issue where they need to be the central protagonists. [...] This work needs to be approached carefully with clear parameters that men are responsible for their violence. Yet bridges need to be built using benefits-based approaches that reach out to men in constructive, nonconfrontational ways. Often, men working with other men is an effective strategy but women's concerns, safety and rights need to remain at the fore.*¹²²

The engagement of women is therefore a crucial accompaniment to any strategy working with men to prevent violence against women and girls. In addition to strategies aiming to empower women and girls (see section 3.4.1 above), there is also a need to consider that women and girls themselves may hold attitudes that stereotype or discriminate on the basis of gender, or themselves be perpetrators of violence against other women and girls. Recent studies have shown that, in some cases, women may in some circumstances be as or more likely to hold attitudes or beliefs justifying or excusing violence, or blaming women and girls for the violence against them, than men.¹²³ Prevention strategies aiming at attitudinal and normative change can therefore not afford to focus on men alone.

- **Children and young people**

Many attitudes, behaviours and beliefs are formed in childhood and adolescence, and this is a crucial time to educate and build skills around respectful relationships. While schools are important sites for respectful

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, and United Kingdom Department for International Development (2012) *A Theory of Change for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls*, CHASE Guidance Note 1, p.12, IMAGE p.48, World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, pp.55-6

¹²⁰ Donovan R and Vlais R (2005) *VicHealth Review of Communication Components of Social Marketing/Public Education Campaigns Focusing on Violence Against Women*, p.204. The authors recommend Michael Kauffman's 'comprehensive theoretical and applied paper' for examples, at www.michaelkauffman.com/articles/pdf/the-aim-framework.rtf

¹²¹ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

¹²² Michau L and Naker D (2004) *Preventing Gender-based Violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa: A Regional Dialogue*, Raising Voices and UN Habitat Safer Cities Programme, p.39 NB – this report also contains more detailed programming guidance on working with men.

¹²³ Research behind Partners for Prevention (2012) *The Change Project: Understanding gender, masculinities and power to prevent gender-based violence – Project Overview and Summary of Preliminary Research Findings*.

relationships education and other prevention initiatives (see section 4.1), adolescents and young people learn much about relationships from other sources – such as peers, media, and the way relationships are modeled in their own families. It is important to engage young people through a variety of channels (not just schools) in child and gender-sensitive initiatives. Prevention can provide young people with the skills, role models and reinforcement to choose positive, respectful behaviours and to engage in non-violent relationships. Prevention strategies targeted at children and young people can make a significant difference (see section 3.3.4 for overlaps with prevention of violence against children, and section 4.2 for example strategies).¹²⁴

3.4.3. Ensure non-discrimination and equality of outcomes

Violence affects women and girls irrespective of cultural, religious, socio-economic or other background or identity characteristics,¹²⁵ but it can affect different groups of women and girls disproportionately or in specific ways. The 2007 General Assembly resolution on the *Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women*, calls on states to have ‘regard to women who need special attention in the development of policies to address violence, such as women belonging to minority groups, including those based on nationality, ethnicity, religion or language, indigenous women, migrant women, stateless women, women living in underdeveloped, rural or remote communities, homeless women, women in institutions or in detention, women with disabilities, elderly women, widows and women who are otherwise discriminated against.’¹²⁶ An inclusive human rights based approach to prevention entails an acknowledgement of the rights of rights-holders and the obligations of duty bearers, and should be based on needs assessment that takes into account issues for each group. A human rights-based approach may particularly mean giving priority to groups whose rights are often ignored and calls for a more equitable distribution of resources in their favour.¹²⁷ It should aim for equality of outcomes for every group as a central guiding principle across all areas of action.

‘Universal’ strategies for prevention will not necessarily have a uniform effect on all population groups, although they should be conceptualized in such a way as to be as inclusive as possible. Additional measures and tailored strategies specifically targeted to the needs of groups experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage – and addressing the intersections of inequalities and discrimination – are also essential. As prevention strategies can only be effective if they engage all members of the community, this human rights based approach is not only in line with international legal obligations, but essential to the overall effectiveness of strategies for entire communities.

The following are some examples of where prevention activity could be tailored to uphold the rights and address the diverse contexts and experiences of different groups:

- Women with disabilities experience violence at a significantly higher rate, and in different forms, than other women, and they have greater difficulty in accessing support services. Many women with disabilities are isolated and marginalised from participating in various mainstream settings (e.g. educational institutions, workplaces and sporting clubs) and so it is vital that agencies like disability services, special schools, and residential facilities are also engaged in developing and implementing prevention strategies.¹²⁸
- HIV-positive women and girls face further forms of discrimination and disadvantage that can increase their risk of violence and/or make access to systems of support and justice more difficult. Strategies

¹²⁴ Flood M and Fergus L (2009) *An Assault on Our Future: The Impact of Violence on Young People and Their Relationships*, White Ribbon Foundation.

¹²⁵ *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) GA res. 34/180.

¹²⁶ United Nations General Assembly (2007) *Intensification of Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence against Women*, A/RES/61/145, art 8(f).

¹²⁷ United Nations Population Fund (2006) *Human rights-based programming: what it is/how to do it*.

¹²⁸ Ortoleva S and Lewis H (2012) *Forgotten Sisters – A Report on Violence Against Women with Disabilities: An Overview of its Nature, Scope, Causes and Consequences*, Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper No. 104-2012.

and programmes to prevent HIV/AIDs should include specific interventions to address violence against women and girls, and vice versa.¹²⁹

- Refugee women and girls who have fled war, civil unrest, a humanitarian crisis and/or displacement in their countries of origin, may be dealing with the after-effects of previous exposure to violence (by state or non-state actors). They may also be less likely to disclose experiences of violence or to seek support, than other women and girls, particularly if their immigration status is uncertain or fragile. The outreach strategies combining prevention with measures to respond to disclosures of past violence may be particularly necessary, taking into account the profound impacts of past trauma and ongoing social isolation that many refugee women and girls experience.
- Language and cultural barriers can limit access to both prevention strategies and response services where they exist, and culturally-sensitive services and programmes targetting different types of violence that may be more prevalent in some minority communities might not exist at all. It is important that violence prevention strategies (and system responses) are culturally appropriate, accessible, and tailored to the specific and diverse situations of women from minority ethnic communities within the cultural and religious contexts of their lives.¹³⁰
- Women and girls in many of the world's indigenous communities face higher rates of violence than their non-indigenous counterparts.¹³¹ Work to prevent violence against indigenous women and girls cannot be separated from efforts to address racism, dispossession and intergenerational trauma. Integrated and culturally competent prevention strategies that incorporate indigenous history, understanding of kinship networks, values and experience are essential.
- Sex workers experience high rates of violence including from law enforcement actors, clients, other stakeholders involved in the sex trade and intimate partners along with frequent discrimination. Violence against sex workers is often not taken seriously by the police and justice systems. As a result, sex workers often never report or are denied justice when they face violence. Strategies to support the collective organisation of sex workers are showing promise in preventing violence against them.¹³²
- Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women experience both sexist and homophobic violence, discrimination and stereotyping. Some of the contributing/risk factors for violence against women and girls in general (e.g. around gender role stereotyping) are shared in part with those for homophobic violence. To be effective, prevention strategies need to examine issues of gender and power, and explicitly challenge homophobia and gender stereotyping. Violence can also occur in same-sex relationships. Prevention work has to make it clear that violence in any relationship, perpetrated by either sex is unacceptable.

The above examples are illustrative only, and by no means exhaustive. A thorough assessment of context, with the full participation of representatives of different groups, is necessary to ascertain how best to tailor prevention strategies in any particular setting.

Finally, a human rights based approach establishes the principle that actions and strategies should be developed and implemented in a way that supports and promotes self-advocacy and capacity building of different groups rather than treating them as passive recipients of initiatives. Participation of women and girls from such groups and their communities should be ensured in decision-making processes that shape policies and programmes that affect them,¹³³ and in monitoring to ensure prevention strategies do not unintentionally

¹²⁹ UNAIDS (2010) *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p.137.

¹³⁰ See for example: Rowland C and Carnegie M (2011) *Violence against women in indigenous, minority and migrant groups*, in State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011.

¹³¹ For example, Indigenous women in Australia are at least ten times more likely to die as a result of domestic violence than are non-Indigenous women, and 28 times more likely than other Australian women to be admitted to hospital for assault injuries: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2006) *Family Violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

¹³² World Health Organisation (2007) *Violence against Sex Workers and HIV Prevention*, Information Bulletin, Series 3.

¹³³ United Nations Population Fund (2006) *Human rights-based programming: what it is/how to do it*.

reinforce discriminatory stereotypes (e.g. that some groups are ‘more violent’) or have other negative outcomes. The monitoring and evaluation of prevention policy and programmes should also include disaggregated data in order to measure impact on different groups and in different community settings.

3.4.4. Strengthen systems of accountability

Holistic and multidimensional prevention strategies should establish mechanisms for accountability and clarify institutional responsibilities. Ensuring that prevention of violence against women and girls is integrated into other leading policy and funding frameworks can also provide strategic venues in which to strengthen efforts and secure budgets. Examples of these include poverty reduction and development strategies and national plans and sector-wide reforms related to education, health, security, justice, HIV and AIDS, and peace-building and reconstruction in post-conflict situations.¹³⁴

Prevention strategies should set specific targets and include mechanisms for monitoring progress towards them, across implementing institutions, and agencies in international/regional systems, with reporting responsibilities clearly articulated. Regular and participatory multi-sectoral assessments at the national and local levels, across line ministries and related public sector institutions can strengthen accountability for performance in terms of agreed-upon budgetary commitments and/or related performance on budgetary allocations.

3.4.5. Align with international human rights standards

Holistic strategies to prevent violence against women and girls should be formulated, at a minimum, to comply with the provisions of international and regional human rights agreements related to violence against women and girls, especially CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The concluding comments of the two Conventions’ committees also provide valuable guidance, as do shadow reports by civil society and women’s groups, and country and thematic reports submitted by the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women its causes and consequences, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children. Legislative and policy reform should aim to meet due diligence standards not only in the protection of women and girls from existing violence and the punishment of perpetrators, but also in the promotion of women and girls’ human rights, through addressing sex discrimination, sexual harassment and actively promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.

4. PROMISING PRACTICES IN DIFFERENT SECTORS AND SETTINGS

As outlined earlier, the factors contributing to violence against women and girls exist across the many sectors and environments in which people conduct their everyday lives, and opportunities for prevention also exist in these settings. This section outlines promising and emerging practice across different settings/sectors, which have in part been chosen to reflect traditional government and international/regional agency work areas.

¹³⁴ http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/EVAWkit_01_10pointChecklist_en.pdf

Reflecting the current global status of prevention activity, the examples here have been largely driven by civil society with limited resources and reach. While many have adhered as far as possible to the guiding principles outlined above, most of the following practice has – by necessity of limited organisational mandates and funding – been restricted to single settings, geographical environments, or types of initiative. It is important to re-iterate, however, that prevention activity limited to a single sector or setting, while valuable for participants, can never be effective in shifting the broader social norms and practices contributing to violence against women and girls. Broad and sustainable change is only achieved when such activities are implemented in a long-term and cumulative way, mutually reinforced across various settings, led from the national level. However, as noted in section 2.3, few governments worldwide have taken on their full human rights obligations to develop holistic, multi-sectoral and sustained prevention policies, leaving a paucity of such examples to draw upon. Recommendations for advancing prevention work to this end can be found in the following section.

4.1. Education sector

Primary and secondary schools can have a significant impact on children and young people at a time when their attitudes towards relationships are forming, especially given not all children and young people are exposed to models of respectful relationships elsewhere in their daily lives. There is a good evidence base for schools-based educational initiatives. One programme has documented decreased levels perpetration and victimization of violence against women and girls in a longitudinal study, compared to a control group.¹³⁵ Many more programmes have demonstrated reductions in violence supportive attitudes and behaviours among participating students, and even improvements on other indicators such as school attendance and educational achievement.¹³⁶ Classroom-based programmes have focussed on developing respectful relationships and promoting gender equality. More holistic initiatives include teacher training, engagement of school leadership, and protocols and policies to foster safe, discrimination-free school environments. A whole-school approach is critical to foster safe and supportive school environments and to build capacity to initiate and sustain teaching and learning.

Examples

GEMs (India) – TBD at EGM

The Good School Programme (Uganda) run by Raising Voices is a comprehensive, school-wide approach that aims to prevent violence against girls and boys by promoting respect for rights and non-violence. The programme is structured around 3 steps: Imagine a Good School to assist participants learn and imagine what a Good School might look like; Learn about a Good School to help participants build skills and develop the capacity of people at the school; Create a Good School which leads participants through a six-step practical process to implement activities to create the Good School that was envisioned.

Safe Dates (USA) is one of the longest-running and best evaluated programmes. Its longitudinal evaluation, which evidences positive outcomes for programme participants not only immediately after the programme, but also at one year, three years and even six years on, is one of the best examples we have of the effectiveness of good-practice schools-based programmes. It is delivered to grade 8 and 9 students through a 10-session curriculum, along with a student theatre production and a poster contest. The focus is on changing norms around relationship violence and gender stereotyping, along with skills-building in the areas of conflict management and help-seeking. There are also linked community activities where services for adolescents in abusive relationships are identified, or where students can be trained to work on a crisis line or in a community agency. Evaluation showed improved attitudes and self-reported behaviour immediately following the programme, with improved attitudes (but not improved behaviour) maintained 1 year afterwards. The longitudinal evaluation was more positive at the 3 year follow-up, with students who had participated in the programme not only maintaining improved attitudes, but showing significantly lower rates of psychological, physical and sexual abuse perpetration (and sexual abuse victimisation), than the control group (Foshee et al 2005).

¹³⁵ Foshee V A, Bauman K E et al (1998) *An Evaluation of Safe Dates – An Adolescent Dating Violence Prevention Program*.

¹³⁶ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, pp.44-7; Flood M, Fergus L and Heenan M (2009) *Respectful Relationships Programmes in Victorian Secondary Schools*, Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Safe Schools Programme (Ethiopia, Ghana, Jamaica, Malawi) aimed to reduce school-related gender-based violence in selected schools in Ethiopia, Ghana, Jamaica and Malawi. The approach included system and school-wide reforms. The five key principles that guide the Safe Schools Programming included: a) take a social mobilization approach working at multiple levels: national, institutional, community and individual; b) efforts to address prevention, reporting and response to violence; c) a gendered approach working with men and boys not only as perpetrators but also as potential victims as well as partners; d) putting in place at least minimal support services before encouraging victims to come forward; and e) building on existing programmes. Baseline and follow-up data collection (qualitative and quantitative) measuring changes in institutional resources; policies; knowledge, attitudes and practices of staff; quantitative data collection among clients measuring trends in violence; and qualitative data collection exploring risks and benefits of institutional reforms.

Tertiary education settings also provide an opportunity to engage young people and a crucial time when attitudes and behaviours are shifting and developing on numerous fronts. To an even greater extent than schools, university and college campuses are ‘mini-communities’ with their own norms, practices and cultures. Like schools, tertiary settings are also workplaces for teaching, administrative and auxiliary staff, and workplace-based prevention activity (see section 4.7) should be integrated with education or classroom-based programmes. Community-mobilisation and advocacy-based initiatives can also be effectively implemented.

Example

The ‘Mentors in Violence Prevention’ (USA) programme by Jackson Katz provides ‘training opportunities for young people in schools and colleges to engage in successful bystander interventions against harassment, abuse and violence, both before and after the fact, and to support women who are experiencing abuse. The programme uses interactive discussions and role plays to help young people learn that they have more than two choices (physically intervene or do nothing) about what to do in situations where they come across abuse. To reduce defensiveness the programme works with men as ‘empowered bystanders’ rather than as potential perpetrators, and with women similarly as empowered bystanders rather than victims.’¹³⁷

Not all children and young people are in school, especially the most marginalised, and ways need to be found to support them and build their skills for healthy relationships. Prevention programming can be integrated into ‘life skills’ and other non-formal education programmes for boys and girls.

Examples

New Horizons and New Visions: Mobilizing communities for Girls’ Education (Egypt)¹³⁸

Over a 10 year period (1994-2004), this initiative supported 365 Egyptian NGOs and youth centres to develop and implement life skills and other non-formal education programmes for youth. These programmes were complemented with broader community mobilization and advocacy efforts as well. The core curriculum for girls was designed for illiterate girls aged 9-20 included a broad range of issues, including the rights of children and women and issues related to violence against women, marriage and reproductive health. Nearly 77,000 girls and young women completed this programme. The New Visions course was completed by more than 15,800. That curriculum included 64 sessions delivered over a 6-month period and addressed gender roles and gender equity, the rights of women, and gender-based violence, among many topics. Evidence from programme evaluations documented positive changes in attitudes about gender, equity and violence at both the individual and community level.

Once upon a Girl, Programme M (Brazil, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua)¹³⁹

Programme M – “M” for mulheres (women in Portuguese) and mujeres (women in Spanish) is an international initiative to promote young women’s empowerment and health. Material for this programme – a manual and video -- were field-tested in Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico and Nicaragua. The manual includes theoretical background and a series of participatory activities to facilitate group work with young women (15 -24 years old) on a range of issues, including sexual and

¹³⁷ Donovan R and Vlais R (2005) *VicHealth Review of Communication Components of Social Marketing/Public Education Campaigns Focusing on Violence Against Women*, p.205, see: www.jacksonkatz.com/mvp.html and www.sportinsociety.org/mvp/mvphome.html

¹³⁸ Text from Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

¹³⁹ Developed by Instituto Promundo, Salud y Género, ECOS, Instituto PAPAÍ and World Education – text from Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

reproductive health, gender-based violence and community participation. Once upon a Girl is a cartoon video about the socialization of girls and young women and tells the story of a girl who begins to question the "do's" and don'ts" of the world around her and how they influence the way she thinks and acts. Touching on children's play and household roles to sexuality and intimate relationships the video is an educational tool to promote critical reflections about the challenges girls and young women face as they grow up.

Young Deaf Women and Violence Leadership Development and Training Project, Canada

This Project was developed in 1999-2000 in a partnership between *Education Wife Assault, Deaf Women Against Violence Everywhere* and the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The programme is innovative first in addressing the specific needs, and expanding the skills, of young women who are deaf or hard of hearing and second in employing a peer-educator model to do so. Young women would-be peer educators 'participate in a 3-day retreat where they learn about different forms of violence and oppression and strategies for helping peers in an American Sign Language friendly environment'. These peer educators then provide workshops on violence against Deaf women and children for students in both mainstream and specialised schools for the Deaf, as well as for their parents, teachers and counseling staff.

4.2. Health and welfare sectors

The health and social welfare sector has a key role to play in prevention of violence against women and girls. Health services and programmes in the areas of community health, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health are all key entry points for direct interaction with communities, families and individuals. This sector also is one of the best placed to identify and intervene early with families and individuals at risk of violence, providing psycho-social support, referrals and social protection.

For example, women who have experienced physical and sexual violence have higher rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reinforcing and exacerbating disadvantage. Women are 2 to 4 times more likely than men to become infected with HIV during intercourse, and rape and sexual assault (including in the context of intimate partner violence) increases this risk by limiting condom use and causing physical injuries.¹⁴⁰ Given the clear association between violence against women and girls and the spread of HIV, both prevention and response strategies to both issues should be closely interlinked. Strategies and programmes to prevent HIV/AIDS should include specific interventions to address violence against women and girls, and vice versa.¹⁴¹ Effective programmatic models should be identified and incorporated in to national prevention and response strategies to address HIV/AIDS,¹⁴² and the incorporation of prevention of violence against women and girls into institutional capacity building, policy and programming in the health sector (from the ministerial to provider level) should make linkages with that for HIV/AIDS. It is important to recognise, however, that, whether at the prevention or response end, 'HIV/AIDS organisations are not always equipped with the skills required to deal with the special needs of GBV cases and vice versa. Attempts to deal with both issues may overwhelm NGOs and reduce the quality of services,' and 'HIV/AIDS organisations often lack the rights-based frameworks that typically underpin women's organisations and GBV programmes.'¹⁴³ Nevertheless, HIV prevention efforts must address violence against women and girls, and prevention of violence against women and girls should leverage the momentum and resources of HIV prevention, and strategies to do so effectively and efficiently should be developed, sensitive to the context and constraints of each sector.

¹⁴⁰ Ferdinand DL (2009) *A Manual for Integrating the Programmes and Services of HIV and Violence Against Women*, Development Connections and UNIFEM, p.14.

¹⁴¹ UNAIDS (2010) *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p.137.

¹⁴² Such as Stepping Stones, IMAGES, and Sasa! See: UNAIDS (2010) *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, p.136, citing GESTOS (2010) *UNGASS-AIDS and sexual and reproductive health of women: civil society report 2010*, Recife, Brazil; and World Health Organisation/UNAIDS (2010) *Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS: what works?*

¹⁴³ Michau L and Naker D (2004) *Preventing Gender-based Violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa: A Regional Dialogue*, Raising Voices and UN Habitat Safer Cities Programme, pp.64.

Example

Stepping Stones, Uganda

The Stepping Stones is a community training package focused on STI/HIV prevention, gender, and reproductive health, originally designed in Uganda and now adapted to settings in over 40 countries. The programme works with community leaders, conducts workshops for men and women (separately), and holds community-wide meetings. The interventions are inter-generational; use creative activities that involve the participants in critical reflection; uses methods that are individual and group oriented; employ a specific and coherent sequence of learning; and is aimed completely at positively changing social norms without explicitly mentioning words that might trigger defensiveness, such as gender roles, inequality and rights. They use workshops, drama, peer group discussions, etc. to address HIV, family planning, condoms, gender norms, communication skills, life-skills, and gender violence. They aim to get communities to question and rectify the gender inequities that contribute to the spread of HIV and other problems.¹⁴⁴

A randomized controlled trial in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa found that among male participants aged 15–26 years-old, a lower proportion of young men in villages receiving the intervention who had participated in the programme reported acts of physical or sexual intimate partner violence in the two years after the programme, compared with men in control villages.¹⁴⁵

Numerous opportunities for alignments, shared capacity building, and partnership development exist between those working for prevention of violence against women and girls and the sexual, reproductive and maternal health sector. Violence against women and girls fuels sexual and reproductive health problems, including unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, fistulas, and sexually transmitted infections (including HIV), and contributes to their recurrence. Violence against women may begin or increase during pregnancy and following the birth of children – with serious repercussions for both infant and maternal health outcomes – making this a key point for targeted prevention or early intervention activity. Mother's groups, and maternal and child health nurse visits can be effective opportunities for prevention. In the US context, reviews of the evidence on the nurse visitation programmes, for instance, have shown strong results on many factors correlated with violence against women and girls, including direct child abuse (particularly for long-term programmes, delivered by professional nurses and mental health workers.

Example

ReproSalud, Peru

ReproSalud was launched by the Manuela Ramos Movement in 1995, and is a rural reproductive health programme working with community-based women's groups to identify women's reproductive health needs through self-diagnosis workshops, followed by community meetings to design strategies to address those needs. Domestic violence and forced sex within marriage repeatedly emerged as a theme and became a focus of many activities, including workshops for women and men on gender. ReproSalud also established a microcredit programme for women. By 2002, ReproSalud had reached over 123,000 women and 66,000 men. A randomised control evaluation measured individual-level, family-level, and community-level "empowerment outcomes." Family level outcomes included changes in levels of domestic violence, satisfaction regarding sexuality, shared decision-making, and women's social and geographic mobility. Differences between the intervention and control sites were more pronounced in the qualitative data, which suggested that ReproSalud had succeeded in producing dramatic changes in social relations and men's behaviour through the community. Respondents spoke at length about decreased alcohol consumption, domestic violence, and forced sex in all intervention villages studied.

The Nurse Family Partnership, USA

The Nurse-Family Partnership operates a maternal health programme for vulnerable first-time parents. New parents are visited at home by maternal and child health nurses who deliver support to first-time mothers aimed at helping them have a healthy pregnancy, become knowledgeable and responsible parents, and provide their babies with the best possible start in life. Rigorous evaluations studies have demonstrated long-term benefits for children visited in this programme. Randomized, controlled trials were conducted with three diverse populations of first-time, low-income mothers. Follow-up research continues today, studying the long-term outcomes for mothers and children in these three trials. This research found a significant impact long-term impact on reduction of anti-social and violent behaviour among children visited through this programme – outcomes that are not precisely focused on violence against women and girls but are very

¹⁴⁴ Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, citing Renton et al., 2000; Shaw, 2000; Shaw, 2002a; Shaw, 2002b; Paine et al., 2002; White, Greene and Murphy, 2003; Interagency working Group, 2003.

¹⁴⁵ Jewkes R, Nduna M, Levin, et al (2007) *Evaluation of stepping stones: a gender transformative HIV prevention intervention*, Medical Research Council.

closely related, including: reduced rates of childhood injuries associated with child abuse and neglect among low-income, unmarried women; fewer rapid successive pregnancies amongst mothers visited by the programme, enabling them to move into the workforce and to become economically self-sufficient, leading to reduced substance abuse and criminal behaviour; a 48% reduction in child abuse at 15-year follow up among children receiving the home visitation compared to controls – factors that are all correlated with the risk of violence against women.

Programmes which promote positive and non-violent parenting have potential not only to prevent violence against children, but also to build skills for, and model respectful and equal relationships between parents/couples and in all intimate and family relationships. Such initiatives can therefore have a dual positive effect of strengthening couples' relationships to prevent intimate partner violence and preventing direct child maltreatment and abuse.¹⁴⁶

Examples

Baby Makes Three, Australia

Baby Makes Three is a discussion group and capacity building programmes for first time parents promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women. It works on the assumption that the transition to parenthood represents a 'window period' during which it is possible to engage and work with both men and women when traditional notions of parenthood are exerting a powerful influence on how they approach and negotiate their parenting roles, and that the decisions that couples make during this key stage of life can have important consequences on the level of equality within their relationship, and between men and women more generally. Qualitative evaluation indicated participants developed a greater awareness of how traditional attitudes to gender and parenting roles were shaping their new families, developed a shared understanding of the influence of gendered norms and expectations, and a shared language for openly discussing their impacts and effects.

Children and young people who are already living with violence against their mothers or other care-givers, and/or with direct abuse, are exposed to relationship models that can influence their own behaviour and limit their capacity to imagine alternatives. Boys and young men in this group, particularly, are at greater risk of going on to perpetrate violence in their own intimate relationships than those who have not been exposed to violence. This 'cycle of violence' is by no means inevitable and can be broken by social, educational and psychological factors which reinforce the resilience and capacity of children and young people. Programmes providing supportive and safe environments to recover from the effects of violence, and to build skills in creating healthy and equal relationships, can make all the difference. Programmes with children and young people who may or may not have experienced or witnessed violence, but are nevertheless demonstrating violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours, can also be effective in reducing later or further violence.

Health and social welfare services have an important role to play in intervening early with such children and young people. Policy alignments, capacity building and partnerships with prevention of violence against women and girls are crucial. It is important, in programming, policy and messaging, to avoid stigmatising or pathologising children and young people who have been exposed to or experienced violence, and an integrated approach with whole-population strategies in schools or other settings also important.

¹⁴⁶ World Health Organisation (2010) *Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women – Taking Action and Generating Evidence*, pp.49-50

Example

The Youth Relationship Project (USA)

The Youth Relationship Project is a community- (not school-) based intervention strategy that identified youth aged 14 to 16, thought to be at greater risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence in the future because they had been exposed to violence in the past. This intervention was delivered in 2-hour, small group sessions over 18 weeks. The explicit aim was to reduce future violence against women. These sessions focused on education about healthy versus abusive relationships, conflict resolution, communication skills and social action activities (Chamberlain 2008). The intervention was evaluated in a study of 158 participants, ages 14-16, with histories of child maltreatment. Participants were randomly assigned to the intervention group or a no-treatment control group. The study found that those receiving the intervention had significantly fewer incidents of physical and emotional abuse as well as reduced symptoms of emotional distress compared to the control group at follow-up (Wolfe et al. 2003).

4.3. Economic development sectors

Given unequal power between men and women is a key risk factor for violence against women and girls, addressing such power inequality is one of the most effective forms of prevention. Of particular importance is addressing women's economic inequality. This is an obligation of the Beijing Declaration, Article 35 of which calls on States to 'ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets, as a means to further the advancement and empowerment of women and girls, including through the enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the benefits of equal access to these resources.'

Organisations involved in economic development, whether aid/development agencies, philanthropics or private enterprises can play a role in prevention of violence against women and girls through broader initiatives for women's economic empowerment. Microfinance programmes aimed at women have shown clear benefits across a number of gender equality and other indicators, including reductions in future experience of violence. Such programmes are particularly effective on this count when accompanied by discussion groups on issues such as intimate partner violence, which provide women a supportive space.¹⁴⁷

Example

IMAGE: The Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity, South Africa

IMAGE combined a poverty-focused microfinance initiative that targeted the poorest women in communities, with participatory training, institution building and community mobilisation on HIV, gender norms, domestic violence and sexuality. A rigorous evaluation (randomised clinical trial design) measured past year's experience of intimate partner violence and nine indicators of women's empowerment. Qualitative data on changes occurring within intimate relationships, loan groups, and the community were also collected. After two years, the risk of past-year physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner was reduced by more than half (55%). Researchers documented improvements all nine indicators of empowerment used.¹⁴⁸ Reductions in violence 'resulted from a range of responses enabling women to challenge the acceptability of violence, expect and receive better treatment from partners, leave abusive relationships, and raise public awareness about intimate partner violence. In sum, the researchers demonstrated using rigorous evaluation methods that economic and social empowerment of women can contribute to reductions in intimate partner violence.'¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Gupta GR, Ogden J, and Warner A. 2011. Moving forward on women's gender-related HIV vulnerability: The good news, the bad news and what to do about it. *Global Public Health*, pg S372. Cites: Pronyk P.M., Hargreaves J.R., Kim, J.C., et al. 2006. Effect of a structural intervention for the prevention of intimate-partner violence and HIV in rural South Africa: a cluster randomized trial. *Lancet*, 368, 1973-1983; Pronyk P.M., Kim, J.C., Abramsky T., et al., 2008. A combined microfinance and training intervention can reduce HIV risk behaviour in young female participants. *AIDS*, 22 (13), 1659-1665.

¹⁴⁸ Gupta GR, Ogden J, and Warner A (2011) *Moving forward on women's gender-related HIV vulnerability: The good news, the bad news and what to do about it*, *Global Public Health*, p.S372, citing: Pronyk PM, Hargreaves JR, Kim JC et al (2006) *Effect of a structural intervention for the prevention of intimate-partner violence and HIV in rural South Africa: a cluster randomized trial*, *Lancet* (368) pp.1973-1983; Pronyk PM, Kim JC, Abramsky T et al (2008) *A combined microfinance and training intervention can reduce HIV risk behaviour in young female participants*, *AIDS*, 22 (13), pp.1659-1665.

¹⁴⁹ Text from Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

4.4. Legal and justice sectors

The role of legal and justice sectors, including police and other security forces, is largely related to responding to existing violence. However, the practices and procedures of these institutions, the ways in which professionals in these sectors react to women and girls reporting violence, and the attitudes and behaviours they display across the gamut of their combined duties – whether attending incidents of violence, conducting arrests, deciding to pursue prosecutions, examining witnesses or sentencing perpetrators – have a profound impact on community perceptions of violence against women and girls. Such practices and attitudes can either contribute to or challenge one of the key risk factors for violence against women and girls – that of ‘weak community sanctions of violence.’ Put simply, where legal and justice sectors consistently fail in their human rights obligations to protect women and girls from violence and punish perpetrators, levels of violence against women and girls are higher.

The first imperative for legal and justice sectors is to respond well to existing violence against women and girls, ‘ensuring a protective investigation and legal process that is responsive, effective, supports and treats victims/survivors of violence with dignity. It must also hold perpetrators accountable for their behavior and ensure they do not repeat their violence.’¹⁵⁰ This may involve considerable institutional capacity building, as well as legislative, policy and procedural reform.

Where such reform has been implemented, and police, legal and justice sectors are responding effectively, appropriately and sensitively to violence in a way that upholds the rights of women and girls, then these sectors will be in a position to play a role in prevention. For example, the legal sector has in raising awareness about existing laws and sanctions. Police, in addition to their early intervention role of identifying, monitoring and responding to risk of violence against women and girls, can also drive or be involved in prevention strategies such as community mobilisation, education programmes (e.g. in schools), working with young people and so forth. Police, legal and justice sectors are also workplaces, and as such can implement workplace-based prevention strategies internally (see section 4.7).

4.5. Media, advertising and popular culture

Working with the media and advertising industries to prevent violence against women and girls is about engaging these industries as places where attitudes, behaviours and social norms reflect those of broader society, but which have a particular role to play in either perpetuating or challenging those norms because of their reach. It may involve building the capacity of media and advertising professionals, developing regulatory frameworks that promote gender equitable and prohibit gender discriminatory messaging, and improving reporting of violence against women and girls (as distinct from interventions that *make use of* media and advertising, like social marketing campaigns).

Like all institutions, media can reflect the norms and attitudes – for better or worse – of the society and culture it operates in. In prevention terms, this means there is a need to address expressions of norms, myths or stereotypes that contribute to violence against women and girls. The Beijing Platform for Action notes the ‘media have a great potential to promote the advancement of women and the equality of women and men by portraying women and men in a non-stereotypical, diverse and balanced manner, and by respecting the dignity and worth of the human person.’¹⁵¹

Media industries mostly enjoy independence from Governmental authority and are largely self-regulating. However, Governments and civil society stakeholders can work in partnership with journalists and media organisations to build their capacity to avoid violence-supportive messaging and promote gender equality and non-discrimination through such measures as training, guidelines and awards, and to strengthen regulatory

¹⁵⁰ UN Women (2010) *Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women*, p.45.

¹⁵¹ Article 33

frameworks with regard to the negative portrayal of women (e.g. in a discriminatory, degrading or stereotypical way), or portrayals glorify violent masculinities. Participatory approaches fully engaging the media industry and its professional are essential in self-regulating contexts, as self-regulation will not work if implementers don't see the relevance or support its goals. This activity can be complemented by supporting advocates such as victims/survivors of violence, men committed to non-violence, and high-profile people to respond to enquiries from journalists and speak at events on issues of violence against women and girls, and to promote messages of gender equality and non violence.

Example

Gender Links (14 countries in Southern Africa)

Gender Links is an NGO based in South Africa that works in 14 countries of Southern Africa to promote 'gender equality in and through the media.' This work includes research, training and advocacy for achieving greater gender sensitivity and balance within the media and in its editorial content; as well as strategic communication skills for gender activists and women in decision-making to better access and influence media content, advisory services, and partnerships. It works to encourage media institutions to change their values, practices and workplaces cultures as a strategy for ultimately improving women's rights, including but not limited to the right of women and girls to live free of violence.¹⁵²

Like media, the advertising industry can play an important role in either reinforcing or challenging the attitudes and norms which contribute to violence against women and girls. Advertising professionals can be encouraged to avoid violence-supportive messaging and promote gender equality and non-discrimination through their work. Again, self-regulatory frameworks and the ultimate accountability of private businesses to financial rather than social goals means that substantial and long-term efforts for engagement of advertising professional, companies and regulators is necessary to achieve results.

Example

Spain committed through its 2007-2008 national plan to establish strong partnership structures between government and the advertising industry in order to strengthen self-regulation and collaboration procedures to eradicate from advertising all direct or indirect encouragement of gender-based violence.¹⁵³

Popular culture and global communications is another important avenue for prevention. The Beijing Platform for Action notes that with 'advances in computer technology and satellite and cable television, global access to information continues to increase and expand, creating new opportunities for the participation of women [...]. However, global communication networks have been used to spread stereotyped and demeaning images of women for narrow commercial and consumerist purposes. Until women participate equally in both the technical and decision-making areas of communications and the mass media, including the arts, they will continue to be misrepresented and awareness of the reality of women's lives will continue to be lacking.' While global technologies and communications pose challenges for government intervention and regulation worldwide (for better or worse), positive and creative interventions to promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination are practicable and provide an opportunity to address issue of violence against women and girls that cross national boundaries.

¹⁵² Bott S, Guedes A et al (forthcoming) *Prevention Module*, UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls.

¹⁵³ Spain's *National Plan to Heighten Awareness and Prevent Gender-Based Violence: Conceptual Framework and Main Lines of Intervention (2007-2008)*

Example

Soul City Television Drama (South Africa)

The Soul City Institute in South Africa – a multi-media health promotion and social change project – uses ‘edutainment’ approaches and strategies to reach more than 16 million people. The project’s popular television drama series, *Soul City*, deals with health and social issues. Storylines are planned on the basis of rigorous audience research and their impact on awareness levels and attitudes is evaluated in the community. Series Four of *Soul City* dealt extensively with issues surrounding violence against women, as well as gender sensitivity and empowerment of women. The series was explicitly designed to inspire friends and community to take a stand on violence against women, as well as to provide role models of non-sexist men and influential figures in the community speaking out against sexism and violence. *‘Participants reported a decrease in their acceptance of intimate partner violence and an increase in the belief that communities can play a role in preventing intimate partner violence following the series.’ World Health Organisation*

The messages in the television series are reinforced through public advocacy and print material directing women to support services. According to the World Health Organisation, the *Soul City* project ‘shows promise in changing cultural and social norms and attitudes associated with violent behaviour’. *Soul City* demonstrates that mainstream popular culture can be used as a powerful tool to challenge cultural norms and attitudes tolerant of violence and that entertainment can facilitate social change.

4.6. Local authorities

Leadership and coordination from local authorities can drive prevention activity at the grassroots community level, using local networks to help build a shared understanding of prevention of violence against women and girls and coordinated action. Local communities are the most immediate contexts for the expression of social norms, attitudes and behaviours in people’s daily lives. Local authorities have a reach and mandate across many of the key sectors and settings for prevention activity (such as schools, public spaces, sporting clubs, etc) and can integrate the promotion of gender equality and non-violence into their core work through their existing infrastructures and programmes. They are also well-placed to tailor prevention activities to meet local needs and demographics, and can work directly with people who are socially isolated or groups experiencing disadvantage and discrimination. Challenges lie in building the capacity of local officials and organisations to understand prevention and determine how it can be integrated into their existing work areas, as well as ensuring adequate coordination from the national to the local level.

Working with local governments to prevent violence against women and girls

From Lori Michau and Dipak Naker (2004) *Preventing Gender-based Violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa: A Regional Dialogue*, Raising Voices and UN Habitat Safer Cities Programme.

Core Concepts

- Local government is strategically located close to the people, has mobilizing power and controls resources. It has the legitimacy and responsibility to work on GBV prevention.
- The link to the central government can be positive, building a bridge between policy and practice.
- Strengthening the role of local government in social crime prevention and violence against women needs to include education, women’s involvement, and community ownership.
- Local governments can work effectively in partnership with NGOs, media and other stakeholders.

Key Practical Concerns

- Internal and external lobbying of Local Authorities is important so that GBV is included as a priority issue in municipality budgeting and allocating appropriate human resources
- Review the by laws and laws/policies to ensure effective access and implementation of laws and by laws/policies.
- Initiate research to assess the needs, direct programme development and measure impact
- Institutionalize GBV prevention efforts for sustainability.
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis (define who does what), consultation meetings and create a database that analyzes the gaps.
- Ensure synergies between central, provincial government and local government
- Invest in capacity building with Local Authorities and partners.

• Encourage networking e.g., Women and Cities Network – Montréal Conference, etc. so practitioners can find support and exchange ideas.¹⁵⁴

Local authorities are particularly important in establishing partnerships with community and local women's organisations to develop and implement community mobilization strategies and urban planning initiatives aiming to increase safety in public spaces, and to avoid duplication of effort. There are many benefits to local authorities strengthening their partnerships with community organisations:

*NGOs are often trusted by the community, especially if the population has concerns with the current government. Thus a partnership with the local authority could create a mutually beneficial collaboration. Local Authorities can affect policy change and thus NGOs could work with them to ensure they are gender-sensitive and protect women's right to live free of violence.*¹⁵⁵

Women and girls face daily harassment and violence in public spaces including in streets, marketplaces, public toilets, on their way to and from school, and other places within their own communities. Promotion of safety in public spaces through urban planning and other measures is a critical area in which local and state authorities, civil society organisations and communities can work together to prevent violence against women and girls. Provision of training for urban planners; involvement of grass-roots women's groups in local planning and decision making; undertaking assessments and audits to identify unsafe areas; activities to engage local communities, men and adolescents of both sexes; reviews of public sector budgets so that adequate resources are spent on making public areas safe for women and girls, and strengthening laws and policies on harassment and violence in public spaces are all effective measures of preventing violence against women and girls in public spaces. While such activity does not go to the heart of changing social norms and promoting gender equality, as one component of a more holistic strategy, with participatory processes, gender responsive budgeting and community mobilisation, such public safety initiatives can be an important contribution to prevention

Example

In Turkey, local coordination committees comprised of governorates, local security forces, gendarmerie, municipalities, universities, professional organisations and the mufti's office, and NGO representatives work together on prevention of violence against women, supported by the Ministry of the Interior.

4.7. Workplaces and other organisations

Organisations can contribute to prevention of violence against women and girls by developing environments and practices that promote women's representation, participation and opportunities, and eliminate discrimination and violence-supportive attitudes. Here, prevention involves reforms of all aspects of the culture, work environment and practice, with the aim of increasing the capacity of the whole institution to prevent violence against women and girls, both within and outside its walls. Many of the strategies for transforming institutions discussed in section 3.3.3 are relevant here.

Workplaces are a particularly important setting for the prevention of violence against women and girls, first because women experience high levels of violence within the workplace, and second because workplaces are effective contexts for addressing violence occurring outside the workplace setting. Workplaces are also important because of their unique potential to reach and support vulnerable or isolated groups who may have limited access to other settings.

¹⁵⁴ Michau L and Naker D (2004) *Preventing Gender-based Violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa: A Regional Dialogue*, Raising Voices and UN Habitat Safer Cities Programme, p.57

¹⁵⁵ Michau L and Naker D (2004) *Preventing Gender-based Violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa: A Regional Dialogue*, Raising Voices and UN Habitat Safer Cities Programme, p.63

The violence against women that typically occurs within workplaces includes sexual harassment, workplace bullying, and violence perpetrated by a co-worker, supervisor/manager or client. Violence such as bullying, while seemingly gender-neutral, is experienced differently by women and men. While both women and men can be victims of bullying, the fact that women are over-represented in casual and/or insecure employment, and under-represented in positions of power, has been shown to increase their vulnerability to such abuse, and decrease their bargaining power to address it.¹⁵⁶ Such violence carries significant and well-recognized costs in terms of reduced productivity, absenteeism and ill-health, and employers and Governments alike have recognized the benefits of aiming to prevent it through legislative, policy and practice change.

Less well recognized is the impact of broader violence against women and girls on workplaces. Intimate partner and sexual violence, for example while not necessarily occurring in the workplace itself, can still have direct and indirect impacts on workplaces, again in terms of absenteeism, ill-health and reduced productivity.¹⁵⁷ Employers can build their organisational capacity to appropriately identify and respond to risk or incidents of such violence.

Crucially, workplaces are also contexts through which the social norms that contribute to such violence are shaped and can be changed. They play a particularly important role reaching women and men who have limited contact with place-based community networks and organisations, which in itself can be a risk factor for violence against women. Women may seek assistance for experiences of violence (whether occurring inside or outside the workplace setting) through workplace support mechanisms and collegial networks. For newly-arrived immigrant or refugee women, the workplace may be the only contact with systems of support beyond their own families – and therefore an essential resource for addressing family violence.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, some workplaces may actually increase the vulnerability of women (and girls) to violence, and this is especially the case for domestic workers in private residences who suffer high levels of sexual violence and exploitation. The 2011 International Labour Organisation's Domestic Worker's Convention binds members to taking 'measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence' and to ensure that minimum age requirements are met.¹⁵⁹

In addition to reviewing legislation and policies on discrimination, harassment and other forms of abuse, strategies for prevention of violence against women and girls in workplaces include fostering the commitment of organisational leadership to prevent violence against women and girls, and organisational development for positive, respectful, equal and discrimination-free environments. Positive incentives such as awards, financial benefits or grants programmes for those organisations/institutions demonstrating a commitment to prevention of violence against women and girls can be effective ways of achieving engagement, while legislative sanctions for those organisations/institutions which encourage or tolerate discrimination or violence are also essential.

Finally, employers are potential partners in violence prevention efforts and benefit from reductions in violence through increased productivity in the workplace. The corporate sector is an important funder of violence prevention and has an interest in doing so given the cost of violence to business.¹⁶⁰

Importantly, workplaces include not only private and public enterprises, small businesses, etc, but also institutions such as the military and the police, schools, sporting clubs (where people are employed), local councils, and government and non-government agencies – discussed elsewhere in this paper as key implementers of prevention activity in themselves. These institutions therefore serve a dual function for

¹⁵⁶ Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Violence against Women in the Workplace (2006) *Reducing Violence against Women in the Workplace*, Government of Victoria.

¹⁵⁷ Studies have estimated that the economic costs to the Australian business and corporate sector of family violence make up \$1.5 billion per annum in staff absenteeism, lost productivity, replacement staff (including training) costs, and misused workplace resources, for instance Henderson M (2000) *Impacts and Costs of Domestic Violence on the Australian/Corporate Sector*, Report to Lord Mayor's Women's Advisory Committee, Brisbane City Council.

¹⁵⁸ VicHealth (2007) *Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper Guiding the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*.

¹⁵⁹ Articles 5 and 4 respectively.

¹⁶⁰ VicHealth (2007) *Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper Guiding the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*.

prevention of violence against women and girls – both as implementers through their mandates, and as settings for action in and of themselves.

Aspects of the organisational change strategies discussed above and in section 3.3.3 can be applied to a number of other organisations playing a role in prevention of violence against women and girls. Because of the socially transformative nature of the prevention project and its engagement of all individuals, there is no limit to the number and types of organisations that could and should be involved – in addition to workplaces and the public sector institutions discussed elsewhere, prevention activity can be driven through arts and cultural institutions, research organisations and academia, community organisations, political parties, residential care facilities, hospitals, the military and other security organisations, prisons and detention centres.

One type of organisation where promising practice for prevention is growing is sporting clubs. Sporting clubs are not just ‘about sports’ – they are also important social and community environments where different people interact, including children and young people, parents, volunteers, administrators and coaches (and they can also be workplaces). Sporting clubs can contribute to prevention of violence against women and girls by developing environments and practices that promote women’s representation, participation and opportunities, and that eliminate discrimination and violence-supportive attitudes.

There are various reasons for sporting clubs (and affiliated sports and recreation organisations) to engage in prevention work. First, the positive elements and values associated with sports, such as those of ‘fair play’ and inclusivity can be extended naturally to the active promotion of respectful relationships, gender equity, inclusiveness and non-violence. Second, sporting clubs and organisations, particularly at the community level, bring together large numbers of people for a common end and so provide an effective environment for skills-building and awareness-raising.

Third there is some evidence of higher violence-supportive and/or victim-blaming attitudes in male team sports particularly.¹⁶¹ There is therefore a good argument for working to build positive, respectful attitudes and behaviours toward women in this context. Finally, there is some concern that certain sporting environments are not inclusive of women. The research has identified high levels of gender stereotyping in sports, with contact team sports in particular (e.g. football) being perceived as a masculine domain, and non-contact and/or ‘individual’ sports (e.g. netball, tennis) being seen as the only ‘appropriate’ sports for women. This can lead to sexist and/or homophobic treatment of women in contact team sports, with women left feeling excluded, unsafe and unvalued in such environments.

Examples

Potentially to add following EGM:

Coaching Boys into Men (United States)

Parivartan (India)

4.8. Faith institutions

Faith institutions play a particular role in prevention of violence against women and girls. Not only are they ‘organisations’ well placed to implement some of the strategies referred to in the previous session, they are also powerful ‘definers’ and conduits of social norms and community attitudes/beliefs, and as such have a distinct responsibility to consider how these norms and beliefs may influence and interact with factors contributing to – or protecting from – violence against women and girls. Faith institutions are also frequently

¹⁶¹ VicHealth (2007) *Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper Guiding the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*.

involved in delivering social services and programmes, and have opportunities to integrate prevention activity into such work.

The Beijing Platform for Action notes the central role religion, spirituality and belief in the ‘lives of millions of women and men, in the way they live and in the aspirations they have for the future’ and upholds the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as inalienable and central to the achievement of equality, development and peace. However the Platform also acknowledges ‘that any form of extremism may have a negative impact on women and can lead to violence and discrimination.’¹⁶²

Examples

The National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women (USA)

The Council has developed toolkit for engaging faith institutions in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, with the following recommendations:

Become a safe place. Make the church, temple, mosque, or synagogue a safe place for victims of violence against women. Display materials that include local, state, and national hotlines for these victims.

Educate the congregation. Routinely include instructional information in monthly newsletters, on bulletin boards, and in marriage preparation classes, and sponsor educational seminars on violence against women.

Speak out. Speak out about sexual assault and domestic violence from the pulpit. A faith leader can have a powerful impact on people’s attitudes and beliefs, and his or her leadership is important, particularly on public policy issues such as funding and changes in criminal laws.

Lead by example. Volunteer to serve on the board of directors at the local sexual assault or domestic violence programme or train to become a crisis volunteer.

Offer space. Offer meeting space for educational seminars and weekly support groups or to serve as a supervised visitation site when parents need a safe place to visit their children.

Partner with existing resources. Include local sexual assault or domestic violence programmes in donations and community service projects. Adopt a shelter for which the church, temple, mosque, or synagogue provides material support or provide similar support to families as they rebuild their lives following a shelter stay.

Prepare to be a resource. Seek out training from professionals in the fields of sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Do the theological and scriptural homework necessary to better understand and respond to sexual assault and dating and domestic violence.

Intervene. If suspicions that violence is occurring in a relationship or in a family exist, speak to each person separately. If an individual is being or has been victimized, speak to her privately. Help the victim plan for safety, and refer her to the community resources available to assist her.

Support professional training. Encourage and support training and education for clergy and lay leaders, chaplains, and seminary students to increase their awareness about sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking.

Address internal issues. Encourage continued efforts by religious institutions to address allegations of abuse by religious leaders to ensure that religious leaders are a safe resource for victims and their children.

¹⁶² Article 24.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are initial conclusions and recommendations addressing the challenges and gaps identified in this Paper, drawing on promising practices and aiming to strengthen prevention policy and programming across at international, regional and national levels. The recommendations focus on actions for States, as those with primary responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring holistic, multi-sectoral and sustained prevention strategies, but also include actions for international and regional institutions and other stakeholders in driving forward the prevention project, whether through evidence building and knowledge management, technical or funding assistance, or strengthening – and ensuring accountability to – the normative framework.

5.1. *Leadership, coordination and partnerships*

- States should ensure leadership, oversight, support and engagement at the highest political levels and across all branches of government for holistic, multi-sectoral and sustained national strategies for the prevention of violence against women and girls, supported by adequate resourcing and implementation mechanisms. In decentralised systems this should entail concomitant leadership from provincial/territorial governments and local authorities.
- All levels and branches of Government should ensure prevention activity is driven in a coordinated way across policy, legislation, services and programmes, including:
 - the identification or establishment of a high-level board, steering committee, or other lead coordination mechanism, comprising senior officials across all relevant ministries/agencies and other stakeholders, with functions to take all high-level decisions concerning the development and implementation of prevention strategies, and coordinate the activities of different stakeholders and levels of action;
 - an adequately-resourced and technically-expert central unit with cross-portfolio/agency responsibilities and strategic potential to drive action, responsible for advising, and implementing the decisions, of the lead institution; and
 - prevention focal points in national line ministries and in provincial/territorial and local governments, to provide appropriate cross-institutional support to prevention strategy development, implementation and monitoring.
- UN agencies should work in partnership at the international and regional levels to develop a shared system-wide workplan on prevention of violence against women and girls, aligned with related system-wide initiatives and through existing coordination mechanisms, to support and promote national implementation of, monitor progress against, and advance the international normative framework. Such a workplan might include strategies to:
 - expand understandings and definitions of prevention activity – beyond awareness-raising, education and sensitization of the media – to encompass positive obligations on States to promote gender equality and change social norms contributing to gender stereotyping, discrimination and violence;
 - ensure outcomes and targets for prevention of violence against women and girls are a key component of the post-2015 development agenda;
 - provide policy guidance, technical advice and knowledge management to support States develop, implement and monitor holistic, systemic and sustained approaches to prevention.
- Regional institutions should similarly develop and implement coordinated prevention workplans to support Member States implement regional normative frameworks, monitor progress against these frameworks, and advance the frameworks themselves.

- Governments, donors, programmers and international/regional agencies should engage civil society and other stakeholders as partners and participants in the above processes.

5.2. *Legislation and policy reform*

- States should review and revise policy and legislation to ensure a consistent whole-of-government framework for the prevention of violence against women and girls that promotes women's and girls' human rights and gender equality. This review and reform process should ensure law and policy:
 - aligns with and responds explicitly to State obligations under relevant human rights treaties, intergovernmental agreements and international standards/guidelines;
 - defines violence against women and girls according to international norms, acknowledging that such violence is a form of discrimination and manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, and the particular vulnerabilities of girls; and
 - recognises that women's and girls' experience of violence is shaped by factors such as disability, age, ethnicity, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status.
- In decentralized systems, national and provincial/territorial Governments should work in partnership to ensure the harmonization of key legislative and policy reforms for the prevention of violence against women and girls across jurisdictions to coordinate systems and actions.

5.3. *Planning and budgeting*

- States should develop, implement and monitor holistic, sustained and multi-dimensional prevention strategies that include the key elements articulated in section 3 of this document, and a coordinated programme of activity crossing the sectors outlined in section 4. These should articulate:
 - an understanding of the underlying causes of violence against women and girls at socio-structural, community, organisational, relationship and individual levels;
 - an assessment of context to define and prioritise areas of action;
 - a theory of change
 - a variety of coordinated interventions to be implemented in a coordinated and mutually-reinforcing way across all levels and a number of settings and sectors;
 - a performance monitoring framework with concrete goals and objectives; indicators, targets and anticipated outcomes;
 - short-term, mid-term, and long-term activities, the implementing entity/entities responsible for each activity, and the budgetary or resource allocation for each activity and the source of funding;
 - coordination and accountability mechanisms.
- States should ensure that earmarked budgets are in place – including human and technical resources – to fund holistic, multi-dimensional prevention strategies that can be deployed over the short, mid and long-terms, including funding for evaluation. Resource allocation models should maximise collaboration between community organisations, and continuity of funding for programmes where they are shown to be effective through evaluation.
- For low resource settings, multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms should be established to plan holistic and multisectoral prevention strategies, with the involvement of representatives from across government institutions and also civil society, donors and other stakeholders who can aid in implementation. These mechanisms should begin by identifying where existing capacity could be harnessed in particular

programmatic areas for immediate impact (e.g. through existing health or education sectors, or existing nongovernment programming), and aim to build capacity across other sectors for mid to longer-term work.

- Governments, international/regional institutions and donors should support civil society organisations, particularly those working with women and girls, foster coalition and network-building for advocacy and coordinated programme development, and work with such coalitions and local networks to drive activity at the community level and ensure coordinated action across different geographical locations.

5.4. Programme development and support

- Governments, funders and international and regional institutions should work in partnership with key stakeholders to support the coordinated development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of good practice programmes across a number of settings and sectors as part of a holistic approach. These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Education programmes: Compulsory education promoting human rights and gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, discrimination and violence against women and girls, and building skills for equal and respectful relationships and for peaceful conflict resolution, at all levels of schooling, from kindergarten to the tertiary level and in non-school educational settings; the review of teaching and learning materials to support the above; the development of relevant curricula and materials in partnership with specialists on violence against women and girls, ensuring that such education is gender-sensitive, comprehensive and fully-integrated and includes assessment and reporting measures; specialized training and resources for teaching and support staff to deliver the above curricula and support students who may disclose violence; and strategies to build the capacity of schools to promote broader ‘whole-school cultures’ of equality, non-violence and respect, through engagement of school leadership, policies and practices, events and extracurricular activities, and involvement of parents and the community.
 - Local community programmes: Strategies to encourage local authorities, communities and community organisations to promote gender equal and non-violent communities through their existing services, programmes, events and grant/funding initiatives; prioritize prevention of violence against women and girls in urban and municipal planning; prevent violence and harassment of women and girls in public spaces.
 - Health and social welfare programmes: The integration of issues of gender equality and prevention of violence against women and girls into health and social welfare programmes including sexual, reproductive and maternal health, HIV-AIDS programmes, programmes promoting equal, respectful and non-violent intimate and family relationships; and strategies to support the role of these sectors in identifying women and girls at risk and referring them to prevention services.
 - Early intervention programmes with children and young people and parents: Tailored programmes combining respectful relationships skills building and counselling support for children and young people who have been exposed to violence (or at risk) and develop intensive early-intervention programmes for children and young people demonstrating violence-supportive attitudes and/or who are using violence; as well as positive and non-violent parenting programmes.

- Organisational programmes: The review of regulatory frameworks to ensure workplace and other organisational environments are safe and inclusive of women and encourage women's participation and leadership across a range of industries; including fostering collaboration between employer organisations to recognise their role in prevention and partner with women's and specialist agencies to develop initiatives, and the identification of women and men who can act as role models and ambassadors for prevention among employer organisations. The incorporation of prevention into organisational development across other organisations, such as sporting clubs, community organisations, the military, etc, including through reviews of codes of conduct, protocols and procedures, partnerships with civil society organisations to develop and implement awareness-raising and bystander capacity-building initiatives.
- Working with media: Building partnerships with journalists and other media professionals for the prevention of violence against women and girls and the promotion of gender equality, such as through training, guidelines and awards; strengthen regulatory frameworks with regard to media, advertising imagery, texts, games and other popular culture mediums which portray women or girls in a discriminatory, degrading or stereotypical way, or which glorify violent masculinities; support advocates such as victims/survivors of violence, men committed to non-violence, and high-profile people to respond to enquiries from journalists and speak at events on issues of violence against women and girls, and to promote messages of gender equality and non violence.
- Social marketing, communications and community mobilisation: Development and implementation – in concert with wider strategies above – social marketing, communications and community mobilisation campaigns addressing the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, such as through the promotion of positive, respectful and non-violent masculinities; challenging gender stereotypes; raising awareness of the unacceptability of violence; and sensitising the community on violence against women and girls as a manifestation of inequality and a violation of women's human rights.
- UN agencies and other international and regional institutions should explore strategies to improve coordinated and sustained national and regional programming for prevention across different agencies and funding streams (e.g. through UNDAFs and in cooperation with regional bodies).

5.5. *Institutional development and capacity building*

- States should provide for compulsory (and ideally standardised and accredited) staff training and institutional capacity development of government work areas, the relevant public entities and civil society organisations that will be involved in development and implementation of prevention activity.
- States should envisage and provide for pre-service training through the curricula of degree and diploma courses for professionals in sectors relevant to prevention (health, education, social services, child protection, economic development, planning, media, etc).
- States should facilitate the forging of partnerships between sectors working on prevention of violence against women and girls and those working on health (including HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health), education, and social welfare (including alcohol and substance abuse), and build capacity across these sectors for shared work.

- Governments, donors and the UN system should work to build the capacity of women's rights and other civil society organisations, not only through resourcing, but also by supporting structures to enable coordination of effort, information and practice sharing for prevention.
- Stakeholders at all levels should develop plain-language advocacy resources communicating issues surrounding prevention of violence against women and girls, including on the underlying causes and risk/protective factors, the need for holistic, sustained and multi-sectoral strategies, the effectiveness of different programmes, etc. Also needed are tools to help States and other implementers manage and counter backlash.

5.6. *Monitoring and accountability*

- States should ensure that prevention strategies are informed by evidence on the underlying causes of violence against women and girls, and a thorough assessment of context, capacities, structures and resources in the national territory. On this basis, they should articulate clearly defined indicators and targets, embedded as a core part of the work of relevant ministries and public institutions, with performance monitoring and reporting frameworks to ensure accountability.
- States should identify or establish a multi-sectoral mechanism to monitor prevention strategies (whether an existing implementation/coordination mechanism or an independent one), with functions including information gathering and analysis, monitoring of progress against targets, identification of good practices and obstacles throughout implementation, and developing proposals for future action.
- States should ensure the direct and meaningful participation of civil society and other stakeholders in its planning, evaluation, monitoring and reporting processes, and provide for regular and public reporting on the implementation and progress of the plan.
- States should report progress on prevention of violence against women and girls to treaty bodies, and ensure the subsequent recommendations made inform future policy and programming development, as well as cooperate with the Human Rights Council's special procedures and the visits and recommendations of Special Rapporteurs.
- Treaty bodies (e.g. CEDAW and CRC) should be supported and assisted to better monitor progress against prevention-related obligations.

5.7. *Research and data collection*

- International and regional institutions, in partnership with research organisations and academia, should work together to identify gaps and improve research and data collection to inform prevention work, particularly in the following areas:
 - better identifying community, organisational and societal-level risk and protective factors for violence against women and girls (much existing research has concentrated on risk and protective factors at the individual and relationship levels, such as correlates between perpetration and individual attitudes, life history, experience of violence, alcohol abuse, etc);
 - building evidence on links (or otherwise) between short-term impacts commonly found in evaluations of prevention programmes (attitudinal change or practice reforms) and longer-term reduced perpetration, and from this defining the short-term indicators of change that may therefore be considered measures of effectiveness in prevention programming;
 - studying the causes, dynamics and protective factors for *all* forms of violence against women and girls (noting most research to date has concentrated on intimate partner and sexual

- violence), and the causes, forms and consequences of violence against particular *groups* of women and girls, with implications for prevention programming;
 - prioritising evaluation and research on the effectiveness of prevention strategies in low and middle income countries (noting most existing evaluations and research is from high income countries).
- International and regional institutions, in partnership with research organisations and academia, should also work together to develop practical tools and resources to support States and programmers in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of prevention activity, for example:
 - monitoring and evaluation tools that are practical and feasible for small-scale organisations and in low resource settings;
 - multi-dimensional evaluation strategies capable of capturing the learnings and outcomes from holistic and multi-sectoral strategies;
 - tools for the collection and analysis of comparable statistical and qualitative data across countries relevant to prevention, building on existing methodologies such as the WHO Multi-country study, the ICRW International Men and Gender Equality Survey and the P4P multi-country Change Project surveys, and research learnings emerging from the previous recommendation;
 - methodologies for cost-benefit analyses of prevention activity, covering not only the saving of longer-term reduced prevalence of violence itself, but also the mid-term social and economic benefits of increased institutional capacity, early intervention, increased gender equality, etc, and guidance for costing and financing prevention strategies;
- International and regional institutions, in partnership with research organisations and academia, should examine processes for identifying and establishing intergovernmental agreement on further indicators to measure progress on the prevention of violence against women and girls.
- States should provide for the regular collection, analysis and communication of data against the above indicators, ideally making use of comparable methodologies developed above, potentially with additional data collection and research particularly relevant to national context.
- States, donors and international/regional institutions should provide for the regular and comprehensive evaluation of projects and programmes on prevention, with feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement. A range of research methods should be drawn from and employed, ensuring that both qualitative and quantitative data is obtained, and that impact, formative and process assessments are made, as appropriate.

5.8. Further work on humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict settings

- International and regional institutions, development agencies and civil society organisations working in the humanitarian sectors should develop evidence and strategies for prevention of violence against women and girls in situations where States are not functioning effectively, are fragile or are in transition, including conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings (building on existing work).