

Knowledge is power: a potent new tool in the drive to end violence against women and girls

Efforts by the international community to end violence against women and girls have gained an unprecedented momentum. Decades of tireless work by the women's movement and human rights activists have placed the issue high on global, regional and national agendas.

At the international level, the campaign headed by the United Nations Secretary-General, *UNITE to End Violence against Women*, calls on governments, civil society, the private sector and the entire United Nations system to join forces in addressing the global pandemic.

Nationally, recognizing that violence against women constitutes a gross violation of human rights with enormous social and economic costs, many countries have passed laws and adopted policies to address the problem.

The major challenge worldwide is to translate national and international policy commitments into practice. Policies and programmes to address gender-based violence must be based on sound evidence, but few policy-makers and practitioners have the access or time to review volumes of literature and learn the latest findings in different parts of the world on 'what works' or 'what to avoid'.

To assist countries and practitioners, UNIFEM is launching a global virtual knowledge centre on how to address violence against women and girls.

Global Virtual Knowledge Centre

This is a one-stop centre to support practitioners around the world in effective design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. The web-based site brings together lessons learned to date and recommended practices gleaned from initiatives large and small, whether originating from the women's movement, civil society organizations, governments, the UN System or other actors. While capturing the leading experiences from all regions of the world, its primary intended audience is in developing countries and other resource-poor settings.

The virtual knowledge centre can improve the quality of interventions, ensure optimal results and impact and enhance the cost-effectiveness of investments by building on existing and cumulative experience, know-how and resources.

A Fully Searchable Database of Implementation Tools and Specialized Organizations

Practical Guidance

Policy-makers and programmers can obtain guidance on implementation developed by experts in the field which draws on experiences from all regions of the world. The centralized on-line system, available in three languages (English, Spanish, French), provides:

- step-by-step guidance on how to work with specific sectors, groups or areas of intervention
- proven and promising approaches
- recommended training and other practical tools for implementation
- a roster of specialized organizations, by regions, countries and languages
- evaluations and key findings
- links to key sources of data and other on-line resources
- an emerging observatory of leading initiatives
- a calendar of major events

Expert modules

The following modules are part of the virtual knowledge centre and many more are planned. They have been developed by well-recognized experts and pioneers in the respective areas of specialization, and vetted by networks of practitioners from various regions and countries:

- programming basics
- campaigns
- education
- health
- legislation
- men and boys
- adolescents
- policy and budget cycles
- prevention
- safe cities and communities
- monitoring and evaluation