

# FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE





# UNITED NATIONS JOINT PROGRAMME ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Joint Programme: UN Joint Programme on Violence against Women, Bangladesh

MDG-F Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO. Government agencies: Ministry of Education (MOE), Local Government & Rural Development (LGRD), Ministry of Expatriate Welfare & Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW), Ministry of Information (MoI), Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW), Ministry of Women & Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Youth & Sports (MoYS).



Empowering Vulnerable Women



## 1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Violence against Women (the Programme) aimed to contribute to the long term sustainable socioeconomic development of rural Bangladesh through poverty alleviation in rural areas, and by supporting poor women under development programmes as indicated in the Bangladesh Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and based on its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Programme has encouraged the adoption and implementation of policies for preventing violence and supporting survivors by enhancing the capacities of the government, improving information (data) and providing support to NGOs and civil society. It has also invested in changing the attitudes and behaviour of men, women, boys and girls to reduce violence against women (VAW) and discriminatory practices such as dowry, early marriage and trafficking. In addition, it has supported the extension of services for survivors of gender-based violence with immediate care, relief and rehabilitation through a comprehensive package including the expansion, renovation and improvement of the existing shelter system in select programme intervention sites.

## 2. Initial Situation

When the programme began, organizations responsible for ensuring access to services - the Union Parishad<sup>1</sup> standing committees on Women and Child Welfare, Culture and Sports - were inactive. Furthermore, the funds for the District Legal Aid Committees (DLAC), which were allocated to ensure legal services to survivors of violence, were going unused. There was a lack of communication between the Union Parishad standing committees, human rights organizations at national and district levels and the DLAC.

Analysis also demonstrated that survivors did not have information about the facilities provided by the government and NGOs, and that the majority

of women were not aware of their rights. As a result, they were unable to obtain necessary support. The Government of Bangladesh and other organizations also had inadequate systems for providing information on services and rights, nor were these systems enabled to collect prevalence data, record the number of cases filed or track the causal factors linked to VAW. Consequently, the problem remained unaddressed.

In the seven districts where UNFPA worked with the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs (MoWCA), there was no shelter available where survivors of violence could obtain holistic support. Women and girls were not able to come forward to speak against the perpetrators, as abuse and violence against women, particularly domestic violence, were generally perceived as a private matter.

## 3. Strategy

An objective of the Programme was to develop a mechanism to set up effective linkages between different service providers and the survivors, as the main concern was that while there were agencies with resources available to provide support, they were unable to benefit survivors due to lack of information. The Programme focused on building the capacities of the Union Parishad standing committees (UP-SC) on Women and Child Welfare, Culture and Sports, in collaboration with the DLAC, to ensure the provision of legal services to female survivors among marginalized groups. A database was piloted in 44 unions under six upazilas (sub-districts) in six project districts, with information on women survivors of violence and the services provided. The database was compiled with upazila-based information and first shared with the respective Upazila Women's Affairs Officers. It was then further analysed and shared with the respective District Women Affairs Officers.

Recognizing the consequences of violence against women on poverty reduction interventions, the Programme linked with the programmes Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets

<sup>1</sup> The smallest rural administrative and local government units in Bangladesh.

(REOPA)<sup>2</sup> and The Local Governance Support Project: Learning and Innovation Component (LGSP-LIC) (two projects implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives together with UNDP) to address the issue of gender-based violence. The project was implemented in Barguna, Habiganj, Narsingdi, Feni, Satkhira, and Sirajganj districts until June 2013 by BRAC<sup>3</sup> as the technical and field implementation partner.

An important objective of the Programme was to empower rights holders, especially rural women, and including vulnerable groups, by increasing access to justice through capacity-building and sensitization, awareness building and mobilization of communities. The targeted rights holders included members of REOPA WCG (Women Crew Groups—women employed under the social safety net scheme) and also local communities.

Another objective was to build the capacities of duty bearers by activating and building the capacity of two nationally mandated committees (UP-SC and DLAC headed by District Judges) for rendering support to survivors; enhancing capacities for the local level government officials, Union Facilitation Teams (Local Youth) and Women Development Forum members (elected UP women leaders) for providing support and care for women and girls who are vulnerable, and/or have survived violence; and supporting the establishment of linkages between UP-SC and human rights organizations at national and district levels.

It also invested in significant community outreach efforts, including through the effective use of community theater to reach large populations, many of whom are illiterate.

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2 REOPA is a social safety net project that works to provide employment primarily to vulnerable rural women through road maintenance projects. It currently employs 24,440 such women to work in groups of 33 on project sites nationwide. Women are selected through a lottery after they have been short-listed as destitute, socially marginalized and unable to meet the basic food needs of themselves or their families.

3 BRAC is an international NGO whose mission is to “empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Our interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enable men and women to realise their potential”.

## 4. Progress and Results

In order to address issues related to data and information needs, a VAW database was piloted in the six districts of the project. The database is building an evidence base regarding the violence affecting women in 44 unions under six Upazilas of six districts. The Women Development Forum, Union Facilitation Teams (Local Youth), members of REOPA Women Crew Group and the BRAC Palli Shomaj (Village Federation) are collecting field data. This information is compiled by BRAC as the field partner and then shared with the respective Upazila and District Women Affairs Officers. One aim was to strengthen the coordination of information between the demand side (community members, UP/UZ<sup>4</sup> Standing Committee, UZ/District Women Affairs Offices) and the supply side (DLAC and District Administration including police, hospitals, shelter homes, BRAC and other NGOs). The pilot testing intervention under the project has actively involved the respective six Upazila Women Affairs Officers (UWAOs) and the corresponding six District Women Affairs Officers (DWAOs) who are currently reporting monthly on VAW incidents to the district administration and to the central level.

As a result of this pilot initiative, data have been collected on the number and type of incidents (such as acid attacks, rape, murder, physical torture, dowry, early marriage, family conflict, suicide and hilla marriage<sup>5</sup>) as well as type of support provided (such as court cases by DLAC, counselling and legal aid by BRAC, shalish<sup>6</sup> by the UP, and others). From September 2012 through May 2013, a total of 811 incidents were reported from 44 unions and have been included in the pilot database.

Working through the REOPA programme allowed direct access to the Women Crew Group (WCG) members, many of whom endured various forms of violence in their lives. Over 97 per cent (23,638) of WCG members received training as a part of the BRAC Community Empowerment Programme,

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4 Upazila, second lowest level of local government.

5 Temporary, often forced marriages.

6 Traditional system for informal dispute resolution.

including medical aid, counselling and rehabilitation. They were also made aware of their rights under Bangladeshi law, and that common cultural practices such as beatings or child marriages are illegal. Over 23,800 REOPA WCG members received a service card each with a hotline number and information related to obtaining immediate support if faced with violence. As a result of their participation in the training, the women have become aware of issues such as gender-based discrimination; the concept, categories and causes of violence against women; steps to take for prevention and protection against violence; and relevant laws. A positive outcome of the training was that 90 per cent of the participants reported understanding that women must be free from these injustices in order to fully enjoy their rights and to effectively participate in society. After receiving the training, the WCG members also reported becoming more confident about asserting their rights. They are combating violence in their own lives, as well as in the lives of others.

Capacity-building activities also targeted District-level officials and were attended by District Commissioners, Additional District Commissioners, Upazila Executive Officers, police superintendents, civil surgeons and judges. Over 4,900 district, Upazila and local government officials and members received sensitization and capacity-building support so that they could provide counselling and survivor support.

Over 4,900 UP members received training on VAW issues. All of the male UP members participated in this training. The objective of the training was to sensitize elected representatives about gender-based discrimination and violence against women in the family and society, so they have the capacity to prevent violence and be able to take effective steps to provide emergency support to survivors. Before the training the members were not interested in attending because they felt that VAW was not an issue of concern. They believed the training to be only for women and that there was nothing relevant for them to discuss about VAW. Gradually, upon becoming better informed about gender-based discrimination, they became more aware about discrimination and VAW issues in their personal, family,

as well as community lives. UP members have since made commitments to assist survivors of VAW and to continue discussions on VAW prevention with community members.

The capacities of 2,335 local youth (Union Facilitation Team members) and 1,003 elected women leaders on VAW have been enhanced so that they can act as whistleblowers in their communities to bring justice for the poor women who do not know what actions to take if a survivor of violence approaches them and solicits support. They have also become sensitized about different laws related to violence against women in Bangladesh and are now able to give guidance and aid to the survivors through knowledge of immediate measures to take in cases of violence and about the types of facilities available.

Popular theatre was used in this programme as a tool for information dissemination to the rural population. BRAC staff assisted local artists to develop community dramas focused on the issue of violence against women. Over 535 village level popular dramas on VAW, human rights and women empowerment were staged where 178,629 community members attended and heard key messages on how to respond to VAW.

Key results of the interventions include:

1. 100 per cent of marriages have been registered (total 15,511)
2. 1,056 community members solicited legal, medical and counselling services
3. 858 family conflicts have been resolved
4. 243 early marriages have been stopped

## 5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Concerted efforts and support from different actors are key for stopping violence against women. Success depends on strong linkages between women's groups, local government bodies and national government services.
- It is important to provide typically excluded women with information regarding the availability of services and assistance in their areas.

- Working through existing networks, such as those developed around the REOPA, helps to leverage resources and to maximize results.
- Popular Theatre is an effective tool for information dissemination, awareness building and increasing the knowledge base of rural populations on various socio-economic issues that affect their lives and to mobilize women and men against social ills and injustices.
- There is no alternative to government institutions for ensuring sustainability of project outcomes. Much can be achieved through strengthening the capacity of all government offices working on VAW.
- Involvement of the district authority, who plays a convening role of the concerned Government officials from different sectors and promotes positive attitudes toward sharing responsibilities, is the driving force for delivering the utmost support required to the survivors of violence.
- Service provision and community mobilization go hand in hand, so that local people become more aware of women's right issues and seek service to redress the VAW.
- Identification and celebration of positive masculine practices toward women's empowerment and facilitation of community dialogue hold potential to instill self-reflexive practices among participating men to bring positive changes in their communities.

## 6. Sustainability and Potential Application

- **Developing a national VAW database:** Continue creation of a credible database on VAW in Bangladesh, including completion of the Policy Dialogue on the National Database on VAW in order to highlight key national achievements, challenges and the way forward based on studies, findings and field experience.
- **The importance of reaching out to rural areas:** Increase popular theatre and dramas in order to have a greater impact on information dissemination on ending VAW, as popular theatre and dramas have proven to be extremely effective.
- **Capacity-building of government staff at community level:** Promote the application of lessons learned through follow up trainings, which provide an opportunity for members to share their experiences, as well as to reinforce the content learned.

## 7. Main sources

- Hardcopy booklet on VAW, database mapping, case studies (which will include a multimedia CD with all the relevant documents, tools and manuals)
- Active database on VAW
- Lessons from the implementation of the MDG-F Joint Programme to address Violence Against Women in Bangladesh (forthcoming)



# EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY WITHIN THE INTEGRAL PROGRAMME AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence in Colombia

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN Women (lead agency), UNFPA, IOM, High Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, Council of the Tourist District of Cartagena, Council of the District of Buenaventura

Ending Female Genital Mutilation



Singing Against Gender Violence



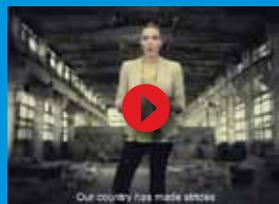
The impact of the MDG Achievement Fund



Closing the Door to Gender-Based Violence



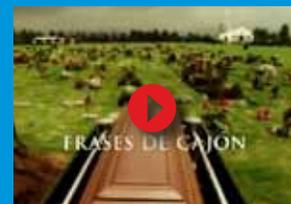
Equal Opportunities for Women



Violence against Women Is Everyone's Business



Preventing Violence against Women



Thinking out of the Box to Protect Women

## 1. Introduction

From 2008 to 2012, the Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence (the Programme) designed and implemented an Educational Communication Strategy (the Strategy) aimed at reducing the Colombian population's social and institutional tolerance to violence against women. With a clear conceptual focus—combating gender-based violence demands a transformation of the cultural and social beliefs that lie at the heart of the problem—the Programme assembled a great diversity of actors from government institutions, civil society and the media to join forces in the design and dissemination of culturally sensitive messages demystifying and condemning violence. The various campaigns launched as part of the Strategy were disseminated through mass and alternative media and through social mobilization actions. The strategy gained national and regional coverage, with specific lines of communication tailored to the territorial and ethnic characteristics of the pilot cities of Buenaventura and Cartagena.

## 2. Initial Situation

The Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence sought to contribute to the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombia, with a special emphasis on the most prevalent and most serious forms in the national context: partner violence, sexual violence, trafficking of persons, conflict-related violence and harmful traditional practices which violate the rights of indigenous women.

The Programme, carried out by UN Women, UNFPA and IOM from 2008 to 2012 was based on three components. The first was prevention, aimed at promoting the transformation of individual, social and institutional behaviors, attitudes and practices that promoted and legitimized GBV. The second was strengthening quality holistic services for survivors of GBV. The third was the development of a legal and public policy framework for GBV. In addition to actions on a national scale, the Programme identified four pilot territories—Buenaventura, Cartagena, Pasto and the indigenous communities of Pueblo Rico and Mistrató—in which all the strategic axes of the three components were focused.

From the moment of its conception, the Programme was based on the premise that the first and essential step in designing effective strategies to combat GBV is to understand the cultural and social context and other driving factors. With this aim the Study on the Social and Institutional Tolerance to Gender-based Violence in Colombia was carried out. This study, undertaken in 2010 on the basis of a survey of 1,080 persons and 300 institutions providing health, justice and education services in 10 of the country's towns and cities, made it clear that the "social and cultural beliefs deeply rooted in Colombian society, generating rigid gender roles and patterns of sexist, patriarchal and discriminatory behaviors, facilitate, allow, excuse or legitimize violence against women." To bring relevant changes in the GBV situation, therefore, requires an emphasis on the transformation of discriminatory ideas and practices historically embedded in the Colombian population. It was with this objective that the Programme designed its Educational Communication Strategy.

The Strategy was developed in the context of a favorable legislative framework, after the passing of Law 1257 of 2008<sup>7</sup> and Order 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court,<sup>8</sup> which oblige public institutions to develop communication strategies for the prevention of violence against women.

## 3. Objectives

- Educate, inform and mobilize audiences—collectively and individually—to build and adopt new patterns of masculinity and femininity, new behaviours and partner and family roles.
- Challenge stereotypical patterns of masculinity and femininity.
- Educate and mobilize institutional and social actors to prevent GBV, detect it early and act.

7 Law 1257 of 2008, which lays down rules for awareness-raising, prevention and the prosecution of forms of violence and discrimination against women, reforms the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and Law 294 of 1996 and lays down other provisions.

8 Order 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court covers the protection of the fundamental rights of women who are victims of forced displacement on account of armed conflict.

## 4. Key Actors

One of the Strategy's key success factors was its ability to call on a considerable diversity of institutional actors, at both national and local levels; civil society, especially women's organizations; international cooperation organizations; communications media; the private sector and opinion leaders. Following are the main actors involved:

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

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- The High Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women
- The Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies
- The Inter-institutional Communications Committee for the Prevention of Violence against Women
- The Town Council of Pasto
- The Council of the Tourist District of Cartagena
- The Council of the District of Buenaventura
- Inter-Institutional Networks for Decent Treatment in Cartagena, Pasto and Buenaventura

### PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION ACTIONS

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- The European Cinema Festival Foundation in Colombia
- The Woman is Audio-visual Foundation
- The Red Kayman Foundation
- The Tridha Foundation
- The Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra
- Corpocarnaval

### PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

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- Caracol Television
- El Tiempo Publishing House
- AVON
- Babilla Ciné
- El Espectador – Cromos
- Semana Publications
- RCN Radio
- Colmundo Radio
- Colombian Union of Advertising Companies

## 5. Strategy

The Educational Communication Strategy:

- Anchored in the fundamental premise that combating GBV requires a change to the cultural and social beliefs that lie behind the problem;
- Based on the findings of the Study on the Social and Institutional Tolerance to Gender-based Violence in Colombia;
- Adheres to the precepts of the Secretary-General's "UNITE to End Violence against Women" campaign;
- Incorporates the promotion of non-violent masculinities;
- Combines and complements educational and capacity-building processes with mass and inter-personal communication;
- Promotes alliances with mass and alternative communications media;
- Articulated through social organizations to carry out social mobilization and citizen actions;
- Includes artistic, recreational and sporting components;
- Covers both national and territorial levels, with culturally sensitive lines of communication suited to the country's territorial and ethnic diversity; and
- Promotes, supports and works hand in hand with local and national Colombian State strategies in this area.

Considering all these elements, the Programme designed and implemented a Strategy which included, among others, four strands of work:

- The "Nothing justifies violence against women" campaign;
- Support for the Colombian State communication strategy "Woman: You have rights;"
- Regionalization of the Buenaventura strategy "Not one more;" and
- Regionalization of the Cartagena strategy "Hey, Man! Don't beat the beauty."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "Oye men, no le pegue a la negra"

The Programme focused its strategic lines of work in four pilot territories, the cities of Cartagena and Buenaventura among them. Both cities have some characteristics in common: a high level of Afro-Colombian communities, large marginalized sectors and high levels of segregation and poverty. For an integrated approach to GBV, both cities had important characteristics: a committed institutional framework in the case of Cartagena, and a weak institutional framework but active civil society in the case of Buenaventura. The Educational Communication Strategy took as its starting point the recognition of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the pilot territories and, in each of them, it proposed culturally sensitive communicative actions, with messages that recognized and valorized their particular ethnic and territorial features.

### **THE “NOTHING JUSTIFIES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” CAMPAIGN**

The strategy for the Campaign’s design and implementation developed in four stages:

#### **Stage 1: Collecting information and constructing the over-arching arguments of the Strategy’s main ideas (Tolerance Study)**

Seventeen of the beliefs and prejudices identified in the Tolerance Study were selected. They touch on patterns of femininity and masculinity, concepts of love in the couple, the view of violence as a means of solving conflicts and the justifications given for VAW. For each of these beliefs the qualitative and statistical evidence available was analysed and an argument was developed to counter the stereotype with reality.

#### **Stage 2: Public relations and strategic advocacy with public and private bodies, opinion leaders and high level members of the Government to secure the signing of a National Pact against GBV in Colombia**

The Programme mapped relevant institutional and social actors. Government bodies and political parties were visited; with the aim of exploring their VAW-related practices, training dynamics, their interest in promoting the Communication Strategy and the body responsible for this. The institutions

were approached with evidence, including the Tolerance Study findings, in order to speak a common language and establish key principles and messages. The Programme secured undertakings from various institutional actors.

#### **Stage 3: The high impact mass communication campaign aimed at raising the awareness of the population of the seriousness of the VAW problem in Colombia**

Using the slogan of “Nothing justifies violence against women,” seven radio slots (on sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual violence, physical violence and male honour as an excuse for violence), two television commercials, three poster designs and three postcard designs were developed. The campaign counted on the collaboration of famous male and female actors who donated their images and voices, which also benefited the mobilization of the communications media around the campaign.

Two commercials were the center of the mass communication. The first promoted the social disapproval of male aggressors’ behaviours. The second argued that the consumption of alcohol did not justify violence against women.

The launch of the campaign benefited from the participation of the United Nations system in Colombia, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, survivors of GBV, journalists and male and female actors. More than 40 media outlets covered the launch of the Campaign, which continued making news in the media for months afterwards through continued free press actions.

The Campaign established a strategic alliance with one of the most important communications media in the country, Caracol TV, thanks to which it obtained: an average of 20 prime time broadcasts per day, free of charge, of the two television commercials produced by the Programme; 10 videos made by the channel, with its artists and journalists as spokespersons for the Campaign; the activation of the channel’s social networks with hash tags referring to the topic; the reading of Twitter messages on Caracol Channel news



broadcasts; and the creation of a five-minute section on the Caracol Channel News focused on analysing the problem of GBV. It is calculated that Caracol TV's contribution to the Campaign, in the form of pro-bono exposure, amounted to some US\$760,000 per month.

#### Stage 4: Social mobilization, media presence, community education and awareness-raising

Having established the Campaign, the Programme focused on social mobilization. "Citizen Brigades" were set up in the cities of Cartagena, Buenaventura, Pasto and Bogotá to mobilize citizens, artists, senators, journalists and opinion leader towards the eradication of GBV. As part of the 25th November celebrations, some 1,200 phrases expressing social tolerance to GBV were gathered together to be buried in a symbolic act to commit citizens to socially sanctioning aggressors.

#### SUPPORT FOR THE COLOMBIAN STATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In June 2009 the Inter-institutional Communications Committee to Prevent Violence against Women in Colombia was formed as the body responsible for the design and implementation of the Colombian State Communication Strategy. The Committee is made up of 13 national bodies with responsibility for the prevention of and response to GBV, the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence in Colombia and a feminist organization with expertise in gender and communications. This Committee, without precedent in Colombia, worked in a coordinated manner during one year to design the "Woman: You have rights" communication strategy, approved in June 2010.

The Colombian State Communication Strategy had as objectives providing information on the State's legal mandate; debunking the myth of violence against women being "natural;" promoting male



and female officials’ and survivors’ understanding of GBV; and building confidence around the new legal framework.

The Strategy defined three target groups: institutions and officials of both genders at national, departmental and local levels, non-perpetrator men and society at large.

Implementation of the Strategy turned on five components:

- **Social mobilization**, to disseminate the educational content;
- **Mass communication**, to give public recognition from State institutions to the commitment to non-violence against women.
- **Internal State communication**, that is, communication from the State for the State, with an internal message for government institutions themselves, reinforcing the role and institutional mandate, with the recognition and enforceability of women’s rights.
- **External communication** from the institutions, by means of the channels each institution uses to communicate with other groups—private institutions, social associations or the public—as part of its institutional activity.
- **Advocacy**, public relations and education and sensitization of communications media.

The Campaign was designed to cascade through the various administrative levels, that is, from national level to its offices at departmental, district and municipal levels. By 2011, 12 municipalities and 16 departments (half the departments in the country) had committed to it. The Campaign adopted the motto of “Woman: You have rights. We are with you,” under which were produced: three television commercials with their respective radio audio tracks; six radio spots; an educational video and a video clip about Law 1257 of 2008; a video with the most significant figures about the GBV problem; five posters and five postcards.

The campaign included male spokespersons as presenters, public figures who placed their image and their voice at the Campaign’s service to transmit a clear message rejecting GBV and promoting women’s right to a life free from violence. Thus, the strategy incorporated the promotion of a non-violent masculinity, fostering a masculinity committed to change and to combating discrimination and challenging behaviors and beliefs that tolerate and perpetuate GVB. At the beginning there was resistance to this from the women’s movement, which argued that by choosing men as spokespersons, men were having their say again, instead of women. It is important to emphasize that this tension diluted, thanks to the positive attitudes of the spokesmen and the good media response to the campaign.

One of the most innovative aspects of the campaign was its emphasis on work within public institutions, for which a discourse of effectiveness, efficiency and the duties of the civil service was adopted. The campaign promoted the dissemination of knowledge about women's rights and the obligations of public institutions under Law 1257 of 2008, informing, educating and raising the awareness of female and male public servants about the re-victimization they sometimes inadvertently inflicted on women through lack of knowledge.

The campaign established alliances with the private sector, using an approach of co-responsibility between State, society and business for combating discrimination and gender inequality. Action plans were implemented in 18 private companies in the areas of cosmetics marketing, development credit, design, art and fashion, transport, extraction of mining resources, universities, communication and technologies.

#### **REGIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY: BUENAVENTURA—"NOT ONE MORE"**

The regionalization process of the Educational Communication Strategy started in Buenaventura on 25 November 2009, on the occasion of the celebration of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, when the Programme joined in with the call made by local women's organizations under the motto of "Not one more... because indifference is our worst ally and impunity its greatest enemy."

For the Strategy's design and implementation the Programme worked with women's organizations and Town Council bodies participating in the **Decent Treatment and GBV Prevention Working Group**. Together they defined the strategies, design and content of each of the activities.

The Educational Communication Strategy in Buenaventura had as its objective "to inform the citizens of Buenaventura about and raising their awareness of the problem of GBV, with a focus on women's rights, through mass and alternative communications media." Later, in 2011, the Strategy broadened its field of action to the dissemination

of the Public Policy of Equal Opportunities for the Women of Buenaventura.

Three target populations were defined:

- **Women:** to promote in them the construction of an identity as citizens with rights, including the right to a life free from violence;
- **Men:** to inform them that violence against women is a crime and to urge them not to exert it; and
- **The communications media:** as allies to reduce social tolerance, through raising the profile of the problem and the dissemination and promotion of women's rights.

The motto "Not one more" sought to send a clear message rejecting violence as well as demanding an end to impunity. The Working Group was unanimous that the campaign images should be in keeping with the social construction of Afro-Colombian



women and they should also demonstrate the possibility of building solidarity and care among women. The goal was to generate a positive valorization of Afro-Colombian women, thus questioning the racialization and hyper-sexualization which had been culturally constructed around them and which had come to justify sexual violence throughout the country. The image is of two women protecting one another and the logo is an open hand held upwards in a “stop” gesture.

The Social Tolerance Study provided input for the creation of the media items. A song “Not one more” was composed. Various media items were created (posters, postcards, radio spots and videos), including one specifically directed at men, and a particular item to raise awareness and recognition of trafficking as a form of GBV, jointly produced with the Inter-Institutional Committee to Combat Trafficking.

Social mobilization was a central component to the Strategy, promoting marches, demonstrations and public hearings, and artistic expressions such as film clubs and theatrical works. High media impact events were organized, such as a football match on the occasion of 25 November 2010 with the participation of ex-professional footballers from Buenaventura and members of the Colombian women’s national team, under the motto of “More football against GBV.”

The Programme built alliances—mainly with women’s organizations—that invigorated the Educational Communication Strategy and gave it social sustainability. Public institutions actively committed to the Strategy and, if they did not provide financial resources, they provided human, technological, logistical, communication and dissemination resources to support the activities. The private sector joined in through local communications media (mainly radio), which undertook to publicize the “Not one more” strategic actions; provide information on women’s rights, Law 1258 and the ways women survivors could get help; present GBV-related news items from a women’s rights approach; and prevent violence against women by encouraging reporting and using non-sexist graphics and written and spoken language.

## REGIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY: CARTAGENA – “HEY, MAN! DON’T BEAT THE BEAUTY”

In Cartagena, the Educational Communication Strategy of the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence was structured around the Action Plan 2009-2011 of the local Public Policy “Women of Cartagena in full Enjoyment of Our Rights”. With regard to the prevention of GBV, this Plan contained the following actions:

- Awareness sessions on GBV and mass dissemination of Law 1257 of 2008;
- “Districts free from GBV” competition;
- Prevention of prostitution, trafficking of women and sexual exploitation; and
- The “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty, because this woman is respected”<sup>10</sup> programme.

The Programme’s four actions turned on joint work with Cartagena institutions, the Participation and Social Development Secretariat, the Women’s Affairs Group Coordinator and women’s organizations.

An **Inter-Institutional Communications Workgroup** was formed with the aim to develop a campaign:

- Culturally sensitive and suited to the characteristics of the population of Cartagena;
- That incorporated the content and results of the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of GBV;”
- Focused on three target groups: women, men and communications media; and
- Using mass and alternative media and inter-personal communications initiatives.

The central motto of the campaign was “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty” in the voice of famous Caribbean music singer Joe Arroyo. In the beginning, both the campaign message and the choice of a man as spokesperson generated unfavorable reactions from women’s organizations, which had not been consulted on this matter. Nevertheless, the campaign’s excellent reception from Cartagena society eventually eliminated any reservations.

<sup>10</sup> “Oye, men, no le pegue a la negra, que esa negra se me respeta”



Later, in order to reach poorer neighborhoods, the Communications Workgroup decided to use *champeta* music, as something for which the community had ownership and which was particular to Cartagena. And so “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty” moved from Joe Arroyo’s salsa to a *champeta* rhythm in the voice of Viviano Torres, designated as the new spokesperson of the campaign. To publicize the campaign, various media items were developed (posters, postcards, six radio spots and two videos), which were widely disseminated by local communications media. Alternative communications were also used, such as invisible theatre, puppets, new technologies and the mobile discotheques known locally as *u6*.

The campaign is also an excellent example of inter-institutional coordination. The Programme and Cartagena Town Hall established a permanent alliance. The administration demonstrated openness, and several departments committed human, technological or logistical resources, as was the case with the Transport Secretariat, Secretariat of the Interior, the Institute of Recreation and Sport and the Citizen Culture Programme. The National Police made available to the campaign a permanent 30 minute weekly slot on its station. The private sector joined in via non-violence pacts. At the same time, the Cartagena Strategy was in keeping with the Colombian State “Woman: You have rights” strategy and with the “Nothing Justifies Violence against Women” Programme strategy.

## 6. Progress and Results

The Educational Communication Strategy of the Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence aimed to contribute to reducing

the Colombian population’s social and institutional tolerance to GBV. To assess its impact, and that of the Integral Programme as a whole, the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia” will be re-run by 2014. Its results will provide evidence-based data on the extent to which the Strategy has succeeded in bringing about transformations in the beliefs and practices of the Colombian population towards violence against women.

Nonetheless, in the absence of hard data about its impact, indirect evidence does exist pointing to the Strategy having led to significant cultural and institutional changes. In the interviews held to write this document, greater awareness of the forms of GBV and of the obligation to respond to them was reported on the part of public institutions; as well as an increase in intentions to report by women survivors of violence and a better response by Family Police Services participating in the Programme.

Turning to the Programme’s immediate results and outcomes, the following are worthy of note:

- The creation of the Inter-institutional Communications Committee to prevent Violence against Women in Colombia;
- The regionalization in 2011 of the “Woman: You have rights” strategy with a view to its being implemented nationwide. Twelve municipalities, 16 departments (half the departments in the country) and 13 private sector companies signed up to it;
- The raising of awareness of the communications media and public opinion to the GBV problem, as reflected in the more than 800 interviews, press releases and publications

made during the Programme's implementation, as well as in the strategic alliances established with various communications media, especially with Caracol TV;

- The mass dissemination of the "Nothing Justifies Violence against Women" campaign, via:
  - The production of seven radio spots (on sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual violence, physical violence and male honour as an excuse for violence) using the voices of famous national figures from the world of entertainment, which were broadcasted on 600 community stations across the country by agreement with the Ministry of Communications, on 25 Cadena Caracol stations via its Corporate Social Responsibility Office and on 35 commercial stations on a paid basis;
  - The production of two television commercials (on the social sanctioning of aggressors and the consumption of alcohol as a justification for violence) and their broadcast on eight regional television channels, via the Television Commission's Civic Code; and on 20 broadcasts a day by Caracol TV via its Corporate Social Responsibility Office;
  - Three posters and 10,000 copies distributed and used at 100 bus stops and on billboards located at high traffic areas; 100,000 postcards in three different designs distributed at restaurants, hotels, theatres, motels and at public events nationwide;
  - A free press strategy with considerable exposure in the press and on radio and television, which started with raising expectations around the campaign launch and was attended by 40 communications media. From September 2011 to March 2012, the free press strategy ensured the Campaign's presence on 130 radio, press and television items (34 per cent local media and 66 per cent national media) which, had they been arranged on a paid basis, would have incurred a cost of nearly US\$400,000;
  - Citizen mobilization, in the form of cultural actions and citizen brigades in Cartagena, Buenaventura, Pasto and Bogotá.

- The formulation, within the framework set by the National Commission for the Regulation of Advertising in Colombia, of technical specifications for gender-sensitive advertising to be incorporated into the Code of Advertising Self-regulation issued by the Commission.
- The mobilization of a broad range of institutional actors at national and local levels, women's organizations, communications media and international cooperation to work in a coordinated fashion.

## 7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

**Approach:** The approach used to structure and implement the Strategy, under the organizing principle that it should contribute to changing the patriarchal culture that was at the heart of the problem of violence against women, facilitated the taking of decisions on the how, where, what and with whom.

**Inter-institutional:** The processes of inter-sectoral dialogue and consensus, in spite of taking up much time and coordination effort, made it possible to join forces, establish institutional processes and create ownership on the part of all the actors involved. Linking all the actors in the process (institutional bodies, women's organizations, mixed organizations and communications media) enhanced the Programme's recognition as agent and interlocutor, while at the same time clearly placing GBV on the public agenda and in social debate. The permanent, free-flowing dialogue between the actors opened new channels of communication, coordination and support to define common objectives for citizen mobilization and collective lobbying.

**Evidence-based:** Basing the design of the Strategy on the results of the "Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia" facilitated the construction of key messages that challenged the deepest-rooted and most change-resistant beliefs and prejudices that normalized, downplayed and legitimized violence against women. Moreover, approaching institutional bodies with statistical data and qualitative evidence provided a technical case that facilitated the engagement of decision-makers.

**Adaptation to context:** Communication starts with understanding the setting, from the macro-structure to micro-spaces. The use of culturally sensitive messages, which acknowledge and celebrate territorial and ethnic identity, is an essential prerequisite for understanding, reflection and transformation. The participation of local actors and, especially, local women's organizations and local communications media, is essential to draw the attention of local territories to the communication strategy.

**Masculinities:** Engaging men to transmit a message rejecting violence contributed to the promotion of new models of non-violent masculinities, at the same time as easing the opening of discussion and gaining the attention of communications media. The tensions which originally arose from giving men's voices center stage, rather than women's, relaxed in light of the favourable social reaction to men coming out against GBV, when they were seen and heard not as aggressors but as part of the solution.

**Civil servants:** Carrying out campaigns within public institutions made it possible to set up clear mechanisms for information, awareness-raising and training on the responsibilities of institutions towards the prevention of, response to and sanctioning of gender-based violence. Involving civil servants as agents for the communication, transmission and transformation of social patterns, meant that administrative units were less resistant to change and to the transformation of mind-sets and practices that tolerated GBV.

**Media agenda:** Generating information and new understandings of GBV produced a significant reaction on the part of communications media. Carrying out actions with high media impact in a short period of time made it possible to place and keep the GBV issue on the media agenda and encouraged institutions publicly to take up positions on the problem.

**Community mobilization:** The use of alternative communications media and social and citizen mobilization around the rejection of violence against women were key factors in reaching different sections of the public and securing their

involvement. The sustainability of the process lies in consolidating and broadening this community base. In the case of Colombia, support for the Integral Programme ended when the process and social base supporting it were still being consolidated. More time and continuation of the financial and coordination support would have been needed.

**Public-private alliances:** Corporate Social Responsibility is an area to be explored as it lowers costs and, if the results are positive, reduces institutional resistance. The alliances the Programme established with various communications media, especially Caracol TV, contributed to significantly broadening the Programme's reach at no extra cost.

## 8. Sustainability and Potential Application

To guarantee the sustainability of the Communication Strategy, the Integral Programme placed an emphasis on the design and approval of action plans by each of the stakeholders involved from the institutional, social and private sectors.

Moreover, the Communication Strategy created numerous communication items directed at different groups and contexts, which could be reused by other GBV awareness-raising, information and education strategies.

The main challenge for the sustainability of the processes triggered by the Strategy is a weakening of the original political will. Thus, in the case of Buenaventura, even though the Public Policy of Equal Opportunities for Women provides for continuing the Educational Communication Strategy, this has not happened to date. In Cartagena, in spite of the Town Hall having included a "communication strategy for a life free from violence" within its 2012-2015 Action Plan, continuity has been difficult on account of administrative instability.

Regarding the possibility of replication, mindful that the cultural matrix which originates and perpetuates GBV is based on patriarchy, the "Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia," its interpretive design, its

methodological approach and its measurement tools can be reproduced in other countries with a similar social and cultural environment, as was suggested in the “International Congress on Non-Sexist Advertising” held in Mexico towards the end of 2011 where the Programme was invited to give a presentation on its experience. The existence of the significant regional development of legal instruments for protection against gender-based violence means that the Strategy’s conceptual and methodological approach is relevant at a regional level and the Strategy could be reproduced in other neighboring countries.

Through a knowledge exchange mission with the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme on Gender in Brazil, the Brazilian programme has adapted the methodology of the Colombian study on institutional tolerance of GBV. The study served as an input for the Brazilian communication/advocacy strategy, which also focused on innovative aspects to fight against racial discrimination.

# MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMME FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Tamkine: Multi-sectoral MDG-F Joint Programme for the Fight against Gender-based Violence through the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Morocco

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN Women (lead agency), UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, FAO, ILO, UNAIDS. Government agencies: 13 Moroccan Ministries: Family and Solidarity, Economy and Finance, Justice, Health, Agriculture and Fishing, National Education, Communications, State Department, Labour and Continuing Education, General Direction of Local Communities, High Planning Commission, National Security, Royal Police. More than 40 NGOs and civil society networks



Fighting Violence against Women



## 1. Introduction

“Tamkine” means empowerment in Morocco, and this is the key strategy through which the Multi-sectoral Joint Programme (the Programme) addresses violence against women. Taking a multi-sectoral approach, it joins together 13 national entities and over 50 NGOs. It aims to prevent and protect women and girls from all forms of violence by addressing the inter-linkages between poverty and vulnerability.

With programme support, women survivors of violence have greater access to legal, psychological, social and economic support. Since 2008, 4,651 women have benefitted from the programme-supported centres for women survivors of violence. The number of counselling centres has grown from 38 in 2008 to 52 in 2010. One example is the Batha Centre, a multifunctional centre where women find a safe space for themselves and their children and are able to develop livelihood skills in confectionery, goldsmith art, cookery, etc. It is run by the association *Initiatives pour la Protection des Droits des Femmes* (IPDF—Initiative for the Protection of the Rights of Women). The Centre mission goes beyond providing access to short-term care. It ensures support for women and their children and aims to prevent the recurrence of violence by promoting gender equality through education, advocacy and awareness-raising programmes. It also aims to offer improved access to quality services in terms of economic, social and political empowerment for women and girls.

## 2. Initial Situation

Tamkine was created to advance the fight against violence against women, and facilitate women’s empowerment in Morocco. Progress had been hindered by the lack of protection mechanisms and institutional care for abused women and girls, the lack of regulations of interventions in the field of the fight against violence against women and girls and social and cultural norms that propagate hierarchical roles of men and women and legitimize violence against women.

In Fes, at the time of the Centre’s creation, seven out of ten married women were victims of domestic violence. A total of 66.4 per cent of all women in the area had been victims of psychological violence, 49.5 per cent of physical violence, and 26.7 per cent of sexual violence. This situation was exacerbated by the lack of state structures to care for and empower women in crisis. The existing multifunctional centres were suffering from lack of a clear institutional vision regarding their implementation, their intervention strategies and their role in women’s empowerment.

The Centre’s interventions were hindered by the implementation of [Law 14/05](#) regarding the conditions to open and run establishments of social protection (EPS – *Etablissements de Protection Sociale*), because the law only took into account abandoned children, women in a situation of family abandonment or exclusion, elderly without any support and the disabled. Centres for women survivors of violence were thus not fully considered under the law, resulting in an unclear institutional mandate. IPDF and its partners thus had to define the mission and organization of the Batha Centre and re-define its services to ensure that women survivors of gender-based violence and their children had access to quality services, while respecting Moroccan law.

## 3. Strategy

The Programme in Morocco had to gather a large number of partners, from various sectors and institutions. This gathering required the establishment of a governance structure that would facilitate this innovative cooperation as well as ensuring the operationalization of the Programme.

To respond to the needs of women survivors of violence specifically in the Fes region, IPDF, in cooperation with its Moroccan government partners and United Nation agencies, set out to establish a multifunctional centre able to provide survivors of gender-based violence with immediate support (psychological, clinical, shelter) during crisis, as well as a set of services that would support longer-term recovery and empowerment. The fundamental premise behind the services provided at the Centre is change through empowerment.

Initially, the creation of the Centre faced challenges in terms of the cooperation of national institutional partners, as it was difficult to secure substantial institutional engagement. A challenge was identified in communicating a clear vision of the Centre's mission to the partners. However, participation was eventually ensured through the signing of cooperation agreements. The partnership with Morocco's national institutions was central to the success of the Centre's strategy to fill the institutional and legal void regarding care for women survivors of gender-based violence. These 'contractual-partnerships' ultimately legitimated and facilitated the implementation of the Centre's services, guaranteeing governmental support for the Centre, particularly in the fiscal sense.

The common strategy that was developed based on the overall objective enabled the provision of multi-sectoral services affording continuous care for women. The ensemble of services provided (admission, support, shelter, training and integration into the workplace) constitutes a chain of services that is uninterrupted and guarantees continuous care and support. It also links to services available outside of the Centre, such as in hospitals, police stations, etc.

The Center is based on three fundamental principles:

- A strict confidentiality policy ensures security and privacy for the users;
- Physical separation between living, clinical, administrative and financial spaces; and
- The women are the main actors in their empowerment.

The chain of services provided to women survivors of violence allows them to escape crisis situations, and to gain practical skills and personal empowerment. The Centre provides integrated services that go beyond simply offering admission and support, such as trainings and integration into the workplace. These services support women in becoming independent economic actors. Empowerment is not only the goal, but also the means to protect women against the recurrence of gender-based violence. Support for these women along the empowerment process is possible thanks to the partnerships developed with both governmental and

non-governmental organizations in the field, as well as UN agencies, each bringing their own capacities and specialties to the chain of services.

The Centre's management also relies on a continuous strengthening of the staff's capacities through trainings, and is directed by 'research-action,' which aims to provide an updated diagnosis of the context and on the issue of gender-based violence, so that the intervention strategy established in partnership with state and association actors adapts accordingly to be as relevant as possible.

## 4. Progress and Results

In 2009, the Centre offered shelter and care to more than 1,000 women. By January 2010, this number had almost doubled, with more than 1,900 women being welcomed at the Centre .

The Centre and its chain of services succeeded in raising awareness among the population about women's rights and gender-based violence. Radio was an important vehicle for this aspect of the programme. With the support of UNESCO, various communications materials such as posters, pamphlets and flyers were produced. Trainings to strengthen Batha Centre's staff communication capacities were also organized.

Partnerships, especially with institutional partners such as the Ministry for Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development (MDSFS – *Ministère pour la solidarité, la femme, la famille et le développement social*) were consolidated, and the increased visibility of the Centre also led to better cooperation with key local actors, including the Police and other government actors. These partnerships are keys to sustainability of investments.

## 5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Importance of the fundamental rights of women: consider the survivor of gender-based violence as an autonomous person, avoid her re-victimization and allow her to be the actor of her own empowerment process.

- Importance of the implementation of a confidentiality policy in any structure that supports women survivors of gender-based violence.
- Importance of strong partnerships with the public sectors, particularly actors specialized in trainings and professional integration. Importance of partnerships in general and of coordination with all the actors along the chain of services, from admission to workplace integration.
- A participative process with consultations of all the actors involved during the Programme's conception allows for more sustainable results. The national partners' actions will be more coherent with the Programme objectives and the institutions will integrate the actions through the governance system. Therefore, some of the Programme actions will be consequently integrated into the sectoral plans of the partners.
- The Programme participants must be represented in all bodies.
- If the project covers multiple regions, its governance bodies must not all be located in one place. Decentralization gives voice to the local actors and decision-makers and helps to avoid a homogenization of responses to different needs.

## 6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Conventions agreed upon and signed by IPDF and the Wilaya<sup>11</sup> guarantee official state support to the Centre for five years. The sustainability of the Centre's work is also supported by the use of tools and manuals that were developed, such as the Manual of Procedures and the Communications Plan.

<sup>11</sup> Second-level administrative subdivisions of provincial governments.

During Phase II of the Programme, a concept note involving six agencies was written and sent to the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in April 2012. As Tamkine comes to an end, action is taken to keep some elements of its coordination structure. An inventory of actions that pursue Tamkine's initiatives is being prepared. Elements of this Programme were also integrated as an intervention axis in Outcome 3 of the UNDAF 2012-2016 in Morocco, prompting UN agencies to sustain their Joint Programming efforts to fight against gender-based violence.

This initiative could be replicated, as long as it is adapted to the institutional and organizational local environment. The Batha Centre is a good model to follow for adaptation in new contexts. Reproducing this experience also requires a partnership between the public sector and civil society in order to ensure that services are provided up to the point when the women are equipped to integrate into the workforce.

## 7. Main Sources

*Modélisation du Centre Multifonctionnel Batha pour l'autonomisation des femmes victimes de violence base sur le genre.*

Rapport de modélisation de l'expérience marocaine du Programme Conjoint Multisectoriel MDG-F «Genre» en termes de coordination et de gouvernance: modèle identifié. June 2011.

Rapport de l'évaluation finale du programme conjoint multisectoriel de lutte contre les violences fondées sur le genre par l'autonomisation des femmes et des filles au Maroc.

# SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Joint Programme: Timor-Leste: Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights in Nation-building of Timor-Leste

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, IOM, UNDP



## 1. Introduction

The Joint Programme entitled Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Timor-Leste (the Programme) sought to protect women and girls from domestic violence, sexual abuse, economic hardship and human trafficking. Institutionalization and national ownership were pursued by strengthening protection mechanisms such as the Law against Domestic Violence or the draft Law to Prevent Human Trafficking; strengthening the capacity of the government and other stakeholders; promoting economic empowerment of the most vulnerable; and improving support services for survivors. This report presents selected promising practices implemented under the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme, from which lessons and challenges for replication in the future have been drawn.

## 2. Initial Situation

For Timor-Leste, newly independent and one of the poorest countries in the world, achieving gender equality has represented a long-standing challenge. Women face limited access to health, education and employment, which makes them vulnerable to gender-based violence, especially domestic violence and both domestic and international trafficking.

Sexual and gender-based Violence (SGBV) is a critical issue for women in Timor-Leste. Domestic violence is the most reported crime to the National Vulnerable Persons Unit (NVPU) of the police.<sup>12</sup> A study conducted in 2005 indicated that 47 per cent of women suffered physical, psychological or sexual violence by their partners. Other studies<sup>13</sup> indicated that 38 per cent of women aged 15-49 experienced physical violence from the age of 15, and 36 per cent who were or had been married reported violence—physical, sexual or emotional—by their husbands or partners.

12 *National Statistics Directorate, Ministry of Finance. 'Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2009-2010'.*

13 Office of Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality, 'National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence', May 2012; UNFPA, 'Gender Based Violence in Timor-Leste Case Study', October 2005; Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSTCL), 'Baseline Study on Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Cova Lima and Bobonaro', August 2009.

Domestic violence is still considered a private matter and survivors and their families often opt for family mediation or seek remedies using traditional justice. This, combined with the fear of family shame, has prevented survivors from reporting GBV/domestic violence (DV) cases to the police or relevant service providers. At the institutional level, however, due to inadequate facilities, non-existent Standardized Operation Procedures (SOP) for dealing with such cases and frequent rotation and insufficiently trained staff, the NVPU has encountered difficulties to respond to GBV/DV cases.

Women's weak position in society also makes them vulnerable to both domestic and international trafficking, since Timor-Leste is a destination for sex trafficking of women to and from other Asian countries. There is reported national trafficking, but little reliable data available on its incidence and scarce services for support.

Since its independence, the government of Timor-Leste is committed to the protection of women's and children's rights, and has ratified international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). However, their commitments had not been fulfilled due to the lack of relevant legislative frameworks, implementation plans and functional systems and procedures.

After domestic violence was declared a priority at the first National Women's Congress held in 2000, a National Law against Domestic Violence (LADV) was drafted by 2004. However, the LADV had to be put on hold to ensure harmonization with the new Penal Code that was still being drafted. Similarly, comprehensive legislation for human trafficking adapting the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) was urgently required.

As the Alola Foundation was the sole national actor dedicated to combating human trafficking, in 2008, the Inter-Agency Human Trafficking Group started to discuss sustainable and coordinated actions

*In 2010, Timor-Leste's Law against Domestic Violence was passed by Parliament eight years after it was first drafted. "This law is very important for Timor-Leste, because domestic violence here is very common," said Armando da Costa, Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI). "This law is not aimed at imprisoning people, but to honor human rights."*

involving different actors. The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAPCHT), presented in September 2009, was followed by the draft of the Law against Trafficking in Persons (LATP) in 2011.

The lack of reliable data and management system has also been an obstacle for capturing a clear idea of the extent of GBV and human trafficking in the country. The government has been mandated to establish a uniform data collection system to comply with the CEDAW General Recommendation. Articles 8, 16, and 23 of LADV refer to the recommendation further detailed in the National Action Plan on GBV (NAP-GBV). Likewise, the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP-CHT) and Child Protection Policy refer to the development of SOP to address human trafficking.

In response to an internal crisis between 2006 and 2008, the Poverty Social Action Policy was developed and adopted by the Council of Ministers in January 2008. One of the schemes introduced in the policy was the conditional cash transfer scheme called "Bolsa da Mãe" (BdM). BdM provides a set amount of cash to specific vulnerable populations, particularly women-headed households. Children's immunization and educational attainment were established as conditions to benefit from the scheme. According to the Baseline Study on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Study in Covalima and Bobonaro, financial difficulties can affect the relationship between husband and wife, leading to domestic violence, and can also encourage women to opt for or to force their daughters into prostitution. In this regard, the BdM also contributes to the prevention of GBV through the economic empowerment of vulnerable women.

Child protection and service providers supporting survivors of GBV and human trafficking exist mainly in the capital Dili, leaving the rest of the country with limited availability. They include NVPU and Child Protection Officers (in all 13 districts); Uma Mahon (shelters) run by NGOs and churches; Fatin Hakmatek (safe rooms) managed by NGOs; and NGOs that provide legal aid. Nevertheless, as pointed out in some reports including the CEDAW Initial Report in 2008, the 'roles and responsibilities of individual organizations and government institutions had not been clearly defined, sometimes prohibiting the survivors of violence from benefiting from the range of assistance available from all the sectors.'<sup>14</sup>

While the concept of Gender-responsive Budgeting (GRB) is still new to Timor-Leste, the Government of Timor-Leste has taken some steps towards gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive budget allocation. In 2008, the Government presented its commitment to promote gender equality through a Gender Integrated Approach (GIA). In the 2009 budget, the government reiterated its commitment to GIA. The specific Resolution on Formulating Gender-responsive Public Budgets (28/11), which calls on the government and parliamentary committees to use and apply GRB instruments, was approved by the National Parliament. The establishment of gender focal points and the subsequent Gender Working Group were the first steps to operationalize the Government's commitments.

Finally, women's NGOs in Timor-Leste have also advocated for increased government budget allocations for women's needs and have maintained

<sup>14</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation No. 12 (4).

constant dialogue with the Parliament. The CEDAW<sup>15</sup> alternative report prepared by NGOs in March 2009 addressed a wide variety of women's concerns, including GRB, and increased women's involvement in decision-making, such as determination of priority problems, planning and budget allocation.

### 3. Objectives

The MDG-F Joint Programme on Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Timor-Leste aimed at supporting the Government of Timor-Leste to improve the conditions of women and girls in Timor-Leste through protection of their rights and their empowerment. It was envisaged that the Programme would contribute to the realization of the UNDAF Outcome of 'Consolidating stronger democratic institutions and mechanisms for social cohesion where the vulnerable population will benefit from quality social welfare and social protection services.' The Programme worked toward the three following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Improved protection of women and girls through the establishment of legal frameworks and mechanisms to uphold their rights;
- **Outcome 2:** Reduced vulnerability of women and girls through improved outreach mechanisms and services, and the establishment of a social protection scheme;
- **Outcome 3:** Improved social and economic situation of women and girls through fair allocation of resources using gender-responsive budgeting.

### 4. Key Actors

In addition to UN Women (lead agency), UNDP, UNICEF, IOM and UNFPA as implementing agencies, a wide variety of stakeholders have actively participated in the implementation of the Programme. Among these are the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) at central and local (district and suco) levels, Ministry of Social Security (MSS), Ministry of Health, National

<sup>15</sup> NGO Working Group on the CEDAW Alternative Report, 'NGO Alternative Report, Implementation of Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): March 2009.'

Police, National Vulnerable Persons Unit (NVPU), Women's Caucus of the National Parliament, NGOs, network members, as well as community members, including school children. Government actors as duty-bearers were expected to fulfill their responsibility to protect vulnerable populations through knowledge and skills building. Civil society actors were expected to advocate for women and children's rights and the protection of survivors while enhancing the quality of their service provision through programme technical support and improved knowledge and skills.

### 5. Strategy

The key strategy of the Programme was institutionalization and national ownership. While the Programme design was in large part led by the implementing UN agencies due to time constraints, needs and priorities based on their prior interventions and discussions with the government and civil society were reflected to the extent possible. In addition, the Programme was designed at the time of the country's internal conflict (2006–2008), which considerably limited the possibility of government and civil society participation in this phase. The Programme adopted upstream and downstream interventions to influence gender equality and build the capacity of stakeholders in different spheres at the central and local levels.

Five districts with potential high risk of GBV, trafficking, and child abuse, including Dili, were selected for the implementation. For the institutionalization of knowledge and skills, technical trainings and support for development of practical tools and mechanisms were included in the Programme design.

### 6. Progress and Results

Seven promising practices have been selected for documentation and are presented below under three categories: A. Support for legal frameworks and mechanisms; B. Support for outreach mechanisms and services provision; and C. Support for fair allocation of resources. These practices have been selected on the basis of interesting lessons learned and possible replication.

## SUPPORT FOR LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND MECHANISMS

### Participatory Development of National Action Plans on Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking (NAP-GBV)

**SEPI-led multi-sectoral/multi-stakeholder participatory process for the NAP-GBV draft.** The technical drafting committee, comprised of 17 stakeholders from various governmental and non-governmental institutions was formed under SEPI. Eight meetings were held to discuss the content and two national and four district consultations were organized to raise awareness and seek inputs and challenges related to GBV. NGOs were consulted based on their direct experience with analysing and treating the problem of GBV “from the ground.”

NAP-GBV focuses on four strategic priority areas of (i) prevention of gender based violence; (ii) provisions of services to survivors; (iii) Lori ba Justice (appeal to justice); and (iv) coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. It lays out specific goals, outcomes, outputs, activities, target groups, as well as a timeframe for implementation. Responsible actors are also clearly identified.

### Wide consultation for development of The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking

(NAP-CHT). A subcommittee was formed under the Interagency Human Trafficking Group and its members received training from IOM. The first draft of the NAP-CHT was shared and consulted on with 320 community stakeholders in 13 districts, including community leaders, service providers, teachers and students. The inputs from the community were taken into consideration and the document was finalized by February 2012. In parallel, several trainings on human trafficking were offered to almost 930 governmental and NGO personnel, and 2,310 suco (local) council members and community leaders.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

**Participatory process and institutionalization are key for success.** As described above, the wide consultative process used in developing the NAPs and led by the technical drafting committees was

key for national ownership of the document. The programme design, which tightly combined the legal/policy aspect and the institutionalization of knowledge and skills, also helped national stakeholders to prepare for implementation.

### Inclusion of costing and clear responsibilities in the NAP-GBV is an important step, but more detailed financial assessment is essential.

The fact that the NAP-GBV identifies responsible actors and costs significantly improves planning and implementation. Nevertheless, even more specific budget analysis, such as human resource costs for implementation, is necessary. For instance, different stakeholders expressed their concerns that the implementation capacity at the district level was not sufficient.

### Enhanced coordination between the government and NGOs for implementation of NAP-GBV.

NGOs are identified as major partners in many areas, and especially in service provision and coordination between government and NGOs. Establishing national-level networks will be imperative for the implementation of the plan.

### Joint Effort for Capacity-building of the Police and Institutionalization

#### UN joint manual and training on GBV

**investigations.** Once the first draft of the GBV investigations manual was finalized under UNFPA coordination, a joint training of trainers (ToT) on GBV investigation was held. Twenty-one selected police officers from different districts, including the head of NVPU, participated in the event and received training on a very broad range of issues related to GBV and human trafficking.

#### Continuous strategic discussions towards

**institutionalization.** One of the main concerns identified by UNFPA, NVPU, and other relevant stakeholders was the frequent rotation of NVPU police officers and their insufficient capacity and resources to respond efficiently to GBV cases according to the established standards. Therefore, measures to ensure a minimum of three years continuation of NVPU officers in their posts and inclusion of the GBV/DV training in the basic

“There are misunderstandings in the public about whether the (Domestic Violence) law will weaken families, so we have to raise awareness to change mistaken negative perceptions of the law. We want people to understand that domestic violence is a crime and that violence in the family hurts families.”

ARMANDO DA COSTA, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY (SEPI)

training at the police training centre have been included in the NAP-GBV. Most recently, the GBV investigation training has been institutionalized in the Police Training Centre and SEPI. Through UNFPA support, six courses on GBV investigation were organized for all national police officers recruits at the Police Training Centre.

#### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

**Cohesion of donors/development agencies.** UN agencies realized the importance of joint training for increased efficiency and effectiveness. In the security sector that involves various stakeholders and donors, close collaboration to minimize duplication and maximize the results is crucial. Strong partnerships with the Timor-Leste Police Development Programme (TLPDP) on the GBV investigations manual and provision of training also proved effective. This unity among donors and agencies transmitted a coherent and consistent message that was very well appreciated and received by the police and other stakeholders.

**Budget constraints continue to be challenging.** NVPU operates with facilities that are inadequate to perform their duties professionally and successfully. Without a specific government budget allocation, it is difficult for the Police Training Centre to regularly carry out basic GBV training. It is essential that advocacy for increased budget allocation is emphasized through different channels, including the governmental Gender Working Group and non-governmental GRB working group, if the situation is to improve.

#### Outreach to Community-level Stakeholders

**Outreach of the Law against Domestic Violence with ‘easy to understand’ materials.** With UNFPA technical support, SEPI developed a simple ToT manual on LADV targeting suco-level audiences such as suco chiefs, council members and local referent networks. The manual includes case studies, role plays, and interactive discussions. A total of 442 suco council members and 256 referents from local networks were trained. A simple brochure on the LADV was produced and used for awareness-raising. This booklet explained the key elements of the law and ‘a step-by-step’ case reporting process with photos.

**16 days activism campaign as an opportunity for outreach.** The theme of the campaign, ‘The Law against Domestic Violence, protecting me, protecting my family,’ was chosen to highlight that the law was conceived to keep families together and not to separate them, as was commonly perceived. In 2011, the Association of Men against Violence (AMKV) joined the campaign and played a key role in tackling the resistance shown by men to the approval of the law. While this initiative was successful, the targeted audience was very limited and improvements must be considered for the future.

**Joint Directory of service providers for GBV and trafficking.** UNFPA, IOM and the Alola NGO produced a booklet entitled “Who Can Help” that listed contacts of useful services in case of GBV in Dili and each district. This booklet was conceived for use by service providers, schools, hospitals and suco-district officers. To reach children and illiterate persons, posters with emergency numbers were printed and displayed in these locations.

## Innovative Awareness-Raising on Human Trafficking through Art Performances

In Dili and Baucau Districts, awareness-raising on human trafficking through drama performance and music were proposed directly by the sucos. To respond to their request, IOM supported sensitization of performers, and provided a selection of good case studies as well as a storyline for the actors selected by the community. The drama performance was open to all members of the community. In Baucau, local youth composed and performed music with the lyrics focused on human trafficking. IOM also cooperated with MTV Exit and developed a programme on combating human trafficking in Tetun, the local language, which was broadcast and viewed in two districts. Considering the high rates of illiteracy, especially in the districts, this type of community-based socialization is an excellent and effective approach that other communities and stakeholders can replicate.

### **Community-based innovative awareness campaign.**

IOM reached 2,540 people through different community-based awareness campaigns on human trafficking (awareness-raising in five districts, trained journalists, advocacy through newspapers, TV shows). Moreover, three small grants per district were assigned to communities to develop innovative awareness-raising campaigns.

**Two layers of Trainings for Trainers.** UNICEF carried out extensive outreach for child protection, reaching all the sucos in 13 districts through two layers of ToT. First, Child Protection Officers (CPOs) in 13 districts were trained as trainers. In a second phase the CPOs trained the members of the Child Protection Network (CPN). Finally, CPN members were able to address targeted audiences, in particular students and children. Different types of materials such as child protection flip charts, guidelines, posters, booklets, and brochures were produced and distributed.

### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

**Continuous awareness-raising at the community level is key for changing the mindset.** There are many social and cultural factors that create barriers to mindset change regarding GBV and human trafficking, among these patriarchal society, consideration of GBV as a private matter and the role of community leaders in mediating cases. For these reasons it is important that people have a chance

## Anger Management Training for Prisoners

As part of the IEC initiatives, UNFPA supported Anger Management Training for GBV/DV offenders to prevent recidivism. This initiative was based on the anger management training manual developed by UNFPA in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice in 2006. In cooperation with SEPI, the National Department of Prison Service (NDPS) and the Ministry of Justice, this initiative was replicated in 2010 and 2011. Ninety-two people (mostly prisoners and some prison guards) received trainings on how to identify and manage emotions and anger, how to manage stopping violence in relationships, and how to maintain non-violent relationships. The sessions also included meditation and yoga as methods for anger control. The participants also received information on the LADV. In addition, trainings were organized to target the correction officers in Gleno and Becora prisons who dealt with the offenders, and 40 officers participated in total. Currently, the DPTS has requested that all corrections officers in Timor-Leste (over 200 staff) undergo this training and that the training is permanently included in the programmes of the prison services. Furthermore, based on recommendation from prisoners, anger management training will be carried out in one of the districts with higher risk of violence, and the participants will be youth who belong to martial arts groups.

to better understand domestic violence and human trafficking. This can be achieved by constantly providing information on relevant national laws and involving the community as active participants in the awareness-raising process.

**Information education and communication (IEC) strategy for harmonized and joint public awareness.**

Although some joint IEC initiatives were undertaken, more coordinated public awareness activities could have been organized under the UN Joint Programme. If a joint IEC strategy would have been developed at the initial stage of the Programme, more synchronized actions with a consistent message could have been delivered and the visibility of the Programme would have been higher.

**SUPPORT FOR OUTREACH MECHANISMS AND SERVICES PROVISION**

**Reduced Vulnerability of Women and Girls through Bolsa de Mãe (Conditional Cash Transfer)**

**Improved identification of vulnerable women.**

UNDP supported the development of a technical note on policies and implementation guidelines of the 'Bolsa da Mae' (BdM). This technical note outlined and defined vulnerability identification criteria and operational procedures for the conditional cash transfers. This intervention was much needed to provide fair access to resources for the most vulnerable while mitigating the potential tensions in the family. To ensure the link with increased attainment of education and vaccination, a monitoring system for compliance with conditionality was also strengthened. The technical note contributed to the Bolsa de Mae Decree Law promulgated in April 2012.

**Systematization of beneficiary data.** The establishment of a central database system for BdM along with the registration of ongoing beneficiaries contributed to the systematization of information allowing the Ministry of Social Security (MSS) to access beneficiary profiles at both the central and district levels. This also enabled a more accurate selection of beneficiaries along with improvement of general implementation and monitoring. By

February 2012, over 15,000 beneficiaries in 13 districts were registered.

**Building the capacity of the district staff to systematize data and link it to the central data system was a remarkable success.** Twenty-one MSS staff members, 13 CPOs in the districts, and 65 social animators in sub-districts have been trained and are now capable to monitor, carry out evaluations, collect data and identify possible beneficiaries for the cash transfers.

**Better access to social protection for vulnerable population.** Vulnerable women have better access to social protection through access to cash, education and health for their children. According to interviews with beneficiaries in Oecussi, Suai and Dili districts nearly all would spend the cash for their children's schooling. It has been acknowledged that economic vulnerability can trigger domestic violence; therefore, the BdM scheme represents an input towards prevention. A divorced woman who was interviewed during the BdM disbursement in Metinaro district of Dili said that she had experienced domestic violence due to financial difficulties. Now she feels protected and empowered, and she can send her children to school.

**LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES**

**Missing linkage with vulnerability to GBV.** The re-defined criteria and registration questionnaires for BdM scheme do not contain information on vulnerability to GBV. For the future, the MSS and UNDP suggested to use the data available so that potential victims and survivors are informed of the existence of the BdM scheme and can have access to its benefits. The database will also be shared among the three Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Solidarity.

**Missed opportunity of a strategic linkage with Gender-Responsive Budget (GRB).** Stressing the strategic linkage between the BdM scheme and GRB would have allowed the MSS to advocate more strongly on the need to increase the BdM budget as it related to access to health and education.

## **SUPPORT TO STRENGTHENING THE REFERRAL MECHANISM AND SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND GBV**

### **Development of SOPs and capacity building on GBV.**

With UNFPAs technical support, two comprehensive SOPs on GBV and GBV data collection were developed by the MSS. The SOPs aim at guiding service providers to respond to all forms of GBV in a coordinated and multi-sectoral manner. They explain the fundamental principles, roles and responsibilities of each service provider. The SOPs also include interview guidelines, reporting, legal assistance, case management and step by step referral pathways. The SOPs were launched in all 13 districts and addressed to 256 stakeholders from various service providers. The existence and implementation of the SOPs will also contribute to quality control of the services and data collection as a whole (elements of recording, analysis, and information management including data sharing and confidentiality).

### **Targeted referral guidelines for child protection and capacity building.**

With UNICEF support, referral guidelines for child protection were developed targeting two different audiences. A comprehensive

‘step by step’ guideline was addressed to the child protection network members, and an ‘easy to understand’ message was targeted to communities and children. The first one provides clear information on the responsible actors and actions, while the second one focuses on ‘whom to inform’ when children experience or witness violence/exploitation.

### **Medical forensic examination institutionalized and available at the regional level.**

An area that became crucial with the adoption of the LADV is the medical forensic examination, which can provide the necessary physical evidence in cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. With the assistance of the AusAID Justice Facility and UNFPA, the MDG-F supported the local NGO PRADET to improve and finalize the original medical forensic examination protocol and to carry out pilot trainings for its use.

**Enhanced Coordination Mechanism.** Establishing and strengthening the coordination mechanism in Dili and at the district level improved the communication among service providers and enabled timely support to the survivors. Two

## **Increased Capacity for Medical Forensic Examination**

With the assistance of the AusAID Justice Facility and UNFPA, the MDG-F supported the local NGO PRADET to improve the original Medical Forensic Examination Protocol (MFP). This Protocol was endorsed by the National Institute of Health (Ministry of Health) in late 2010. With MDG-F support, 20 midwives and doctors from five hospitals in five districts (Oecussi, Suai, Baucau, Maliana, and Maubisse) have been trained in the use of the MFP and graduated in April 2012. Given the lack of consistent electricity supply, computers, printers and photocopy machines in many locations where this kind of examination is performed, carbon paper is used in order to have a duplicate of the evidence recorded. Such a simple idea can make a difference. Prior to the recent graduation of health care workers on the use of the MFP, Dili-based PRADET was the only organization that could provide a medical forensic examination, and survivors who did not have access to the service in the districts had to be brought to Dili. Now that 20 nurses, midwives and doctors have acquired this knowledge and that new Fatin Hakmateks (safe rooms) have been (and will be) established in Oecussi, Suai and Maliana, it is expected that an increased number of survivors will be able to undergo this examination according to the national recommendations. This, in turn, will support the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor to proceed to trial, relying now on solid physical evidence and not only on witness testimony.

government-led GBV working groups were formalized in Dili and several local referral networks were established in the districts. The Directorate of the National Social Reinsertion in the MSS coordinates the service providers meetings to ensure coordinated responses to GBV cases as well as child protection issues, whereas SEPI coordinates the strategy and advocacy meetings. Even though the Child Protection Network existed prior to the MDG-F Programme, numerous trainings and operational support strengthened the network and regularized the meetings. The monthly national-level meeting, which is attended by all the CPOs, is now also used as a forum to discuss and coordinate DV issues with the Women's Unit of MSS.

#### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

**Absorption capacity towards actual implementation is still a challenge.** As the plan for annual training and continuous operationalization of the SOPs has already been included in the NAP-GBV, it will be crucial for the government to allocate sufficient funding to guarantee continuity. Furthermore, some officers, especially CPOs, NVPU staff and service providers such as NGOs are responsible for all three areas (GBV, child protection and human trafficking). Due to the fact that the training was provided in the same period, it may take time for them to clarify and absorb each procedure.

**Cross-reference and complementarities of SOPs.** Whereas the SOP on GBV makes reference to the Child Protection Referral Guidelines and the SOP on Human Trafficking, the latter do not link with each other in a comprehensive manner. It could be partly because the documents have been developed in two different moments. One of the service providers expressed some confusion about the different procedures and suggested comparisons and clarification of the three procedures in the future.

**Sustainability of the referral networks at the district level.** Despite the enhanced referral networks and procedures in place, some challenges remain. A local GBV referral network in one of the districts used to be coordinated by a local NGO, but,

in accordance with the LADV, the coordination role has now been handed over to the MSS. NGOs at the focus group meetings have noted that the network has been inactive despite enhanced referrals. This inactivity may be attributed to the heavy workload of the CPO, lack of skills or insufficient budget. It appears that the capacity and feasibility to operate the networks may need to be discussed among the stakeholders, who could consider either increasing the human resources or delegating the coordination role to another service provider as a temporary measure, so that the momentum and solidarity of the networks are not lost.

**Enhanced conditions for achieving formal justice are necessary.** Despite the existence of the LADV and penal code, GBV survivors continue to face challenges to bringing their cases to court. The main reasons include lack of knowledge about formal justice mechanisms, lack of confidence, economic dependence on perpetrators, lack of community support and cultural constraints, geographical constraints to access courts and weak capacity of judicial and police actors.

#### SUPPORT FOR FAIR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

##### Support to Strengthening Institutional Capacity on Gender

**Increased knowledge of and interest in GRB by government stakeholders.** One of the key achievements in GRB is the increased interest of government stakeholders achieved through training and south-south exchange on good models implemented in Mozambique and India. After a GRB assessment that showed the baseline and capacity of GRB in Timor-Leste, needs for capacity building were identified. As a response, several trainings were conducted accordingly, addressed to the targeted stakeholders. SEPI staff, parliament members and civil society received training on GRB and budget analysis and the Annual Action Plan (AAP). The Inter-Ministerial Gender Working Group (IM GWG) also was sensitized on GRB and gender mainstreaming in their work. Selected SEPI staff was trained through the ToT in order to be able to reach other ministries and district-level GWGs. SEPI played a key role in reviewing and

providing inputs in sectoral AAPs and budgets of several ministries and secretaries of state. The fact that 20 per cent of the Ministry of Education and Health budget is targeted to women and children, and the budget for implementation of LADV in 2011 has reasonably increased are attributed to SEPI and the Ministry's effort.

**Other ministries also took action in this direction.**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Social Solidarity have initiated the GWG meeting for strategic gender mainstreaming discussion within the Ministry. They have identified institutionalization of knowledge as one of the crucial actions and have requested UN Women for technical assistance in conducting internal trainings on the GRB concept and GRB analysis of the AAP.

**Development of GRB tools for institutionalization of knowledge.** Under SEPI's leadership three comprehensive tools were developed during the training process. The GWG resource kit is targeted for all the GWG members. As the appointment of GWG members was still underway at the time of developing the kit, it will be used in the future for new members. SEPI, with support from UN Women, will continue to carry out trainings at district levels using the resource kit. The second tool is GRB strategies/guidelines for civil society, and the third is a comprehensive GRB training package for different stakeholders and new staff. The development of these very useful tools will take forward the gender mainstreaming and GRB work at national and district levels.

**Costing for the NAP-GBV. Costing of the NAP-GBV carried out with NAP-GBV stakeholders was a significant achievement.** It played a key role as an advocacy tool for the budget request and allocation, as well as identification of gaps. Each activity cost was estimated and therefore each implementing agency and partner was aware of the budget for respective activities. As the implementation proceeds, however, the necessity of more detailed costing and additional requirements, especially for human resources, have been identified. SEPI and stakeholders could consider elaborating on the costing.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

**Implications of late start on implementation.**

An overall challenge for the GRB component was the late start of the implementation due to organizational changes of UN Women and difficulties in recruiting the staff. As a result, capacity building training and tools development were significantly delayed. Due to the tight schedule of the training, trainees did not have enough time to internalize and apply their new skills.

**Strengthening of enabling environment for GRB implementation.** The Director of Planning at SEPI pointed out the challenges for implementation of GRB during an election year, which hampered the process and diverted the politicians' and governments' interests. While the appointment of the GWG members was underway prior to the elections, the changes in the political structure that were to be announced in early August 2012 may also have had an impact on the appointment and the operationalization of the GWG system. There is no installed mechanism to ensure GRB in the budget process at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and having MoF more involved in the institutionalization of GRB is essential. SEPI is also advocating for membership in the Budget Review Committee to influence the budget review more effectively.

**SEPI-led process for capacity building with increased practical application of their skills is important.** A coordinator was appointed within SEPI to accelerate implementation of capacity-building. As a result, staff was provided with mentoring and hands-on training for project management, including management of a team of experts in GRB, procurement processes and financial procedures. One of the main lessons learned was the insufficient involvement of the trained SEPI staff in the actual provision of training and development of tools. While SEPI staff had some opportunities to facilitate and train the district GWG members, further use of their new skills could have been maximized. Co-facilitation of the training or mentoring by the trainer (expert) will be a good approach for the staff practical training. In developing the GRB strategies and guidelines for civil society, involvement of civil society in the process could have been also maximized.

**Pool of trained trainers at the national level.** A significant number of government, parliament and NGO staff received initial training on GRB. Tools and guidelines will be all available by the end of the Programme. It is a priority not to lose this positive momentum and continue with the training and application of the new skills, strengthening coordination between and among government, civil society and the parliament. To further institutionalize the GRB knowledge across the government and the civil society, it was suggested to create a team of trainers in charge of training institutions and civil society.

### Strengthening the NGO GRB Working Group

**Increased knowledge on GRB and its practical application.** To introduce the concept and roles of NGOs in the area of GRB, UN Women organized several workshops where NGO advocates enhanced their understanding and knowledge on this topic. The workshops not only introduced the concept but also involved hands-on exercises to analyse the government budget. “This practical application of the analysis was eye-opening for us to unpack the government budget and use the result as an advocacy tool,” said one of the NGO participants. They also found that mentoring by the consultant on their analysis of the government budget was very helpful.

**Collective advocacy as an NGO GRB working group.** With the support of UN Women, the NGO GRB working group was gradually established to enhance their joint work and advocacy, and started to meet monthly after the first GRB training. The working group played a key role to unite women’s NGOs and non-traditional partners, i.e. NGOs for transparency. Despite the very recent creation of the group, it actively discussed joint actions, advocated and started to write joint letters to the government. During 2010, they had written joint request letters to SEPI, the President of the National Parliament, and the Ministry of Finance to advocate for NGOs’ increased role in monitoring gender-responsiveness, and actively participated in the budget hearing. In October 2011, the NGO GRB working group submitted a formal question to the National Parliament requesting the following:

- To provide enhanced support to GBV survivors through:
  - Establishment of shelters (Ministry of Social Solidarity)
  - Establishment of a crisis centre (Ministry of Health)
  - Inclusion of curriculum on Law against Domestic Violence (Ministry of Education)
  - Provision of vehicles to National Vulnerable Persons Unit (NVPU) and National Police of East Timor in 13 districts (Secretary of State on Security)
- To increase the budget for the CEDAW Committee.

**The NGOs’ demands partly met.** Dialogue with the Parliament was strengthened in the past two years. The NGO GRB now has a regular meeting with the Parliament Commission that deals with gender issues to share information and advocate for an increased budget. They have continued to lobby regarding the above request, and as a result, they managed to get a positive response and the following actions have been taken to date:

- Two shelters are in the process of construction;
- LADV has been included in the curriculum for secondary schools and above;
- 15 vehicles have been allocated to NVPU;
- Discussions on the establishment of the Crisis Centre is under way; and
- A budget of US\$67,000 was allocated to the CEDAW Committee.

**Joint study tour increased communications between the government and civil society.** Representatives of the NGO GRB working group also participated in the GRB study tour to Mozambique and India supported by the MDG-F. This, besides increasing the knowledge of GRB mechanisms, enhanced information exchange and discussion among the Timorese government and civil society participants. The multi-sectoral composition of the group created a good environment for joint thinking.

## 7. Sustainability and Replication

The overall design and the main strategy of this Programme, namely institutionalization and national ownership, are closely linked to its sustainability.

### 1. Support to the legislation on domestic violence and human trafficking, and their action plans contributed to making the Government responsible and accountable for its commitment towards prevention of such cases and protection of survivors.

In case of the NAP-GBV, long and short-term goals along with costing for the next three years and specified responsible actors are key factors for sustainability.

### 2. Support to operationalization through capacity-building and development of protocols and tools was an essential element of the programme towards institutionalization and sustainability.

Amongst the different trainings in the programme, institutionalization of the GBV Investigation at the end of the MDG-F Programme implementation demonstrated the success of sustainability. Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders were involved in the development of protocols

and tools; final documents were translated and made available in the local language (Tetun); and the stakeholders received relevant training to apply them. Moreover, an initiative such as the two layers of ToT in child protection to reach grassroots level actors also contributed to sustainability. Support to and strengthening the networks systematized the mechanism towards sustainability.

### 3. Political will and sufficient government budget allocation are key for sustainability.

Despite all the positive aspects above, implementation of the plans, the performance of each actor and the operationalization of networks and meetings after the MDG-F Programme period hinge on the political will, sufficient government budget allocations and the motivation of the responsible actors. The Government's commitment to gender equality, especially in its operationalization and budget allocation, is still weak. To advocate and support the Government to take a more gender-sensitive approach to its budget planning and allocation, the Programme also attempted to institutionalize GRB. GRB still being a new concept for Timor-Leste, continuous capacity-building and mentoring, as well as monitoring for government and civil society actors will be essential.

Scaling up	Replication
Further technical and financial support to implementation of the NAP-GBV: sustainable quality service provision, capacity-building, and continuous public awareness-raising.	Technical support to costing of the NAP-CHT and its operationalization upon approval of the NAP-CHT and the LAHT similar to the support to NAP-GBV.
Further technical support to GBV data collection and its systematization.	Support to the government-led, multi-sectoral and participatory process for developing policies and actions plans.
Support to strengthening/establishment of the local referral networks (GBV, child protection, human trafficking).	Support which combines policy/legislation development and capacity-building of stakeholders.
Continued and scaled up capacity-building support to government stakeholders on GRB at the national, district and sub-district levels including establishment of a systematized pool of experts.	UN joint/coordinated training as a model for aid effectiveness.
Continued technical and financial support to NGO GRB working group.	Community-led/based public awareness-raising.

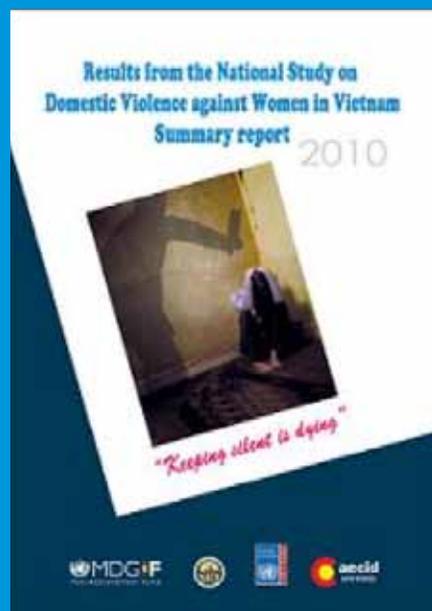


# NATIONAL STUDY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Joint Programme: Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UNFPA (lead agency), WHO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, IOM, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC, UNAIDS, General Statistics Office, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Provincial Statistics Offices



Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality



Women Have New Hope



## 1. Introduction

On 25 November 2010, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the results of the first ever National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam were released at an event in Ha Noi. The dissemination of its findings has contributed to raise awareness on the extent of domestic violence in the country and presented evidences to policy makers and civil society actors to design and implement evidence-based policies and interventions to prevent and address domestic violence against women. The Viet Nam Government plans to carry out a new study in 2015 to assess the progress made since 2010 to eliminate domestic violence. Although the Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality adopted a holistic strategy to promote the rights of women, the present report concentrates on the methods and results of the national survey.

The study found that 34 per cent of ever-married women reported that they had suffered physical or sexual violence from their husbands at some time in their lives. Ever-married women who were experiencing either of these two types of violence amounted to nine per cent at the time of the survey. When all three main types of partner violence—physical, sexual and emotional—were considered, more than half (58 per cent) of Vietnamese women reported experiencing at least one type of domestic violence in their lifetime. The study findings also show that women are three times more likely to be abused by their husband than by any other person.

## 2. Initial Situation

Viet Nam's commitment with gender equality is evident in its efforts to improve the national legal and policy frameworks to advance women's rights and end violence against women. Domestic violence was, for the first time, officially recognized as an obstacle to national development in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy approved in 2002. In 2006, the Law on Gender Equality was passed. It was followed by passage in 2007 of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

However, despite important legislative advances, there is a gap between the theory and the practical implementation at all levels. Major contributing factors include domestic violence being considered a private family matter, in which society should not interfere, violence being accepted as normal behaviour, and limited knowledge about domestic violence among both the population and the duty bearers. Before 2010, there was also a lack of reliable data on this issue. While some small-scale quantitative and qualitative studies had been undertaken before, available data was not nationally representative and the actual extent of the problem was not fully known. With limited data on and understanding of domestic violence, there had been insufficient response to address gender-based violence in Viet Nam.

There was, therefore, a real need for more sound evidence for policy advocacy and design, as well

*“This report highlights the urgency of breaking the silence. All of us owe it to the women who suffer from domestic violence, and the women who took part in this survey, to step up, speak out and end domestic violence.”*

**JEAN MARC OLIVE, WHO REPRESENTATIVE IN VIET NAM**

as for baseline data against which the impact of the Law on Domestic Violence could be measured. Specific and in-depth research was identified as a priority to learn more about the prevalence, causes and consequences of domestic violence in the country.

There was also a need to promote collaboration among different institutions responsible for addressing domestic violence. While the state management agency for the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control is the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, a number of other ministries and government agencies have also important roles to play, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Security and the General Statistics Office. However, information exchange and collaboration among different agencies were limited.

In this context, the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam was implemented in 2009-2010, within the frame of the United Nations-Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality.

### 3. Objectives

The 2010 National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam aimed to contribute to the elimination of domestic violence in Viet Nam, by ensuring availability of regularly generated data to be used as a basis for formulating and implementing interventions to prevent and respond to violence against women and for monitoring and evaluating progress.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Estimate the prevalence, frequencies and forms of violence against women;
- Assess the extent to which domestic violence against women is associated with a range of health and other outcomes;
- Identify the factors that may either protect or put women at risk of domestic violence; and
- Document and compare the strategies and services that women use to deal with domestic

violence, perceptions about domestic violence against women and how much women know about their legal rights.

The study also had the following indirect objectives:

- Improve understanding about violence against women in Viet Nam;
- Increase national capacity and collaboration among researchers and women's and other civil society organizations working on domestic violence;
- Increase awareness about and sensitivity to domestic violence among researchers, policy makers and health care providers; and
- Contribute to the establishment of a network of people committed to address domestic violence.

### 4. Key Actors

The General Statistics Office (GSO) was responsible for the overall management of the survey and the implementation of the fieldwork. The GSO was considered the key institution, due to its extensive experience in data collection and analysis, its nationwide network of local statistical offices and the capacity to mobilize field workers.

The World Health Organization (WHO) was responsible for providing technical assistance and for the overall coordination of the study.

The Sub-Working Group on Gender-Based Violence integrated experts from the United Nations agencies participating in the Joint Programme: UNFPA, WHO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, IOM, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC and UNAIDS. This Group was used to discuss the substantial contents of the study, such as the questionnaire, training materials and the list of stakeholders to be involved.

The National Survey Steering Committee was established in mid-2009 to take the overall responsibility for the implementation of the survey fieldwork. The Vice General Director of the GSO led the Committee. Members included high-level representatives from the GSO, the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Gender

Equality Department from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST).

The research team consisted of seven core members, including two experts from the GSO, one expert from MOH, two national consultants, one international consultant and one staff member from WHO Viet Nam. This diversity brought different views into the study and ensured technical soundness. National and international NGOs, the academia, mass organizations and bilateral cooperation were also involved.

## 5. Strategy

The process around the elaboration and dissemination of the Study consisted of the following steps:

1. Data collection
2. Report writing
3. Dissemination of results
4. Feedback from field workers

### STEP 1: DATA COLLECTION<sup>16</sup>

The research included a quantitative component (a population-based survey) and a qualitative one (in-depth interviews and focus group discussions).

#### Quantitative component

The quantitative component followed the methodology developed for the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence, with a few modifications in terms of the sample and the questionnaire. From December 2009 to February 2010, a nationally representative sample of 4,838 women of 18-60 years old women was interviewed throughout the country. The response rate of the survey was 78.2 per cent. The refusal rate was low compared with other surveys carried out in Viet Nam, with only 1.6 per cent refusing to participate.

<sup>16</sup> Detailed information on the methodology can be found in Chapter 2 of the report *Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam*.

#### Preparation of the questionnaire and other survey tools

The process of adapting the WHO Multi-country Study survey questionnaire Version 10 to the Viet Nam context involved many stakeholders from different technical backgrounds who had interest in the survey. There were numerous requests to include additional questions to collect data on other issues, such as child abuse and HIV/AIDS. After long negotiations, the final contents of the questionnaire were decided, taking into consideration the following factors:

- Safety of respondents;
- Focus: adding many questions on different topics may weaken the focus of the study;
- Resources: more questions means longer time to complete one questionnaire and, therefore, more working hours to complete the field data collection; and
- Ethical considerations involved in adding questions on specific topics.

The adapted questionnaire was pre-field tested in Ha Noi and Tien Giang. Respondents were asked to answer questions, as well as to provide feedback on the clarity and acceptability of the questions and the way in which the questionnaire was delivered.

#### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

It is not advisable to include various topics in efforts to capture a lot of information, since each topic requires specific steps, questions and set-up to collect reliable data. It may appear feasible and appropriate to include some topics (e.g. questions on child abuse). However, new topics can create a new set of issues, which may not be appropriately addressed (e.g. what an interviewer should do when a case of child abuse is disclosed during the interview).

#### Selection and training of field workers

Field workers were selected from among women aged 30-60. Previous experience in survey work was required, so the field workers were selected from the staff from Provincial Statistics Offices

(75 women) and the GSO (seven women). Important skills sought were the ability to interact with all classes of people, a nonjudgmental attitude, maturity and life experience, good interpersonal skills to build a rapport with the respondent and experience in dealing with sensitive issues.

Selected field workers were trained during two weeks in November 2010. Data entry designers also attended the training, so that an appropriate data entry system could be developed. All staff signed a confidentiality agreement on the final day of training as part of their work contract.

Since interviewers already had survey experience, it was possible to develop a shorter two-week training curriculum based on the standardized programme from WHO, which is normally three weeks. Two days were dedicated to gender sensitization, followed by training in interview techniques, discussion of the questionnaire and role-playing. One day in the second week was dedicated to practice in the field (pilot study). The site for the pilot was selected to represent an average site in Viet Nam. Seventy-eight women completed the pilot interview. The answers were analyzed and the data for key indicators, such as rate of women who suffered from different types of violence, was generated.

#### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- Many field workers expressed that they did not have enough training on how to handle difficult situations, especially when interviewing survivors of domestic violence, and they had been left with feeling of regret for not being able to provide greater support. Training should better prepare the field workers to know what they could do and could not do when interviewing domestic violence survivors. Knowledge of referral services is essential, and should be standard practice.
- Although the percentage is not known, some interviews with women with disabilities were discontinued when the field workers felt that they were not adequately equipped to continue. However, women with disabilities should not be excluded. Special considerations and resources

are required to ensure that women with disabilities are not excluded from the survey.

- It is critical to recruit more field workers than the exact number required in the actual survey. The Viet Nam experience recommends 20 per cent more field workers to be trained and be available than the number required to carry out the field work.
- It is advisable to have a large enough sample size when carrying out a pilot test, since results from the pilot may act as a reference point for data checking. In the case of Viet Nam, the key indicators (e.g. rates of physical, emotional and sexual violence) showed similar rates, both in the pilot test and in the national survey. Therefore, when rates from a certain site were very different from those of the pilot site, the survey team was able to ask questions for quality assurance (e.g. were the questionnaires completed appropriately?) and for potential need for further investigation in the qualitative component (e.g. what are possible reasons for certain areas to have much lower/higher rates of violence?).

#### Conducting field data collection

Fieldwork was conducted between December 2009 and early February 2010, with 4,838 women interviewed. To prevent burnout, gender violence studies recommend a maximum of 100 interviews per interviewer. Further, experience from other studies has shown that it is advisable to finish one cluster in one day, so that safety and confidentiality are not compromised. As each interviewer was expected to conduct three interviews in one day, and since each cluster consisted of 12 households, it was decided to organize teams of five members, with three interviewers, one team leader and one field editor. For the fieldwork to be completed in two months, 14 field teams were formed. Team leaders were responsible for overseeing all activities of the team in each cluster. Field editors ensured that questionnaires were completed and correctly filled out, and interviewers conducted the face-to-face interviews.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject, the Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on

Domestic Violence with Women<sup>17</sup> were strictly applied. One example is the name assigned to the field survey. To avoid jeopardizing interviewees and interviewers, pre-judgment among the interviewees and potential interventions to prevent disclosure of information, the survey did not use the word “violence.” Instead, “National Study on Women’s Health and Life Experience” was used as the safe name. This was the title used to inform the Provincial Statistics Offices and to ask for their support to send invitations to potential participants and arrange for the interviews.

As recommended in the WHO guidelines, women were not interviewed in their homes but received a letter of invitation in advance and were interviewed in a central neutral location, usually the commune centre. This modification was decided on due to the common living style in Viet Nam, where many generations live together, which may not be ideal to maintain privacy and safety during interviews. Although the interviews were conducted in one room with three to four women being interviewed at a time, allowing sufficient space between tables and chairs preserved privacy.

At the end of the interview, which usually took around 85 minutes, the interviewed women were given a pocket-sized booklet containing general information on domestic violence and available services for survivors. These materials were mixed with leaflets on other general health issues, so that whoever viewed the materials did not identify the real purpose of the survey (domestic violence). The aim was to avoid any potential violence against the interviewed women by her partner or husband after participating in the survey.

At the end of the interview, women were asked how they felt, better, the same or worse compared with before the interview. Eighty per cent of interviewed women reported feeling better. What is striking is that women who experienced violence by partners were more likely to feel better than those who did not experience violence, even more for women who

had suffered more severe levels of violence. Among those who reported both physical and sexual violence, almost 90 per cent stated they felt better after the interview.

#### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, the guidelines on ethic and safety considerations must be applied strictly in all actions. Appropriate words (e.g. avoid the word “violence”) should be decided and used in all the official documents and communications.
- Field workers sometimes expressed feelings of depression after interviewing women suffering from domestic violence. In these cases, other team members provided support to comfort each other. However, it would be more helpful to have additional support systems during and after the field data collection.
- Good cooperation among the survey teams, the Provincial Statistical Offices and communal offices is the key for the smooth operation of the fieldwork. To establish a good relationship, all relevant offices need to be aware of the survey plan in advance.

#### Processing and analyzing data

A central data entry system was created in the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPRO 2.5), with an extensive error check programme. All data were double entered to minimize data entry errors. Dummy tables, a data dictionary and analysis syntax in Data Analysis and Statistical Software (STATA) were adapted and created for conducting data analysis. Weighting was done to correct for the effect of sampling. Univariate, exploratory and descriptive analyses of the results from the questionnaires were performed.

#### Qualitative component

After completion of the quantitative component, the qualitative research was carried out in April 2010. It sought to contextualize the violence and to provide a better understanding of perceptions about the violence by community members and authorities,

<sup>17</sup> WHO. ‘Putting women first: Ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women’. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2001.

perceived causes of violence, risk factors, how violence escalates, consequences of violence and how family members, neighbors and other people may intervene in cases of violence.

Selecting participants, sites and research tools. Based on the above-mentioned specific objectives, the following target groups were identified:

- Women survivors of violence;
- Village leaders, chairs and vice-chair of the Communist Party, police officers, officers from the Women's Union and a Health Care Provider at the local level;
- Women from the community; and
- Men from the community.

The selection of women suffering from domestic violence was thoroughly discussed. After analysing different options, it was decided to select and contact women participating in projects on domestic violence or receiving services. The option of going back to the quantitative component to identify the respondents suffering from domestic violence was also discussed, but not selected, for ethical reasons and to maintain confidentiality of the study.

In terms of sites, it was decided to select communes not targeted in the quantitative component, so that the safety of the women who participated in the quantitative interviews was not jeopardized. Three provinces, representing northern, central and southern Viet Nam, were finally selected.

The research tools (e.g. guidelines for interviewing women suffering from domestic violence, guidelines for men in community, etc.) were tested by completing five interviews with women suffering from domestic violence, interviews with one man and one local leader and two focus group discussions (one with women and one with men). Based on the results and feedback from the pilot test, the questions and guidelines were fine-tuned and finalized.

Conducting field data collection and analysing data. The field data collection was conducted during March-April 2010 by three teams composed, each of them, of four senior researchers and one assistant researcher who had undergone specialized training.

To ensure homogeneity in the application of the guidelines, all researchers attended a one-day preparation workshop.

In total, five women survivors, five key informants (a staff member from the Women's Union, a health care provider, a policy officer, a village leader, a chair and vice-chair of the Communist Party), ten women and ten men per province, underwent in-depth interviews. Two focus group discussions for women and two for men were also conducted in each province.

## **STEP 2: REPORT WRITING**

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Upon completion of the field data collection and the subsequent data processing, the research team gathered in a five-day intensive writing workshop, where they could focus on report writing without any distractions from daily work. At the end of the workshop, a first draft of the report had been produced.

## **STEP 3: DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS**

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Since domestic violence is a sensitive topic, it had been envisaged that a sudden release of the results might provoke unfavorable reactions by some of the key stakeholders, particularly policy makers. Therefore, the process of findings dissemination was carefully planned and implemented involving the key stakeholders and promoting a shared understanding on the study. The key steps included:

- Finalization of the draft report by incorporating inputs from the key colleagues involved;
- Consultation meeting with the key stakeholders;
- Pre-launch meeting to present the study; and
- Official launch of the study report.

### **Finalization of the draft report**

Copies of the draft report were distributed to the technical advisory members for review, prior to the closed consultative meeting. The copies were treated as strictly confidential and were sealed and hand-delivered to reviewers, to prevent information leakage and to assure confidentiality of the findings.

Reviewers were those who were closely involved in this study and who would be responsible to support the dissemination, communication and utilization of the data after the official launch. Reviewers were asked to provide feedback and raise questions regarding the study and its findings prior to the public view. This provided an opportunity for reviewers to discuss and anticipate issues that might arise during the release of the findings.

### Consultation with the key stakeholders

The first consultation workshop took place on 24 June 2010. It had a twofold objective: to collect comments to improve the draft report and to develop strategies to communicate the results in an effective way, by anticipating concerns and questions from the public. The participants were technical experts, including representatives from the GSO, key line Ministries, the Viet Nam Women's Union, national NGOs, academic institutions and the UN.

The consultation workshop highlighted some issues that needed to be addressed before the official launch:

- Some participants did not have a comprehensive understanding of the survey methodology, and thus questioned the methodology as well as the credibility of the data.
- There were questions related to the sampling technique and sample size, questioning the national representativeness of the findings.
- Some participants were concerned that this study excluded men from the picture.
- There were some interests to see data from similar surveys conducted in other countries.
- There was a call for relevant agencies to be present at the launch, in an attempt to address questions related to mechanisms and services in place to respond to domestic violence.

### Pre-launch meeting

Prior to the official launch of the study, a half-day pre-launch meeting was organized to explain the study objectives, scope and methodology, present

the findings and discuss and clarify any issues necessary for endorsing the findings. The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy General Director of the GSO. The participants were representatives, directors of departments, decision makers and technical experts from key Ministries. The participants shared their comments and endorsed the report for the official launch.

### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

It is important to obtain support from the leadership and management of the relevant ministries and institutions prior to the official launch, by clearly explaining the study methodology and the findings.

### Launch of the report

The report *Keeping Silent is Dying: Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam* was officially launched on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November 2010, in Ha Noi. More than 200 colleagues participated, representing government institutions, national and international NGOs, academic institutions, mass organizations, media, donors and UN agencies.

Presentations were made on the methodologies and scope for the quantitative and qualitative components, the key findings and recommendations for further research, followed by a questions and answers session. The agenda included presentations by the key duty bearers, such as the MOCST, to support the key findings and to share their view in responding to domestic violence. The launch also included a media briefing session. With support from the One UN Communications Team, the launch was featured in many media outlets, including newspaper, online news and TV.

### LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- It was essential to count on the representation and interventions of the key line ministries, such as the GSO and MOCST. This showed the ownership of the data by the government of

Viet Nam, meaning that the findings were credible and could be used for further work on prevention and response to domestic violence.

- It is fundamental to provide clear explanations on the study methodology to prove credibility of the results. There were many interventions from the public saying that the results may be high due to the study methodology, but the research team was able to present a strong case for the methodology.
- It is necessary to arrange a separate briefing and Q&A session specifically for media, so that they can receive comprehensive and accurate information to use in their articles, even if they do not stay for the whole event.
- For wider dissemination of the findings, the launch at the central level may be followed by launches in other major cities and provinces of the country.
- The launch does not mark the end of the communication and advocacy. A strategy is needed to continuously disseminate and communicate the study findings to various stakeholders. It is important to continue addressing the questions of the data use, influence on policies and programmes, to what extent the recommendations were realized and how to sensitize policy-makers and the general public about the consequences of the violence to the family, the society and the country.

#### STEP 4: FEEDBACK FROM THE FIELD WORKERS

Immediately upon completion of the fieldwork, it was decided to acknowledge the contribution of the field workers and to seek their feedback to learn to what extent the training had been useful and how they addressed difficult situations, as well as to identify possible areas for improvement. An appreciation letter and a feedback questionnaire were sent to all field workers. In total, 45 questionnaires were returned.

Overall, the feedback showed that the training had been useful in terms of providing sufficient knowledge on domestic violence, asking questions in ways that were easily understood by respondents,

completing the questionnaire, keeping confidentiality and addressing unexpected interference. The field workers also expressed that the field data collection had proceeded well in terms of ensuring safety of respondents and field workers and emotional well-being of field workers. Logistical preparation and support was highly appreciated. The feedback indicated that the study also had some impacts on the field workers in terms of their level of awareness and understanding of domestic violence issues.

*“ Participating in the survey was an important change for me. From conducting the survey, I realized that domestic violence was a big issue for women. ”*

*“ I realized that all cases of emotional violence are extremely painful, though they do not leave visible injury or marks on a body, like physical violence does. A pain in one’s heart is no less serious. ”*

The feedback also identified areas for improvements, especially the need to better prepare the field workers for dealing with depressing feelings after interviewing a woman suffering from domestic violence:

*“ I had an interview with a female teacher who told me that she had a harsh life and her teardrops kept falling down on her face and soon we began our conversation. The interview ended late but successfully. That night I could not sleep. In my mind, I still remembered the image of the woman who suffered from physical violence. Her husband even offended her dignity and spiritual well-being. ”*

## 6. Progress and Results

The National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam filled the data gap on the issue of domestic violence against women in Viet Nam. Its findings are being used to:

- **Present concrete evidence to policy makers** and development practitioners to develop and implement evidence-based policies, programmes and interventions to address violence against women.
- **Measure progress.** Data collected in the survey can be used as a baseline to measure changes brought about by policies, programmes and interventions addressing violence against women. The General Statistics Office plans to repeat the study again in 2015, with the aim of assessing progress made to eliminate domestic violence since 2010.
- **Increase awareness of domestic violence.** The findings from the study were used when developing key messages and communication materials for further awareness among general public. With advocacy backed up by evidence, there has been increased attention to domestic violence by parliamentarians, communist party members, and leaders of relevant ministries and local authorities. In all advocacy events, leaders of the key government agencies played an active role, such as a co-chair, to enhance the advocacy efforts. Gender-based violence, which was absent from the past gender strategy, is now one of the priorities in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 (Objective 6) and the National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015 (Project 4).
- **Further knowledge of different gender violence issues.** The study has led to the initiation of additional research utilizing raw data from the survey, e.g. domestic violence and HIV/AIDS, by UNAIDS, and the cost of domestic violence, by UN Women and UNFPA.

Officials involved in the implementation of the study have increased their knowledge and strengthened their capacity to carry out surveys on domestic violence, so that they are expected to play an important role in conducting the foreseen 2015 study.

The high credibility of the study is due to the fact that the preparation, implementation and dissemination of the results were all done with the involvement of key officials from the relevant ministries and institutions. This was possible as the Programme brought various institutions to work together and regularly share information. Prior to the Programme, information exchange and collaboration among different institutions was limited, and research findings produced by one were often not fully utilized by others, as there was a lack of ownership.

In addition, the study had a significant **impact on those who were directly involved**, such as the interviewers and the respondents. Domestic violence is a sensitive topic, usually unspoken. Going through the questionnaire, the respondents gradually became aware of the issue of domestic violence, and received information on where to seek help in case of need. For most of those women suffering from violence, the interview was the first occasion to talk about their experience. Many of them expressed that they felt valued and thankful for being heard and that participating in the survey had changed their awareness:

*“ I feel a lot better having talked with you. I could not figure out why I told you all these secrets of my life that even my mother is not aware of. I thank you very much for listening to my unhappy stories. I'll take your advice. ”*

Many of the fieldworkers reported also being transformed through their participation in this study:

*“ I have gained more experience and understanding about life and society and developed a better sense of responsibility for myself and my community to deal with cases of violence ... also I have become more self-confident and gained more courage. ”*

“When interviews were completed, I myself felt stressed from seeing respondents crying a lot as they suffered from violence. After interviews, the interviewed women expressed their sincere thanks with smiles and they even wanted to invite us to their houses. This makes me think we made a small contribution to a long-term issue of domestic violence.”

## 7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

As lessons learned have already been presented in the description of the practices above, this section will briefly summarize the main lessons and the way forward.

**Involvement of key stakeholders.** Requiring the involvement of the key stakeholders, such as MOCST, MOLISA, MOJ, MPS and the UN, from the very conception of the research to the dissemination of the results, contributed to the success of the study, as stakeholders gained ownership of the study and its findings.

**WHO methodology.** Using the well-established methodology developed by WHO as a basis for the national study led to robust data and allows for comparison with other countries.

**Data needs.** The survey must balance data needs while keeping a strong focus on the key issues. It is not advisable to include many different topics, since each topic requires specific questions and set-up to collect reliable data.

**Safety guidelines.** Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, the guidelines on ethic and safety consideration should be strictly applied in all actions.

**Well-being of the field workers.** Some field workers expressed feelings of depression after interviewing women suffering from domestic violence. It would have been necessary to provide some support mechanisms during the fieldwork.

**Further analysis.** The raw data generated by the study can be further analyzed to produce more useful information. This requires having precise guidelines on who can access and use the raw data, under the close supervision of the GSO.

**Communication and advocacy.** The strategy put in place to implement the study mainly focused on collecting and analysing data, paying less attention to the dissemination of the results. For the most effective use of the data generated, a well-thought Communication and Advocacy Plan, with sufficient budget, is of paramount importance.

## 8. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Viet Nam Government plans to repeat the survey in 2015 to obtain estimates of prevalence and patterns of domestic violence against women. The results of the 2015 study will allow assessing progress made to eliminate domestic violence since 2010. The preparation and the implementation of this future study will be based on the process followed in 2009-2010.

As established in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020, the Viet Nam Government has committed to collecting key gender data on a regular basis, to use it as a basis for improving its legislative and policy framework and to monitor the implementation of the gender-related laws, policies and programmes. With support from the Programme, a Gender Statistical Indicator System (GSIS) has been developed and approved in 2011. The GSIS incorporates a list of key gender indicators, including indicators on domestic violence, and regular data collection is required. This calls for continuation of the data and knowledge generation efforts initiated in 2010.