

WORKING PAPER

# SCHOOLS AS AN ENTRY POINT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS:

Lessons from Civil Society Organizations  
Funded by the UN Trust Fund to End  
Violence Against Women

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UN TRUST FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



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Produced by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

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## ABOUT THE UN TRUST FUND TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) is a global multilateral grant-making mechanism dedicated to supporting efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls. Established in 1996 by United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 50/166, it is managed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on behalf of the UN System. Since its establishment, the UN Trust Fund has awarded USD 150 million in grants to more than 500 initiatives in 140 countries and territories. UN Trust Fund funded projects seek to impact the lives of women and girls by their access to multisectoral services, by increasing the effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems that address violence against women and girls, and by changing practices, behaviors and attitudes for a prevention thereof. Per the decision of its Global Programme Advisory Committee, since 2017, the UN Trust Fund exclusively awards grants to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

## ABOUT THE UN TRUST FUND SYNTHESIS REVIEWS

The Synthesis Reviews are a new initiative of the UN Trust Fund. Over the past ten years, the UN Trust Fund has commissioned more than 150 evaluations of UN Trust Fund funded projects implemented by CSOs across the globe. These evaluations document the processes, mechanisms and implementation challenges of working on the frontlines of ending violence against women and girls. This set of process evaluations forms the core of the UN Trust Fund Synthesis Reviews. The primary aim of the reviews is to contribute to the global debate on ending violence against women and girls by highlighting the role of CSOs in this area of work. A secondary aim is to inform the UN Trust Fund's Strategic Plan and to guide the programmatic and operational support provided to the organizations it funds. Each synthesis presents thematically grouped evaluation findings and recommendations, and benefits from an external peer review process and consultations with CSOs prior to publication.

The demand-driven nature of the UN Trust Fund's work is mirrored in the scope of initiatives discussed in the Synthesis Reviews. These initiatives stem from the universe of UN Trust Fund funded grants only, and, as such, reflect the priorities and strategies that CSOs as experts in the field of ending violence against women and girls and as project designers and implementers have identified to change the lives of women and girls. As the projects they look back on, the final evaluations that are at the center of the reviews were carried out in varying contexts, primarily by evaluators from the global South who are specialists in the thematic examined.

Evaluation methodologies were informed by the respective evaluation objectives and the findings presented in the Synthesis Reviews are those of the external project evaluators and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CSOs that implemented a given project, or of the UN Trust Fund.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Responsibility for the views expressed in this paper and for any errors of fact or judgment remains with the author(s). Any questions or comments on the UN Trust Fund's Working Papers can be directed to [untf-evaw@unwomen.org](mailto:untf-evaw@unwomen.org)

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAYMCA	Africa Alliance of Young <b>Men's</b> Christian Association
AWC	Autonomous <b>Women's</b> Center
CCPC	Community Child Protection Committee (Malawi)
CPC	Crime Prevention Council (Turkey)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoET	Department of Education and Training (Vietnam)
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues (Kosovo)
EVAW/G	Ending Violence against women and girls
FCT	Federal Capital Territory (Nigeria)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEM	Gender Equitable Men (scale)
GRS	Gender Responsive Schools
GWWD	Girls and Women with Disabilities
IAWJ	International Association of Women Judges
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JAI	Juvenile Affairs Inspector (Kyrgyzstan)
LBT	Lesbian, Bi-sexual and Trans
LCDZ	Leonard Cheshire Disabilities Zimbabwe
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MONES	Mongolian <b>Womens'</b> Fund
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (Nigeria)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PIAT	Project Implementation Advisory Team
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RSAT	Rainbow Sky Association Thailand
SBMC	School-based Management Committee
SBVAG	School-based Violence against Girls
SMC	School Management Committee
SOAR	Sexual Offences, Awareness and Response Initiative (Nigeria)
SRGBV	School-Related Gender Based Violence
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNGEI	United Nations <b>G</b> irls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTF	UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women
WCC	War Child Canada
WHO	World Health Organization
YMCA	Young <b>M</b> en's Christian Association
YWCA	Young <b>W</b> omen's Christian Association

# I. INTRODUCTION

Ending violence against girls in and around schools is a deeply complex problem with solutions that span both human rights and development practice. Educational settings, generally perceived to be benign, safe and transformational when it comes to violent attitudes and behaviors, are often sites of violence themselves (Leach and Mitchell 2006). According to UN Women’s Global Guidance on School-Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV), “...Education has a key role to play in transforming the root causes of violence, and especially GBV. Education is an important mechanism for the social, emotional and psychological development of young people. This is as critical as the development of systems and policies to address SRGBV. What students are taught and how they are taught is essential to preventing SRGBV.” (2016: 14). Educational settings are critical sites for prevention, but they can also be critical sites for appropriately responding to instances of violence in a timely manner. However schools are not always equipped with response mechanisms in-house or trained in referring to appropriate authorities. A lack of understanding of the frequency, severity, complexity, causes and consequences of SRGBV within schools and communities, and a lack of availability of easily-accessible, child-sensitive and confidential reporting

mechanisms, healthcare services including counseling and support, and referral to law enforcement, can all impede efforts at mounting an appropriate response.

While the importance of doing school-based interventions is well understood, and several guidance and materials exist to do policy work on this front, lesser is known about the entry points for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in particular small and women-led organizations in working through schools and communities around schools to end violence or create the enabling conditions for ending violence against girls. Drawing on the work of 51 organizations funded by the UN Trust Fund globally in 42 countries, we find that CSOs funded by UNTF have worked on the entire gamut of SRGBV prevention and response activities, not only engaging girls and survivors directly, but also engaging their parents, the community, school teachers and administration, service providers and policy makers. Covering a wide range of geographical and political contexts, CSOs have worked from within schools, but they have also identified those who are most affected or most vulnerable to school-based violence – i.e. dropouts due to SRGBV and out-of-school girls – and have worked incrementally to support their re-admission into schools in multiple ways.

In this sense, we look to inverting the gaze of this area of work from CSOs working on school-related violence, to CSOs using schools as an entry point more broadly to tackle all forms of violence against girls and women. To illustrate this further, the report is divided into five sections a) the literature review of b) the **strategic fit** of the findings from this paper with other UN publications and how this contributes to the global debate, c) a matrix of various types of **activities** and strategies that CSOs have employed to

strengthen schools to end violence against girls, d) the **results** of these strategies for both primary and secondary beneficiaries, and finally e) some **lessons learnt** from CSOs in working with schools, and the precise mechanisms that make some activities and projects more effective than others. We do not suggest that any of these strategies are replicable, but we hope they will generate ideas that can be transformed into context-specific strategies and solutions.

## II. STRATEGIC FIT

Within the purview of the United Nations, violence against children in and around schools was recognized as a worldwide phenomenon in 2006, as evidenced by the Study on Violence against Children commissioned by the Secretary General. Following the report, Leach and Mitchell (2006) published a book *Combating Gender Violence in and around Schools* that gave the debate a gender lens for the first time, compiling

best practices on SRGBV from over 10 countries. Since then, a Global Working Group to End SRGBV was established under the leadership of the United Nations *Girls' Education Initiative* (UNGEI) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to bring together a wide range of partners committed to ending GBV in and around schools.

### BOX 1

#### GUIDANCE ON ENDING VAC IN SCHOOLS

- 1 WHO (2019): *School-Based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook* that provides guidance for school officials and education authorities on how schools can embed violence prevention within their routine activities. The handbook also draws attention to the health outcomes of VAC.
- 2 UNICEF (2017): *Child-Friendly Schools Manual* that is a package solution for comprehensive range of interventions in quality education
- 3 Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children for linking into a community of practice and their *Safe to Learn* initiative for a global call to action on SRGBV at the country level.

#### GUIDANCE ON ENDING VAG IN SCHOOLS

- 4 UNESCO and UN Women (2016): *Global Guidance on School-Related Gender-Based Violence* is a comprehensive
- 5 UNGEI (2019): *A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender-Based Violence: Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework*: for designing action plans to address SRGBV

The subject has seen an increased donor interest in the past decade, and several UN agencies – UNGEI, UNESCO, UN WOMEN, UNICEF and WHO – have produced relevant publications, each from its unique vantage point, that provide concrete toolkits, global guidance and minimum standards for tackling school-related gender-based violence (see Box 1 for references). The most recent RESPECT framework by WHO (2019), also acknowledges whole school approaches and working on school-based curriculum as key intervention types in order to make environments safer for girls and prevent child abuse.

Our aim is to complement the existing guidance and contribute to the global debate in three ways. A primary aim is highlighting the specific ways in which civil society can play a role in initiating school-based interventions and deepen the impact of existing laws, policies and services. The scale of GBV in and around education settings is extremely high

and despite legal and policy commitments by most governments and UN agencies, GBV rigidly remains a part of school life. While guidance documents exist, the role of CSOs in these documents remains peripheral and confined to playing a coordination and advocacy role and on strengthening community networks around schools. By bringing forth the experience of 51 CSOs (and INGOs that work through local CSOs), in particular, small and women’s rights organizations, that have had varying degrees of success in this field, we aim to demonstrate that CSOs can play a strategic role in building local, national and regional partnerships to tackle the problem at the grassroots level and are often more uniquely situated to take a ‘whole school approach’ than government stakeholders or school-level actors, given that schools are often one of many entry points for their interventions.



Photo:  
MONES/Erdenekhuyag B.

A second aim of the report is to expand the scope of the review from school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), to all interventions that use schools and its nearby communities as an entry point to ending violence against girls. Through our review, we find that all school-related interventions may be divided based on who they target, where they are situated and what forms of violence they tackle (see Table 1 below), which allows us to take a more three-dimensional view of the interventions and assess which types of settings and which agents of change are best suited to reduce which forms of violence within and around schools.

And finally, we aim to complement the existing body of knowledge with concrete implementation challenges, achievable outcomes and pathways to ending violence against girls. In the literature on what works for school-based interventions, the evidence in high income countries as well LMICs is insufficient and at best, mixed<sup>1</sup>. When it comes to practitioner based knowledge, while there are several toolkits and

minimum standards that clearly outline the prevalence, key drivers and tools for school-related violence, we aim to focus on the nuts and bolts of implementation – the barriers faced in the frontlines in affecting change at multiple levels with limited resources, the realities of what can be achieved within donor-driven timelines with varying organizational capacities, and the challenges of what can be realistically measured given the high ethics and safety risks of conducting research with girls and schools. The report therefore aims to be descriptive, rather than prescriptive in its approach, and leverages the UNTF's unique position as interlocutors between EVAG policy and practice to consolidate and put forth this experience. Through a careful unpacking of some of the more process-oriented findings of the evaluations, we seek to shed light on field-based realities of CSOs working with schools to end VAG and draw internal lessons for programming and for shaping the next UNTF strategic plan.

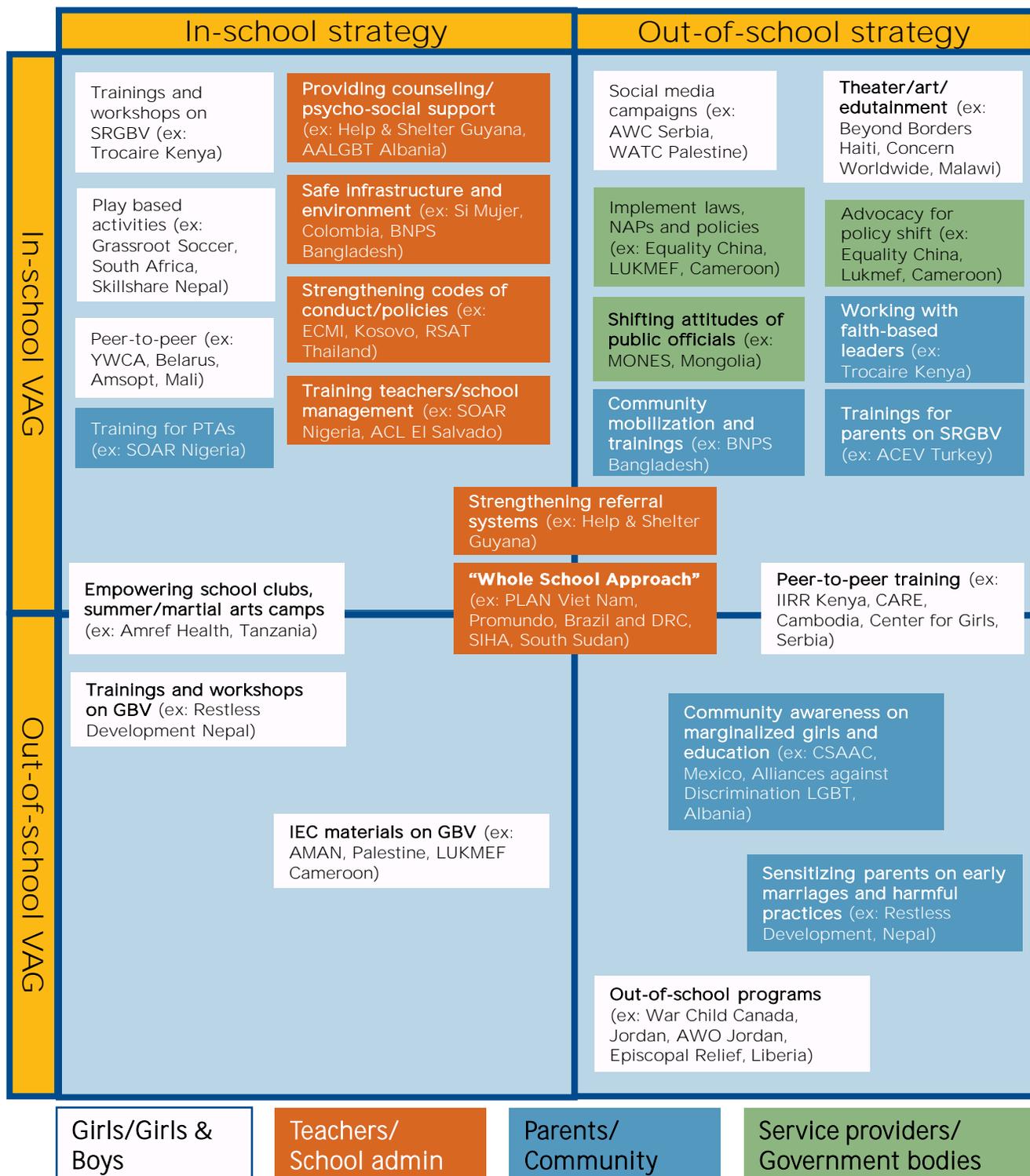
### III. METHODOLOGIES

For a systematic review of all school-related projects, the inclusion criteria was CSOs (and INGOs working through local CSOs) funded by the UNTF, and the timeline was limited to the last 10 years i.e. 2009 to 2019. This gave us 51 projects total, of which 27 are focused on schools alone, while 24 are projects that have multiple entry points, at least one of which are schools. Of these 51, 36 projects have closed and 15 are in our active portfolio. The projects were analyzed in two stages. Stage 1: for each of the projects that are closed, a detailed review of their evaluations<sup>2</sup> was conducted including examination of the strategies used for the intervention (who, where, what), the emerging results (on norms, awareness, knowledge, action or likelihood of action), lessons learnt (on program

design, implementation and evaluation) and recommendations put forth by the evaluators. For the projects that are in our active portfolio, only their strategies were reviewed. In Stage 2, these individual reviews were then brought together and analyzed as one body of evidence that together highlight the nuts and bolts of how and why project trajectories differ, which kinds of outcomes are harder to affect, and the precise mechanisms that result in these outcomes. The data primarily employs qualitative methods (focus group discussions, interviews, observations), which prevents us from drawing any strong conclusions about the impact or *what* works as an intervention, but it allows us to make observations about how certain strategies work on the ground.

# IV. TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

BOX 2: Typology of Interventions Using Schools as an Entry Point



As mentioned above, the activities deployed by CSOs can be broadly divided in three ways: 1) *Who* they target: CSOs can be targeting students / girls and boys, teachers and school administration, parents and the surrounding communities, and finally government stakeholders and service providers. It is important to note that the target of the specific activity can be different from the primary beneficiaries of an activity, which for all UNTF activities are women and girls by mandate 2) *Where* the interventions take place: CSOs have employed a range of activities both working from within schools, but also working outside of schools through parents, communities, mainstream media and social media, and 3) *What* forms of violence they tackle: the violence tackled could be within schools (e.g. different manifestations of physical, sexual and/or psychological violence, such as verbal abuse, bullying, sexual abuse and harassment, coercion and assault, and rape – see UN Women 2016, p 21 for a list of forms of SRGBV) or it could be a form of violence against girls experienced off of school sites (such as

FGM, early marriage, bride kidnapping or corporal punishment at home).

Based on this, the activities have been divided into four quadrants as seen above. It is important to note however, that these are ‘**ideal type**’ distinctions useful for analytical purposes and for designing projects in order to focus on the nuts and bolts of who, where and what is being targeted, but in reality, many activities fall into one or more quadrants, and many projects employ more than one of these activities at any given time.

## 4.1. INTERVENTIONS TARGETING GIRLS AND BOYS

### TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

Most of the organizations working in schools have at least one activity that involves training or workshop directly with students – about half have worked with girls only, and another half with both girls and boys. These trainings are either delivered by CSOs directly, or they can be peer-to-peer in nature i.e. CSOs train students, who then become agents of change within schools and communities. Typically, through these trainings, students are empowered with

the requisite knowledge and skills to identify, prevent and protect themselves from school-related violence.

For instance, in Brazil and DRC, the organization Promundo worked with adolescent girls and boys who have experienced or witnessed violence. Through group education and counseling, Promundo sought to foster critical reflections on the youths' experiences and the adoption of healthy, non-violent attitudes and behaviors (see more in Box 3).

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#### BOX 3: Promundo, Brazil and DRC

Promundo, a CSO working in Brazil and DRC, created the training strategy “Jovens Pelo Fim da Violência,” in Sao Paolo, which addressed girls and boys as well as schoolteachers. The project material, a kit of 5 booklets with suggested content and activities, focused on themes which intersect with gender issues: “**Building Links**”; “**What they expect from us**”; “**Diversities**”; “**Power, Relationships and Violence**”, and; “**Communication and Relationships**.” The delivery was carried out in 3-month cycles (across 6 schools), totaling 3 cycles across two years of implementation (with the first project year dedicated to project development). The program intervention consisted of:

- 13 Workshops (per cycle) with students using the material to address one of the 5 aforementioned themes
- 13 Workshops with teachers (per cycle) to discuss key issues of gender and train those who wanted to use the materials
- 1 campaign in each school at the end of each cycle which varied according to the context from participation in a pre-existing school event (with a stand and the distribution of educational materials), awareness raising in local community and participant-led campaigning activities within the school (using placards and performance)
- Monthly training sessions held by facilitators with teachers

## TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

Several CSOs have also given trainings on human rights, gender norms, sexuality and gender stereotypes as entry points to discussing violence prevention and justice. Trocaire for instance, a CSO based in Kenya, utilized the site of the school to train students on issues related to VAW/G – focusing on gender norms, attitudes, behaviors and practices relating to VAW/G. Finally, life skills training on essential communication, coping and decision-making skills are also common, and they

are intended to help girls build their confidence to navigate different forms of violence on school premises. For instance, Restless Development in Nepal utilized a life skills training approach to girls to enhance their critical thinking and advocacy skills so that they can effectively advocate against *Chhaupadi* (discrimination during menstruation) practices and other forms of GBV that prevent girls from attending schools or reaching their full potential.

## PEER-TO-PEER

CSOs have also trained students to be agents of change, who can then advocate and raise awareness in their respective schools on SRGBV and act as peer educators or mediators. For instance, Si Mujer in Colombia, a project in our active portfolio, identifies and trains young leaders from schools and targeted neighborhoods, (particularly in Cali which has a high IDP, Afro-Caribbean and indigenous population) to be watchdogs and advocates for GBV, and through their peer outreach, they aim to advocate for schools to review their sexual education curricula and for school staff to have training on how to prevent, detect and refer cases of sexual violence in schools, the incidence of which is alarmingly high according to the project.

Utilizing peer-to-peer trainings as an intervention to address SRGBV specifically accounts for a majority of the CSO activities, but the peer-to-peer model in schools also makes for a neutral site to address other forms of VAW/G as well, such as FGM, forced and early child marriage or intimate partner violence. One of the projects in our active portfolio for instance – the Belarus YWCA, aims to first gather narratives and cases of violence as the foundation of training material for their “**Change Agents Against GBV**” model, and use the material to first train YWCA youth leaders who will in turn train 1800 girls and boys in schools and universities to identify violence in relationships and help build equal, non-violent relationships.

An example of a closed project that has been particularly successful with peer education is by the organization Amsopt in Mali. Their project focuses on young people, especially girls at risk of early marriage and Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C), and aims to improve the health, rights and status of girls and women by breaking the cycle of vulnerability young girls face through their social status and lack of access to information about their rights. 60 young girls and boys were trained to be peer

educators, resulting in 87% of young peer educators acquiring awareness-raising skills and delivering 320 sessions (the target was 240) on FGM and child marriage, targeting not only their peers but also households. According to interviews with community members, they stated appreciation of the peer led awareness sessions, and committed to not force their daughters to undergo FGM and to reject child marriage (more on this in the results section).

### SCHOOL CLUBS AND SUMMER CAMPS

School-based clubs and other types of newly created or pre-existing safe spaces can be a useful entry point for addressing SRGBV (UN Women 2016: 70). Several CSOs have used existing student bodies (girls' clubs, summer camps, martial arts camps) within schools as focal points to strengthen their role and skills in advocating for

GBV prevention. Amref Health in Tanzania for instance sought to empower girls, women and community in Serengeti District to abandon FGM/C practice. As part of their initiative, Amref established 137 school clubs and organized gender specific forums at 140 schools (for more details, see Box 4).

### SPORTS/PLAY-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Another novel type of intervention within schools is play-based activities to address SRGBV. Sports can play a powerful role as both an avenue in itself to prevent violence against girls on playgrounds, but also as a platform to shift norms on violence against girls in schools and communities. Play based interventions use the sport to draw or incentivize young girls and boys to participate in the project, and train

coaches as mentors for both the soccer but also for gender development components to disseminate messaging. A key example of this is Grassroot Soccer in South Africa that has creatively leveraged soccer, the football ground, coaches and the teams as a space to disseminate messaging on intimate partner violence, HIV/AIDS prevention and positive gender norms (see Box 5 below for more details).

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## BOX 4: Amref Health, Tanzania

In Tanzania, Amref Health Africa in collaboration with a local CSO - Legal Human Rights Centre – implemented a 3-year project to end FGM in Serengeti, Mara. They trained a 100 school teachers on FGM/C recognition of girls at risk and how to discuss FGM/C related issues in teaching sessions, facilitated formation and strengthening of 137 school clubs on anti-FGM/GBV (110 primary schools and 23 secondary schools and 4 private schools) and facilitated dialogues and forums on anti-FGM/C in 140 schools. 15,747 out of the 24,533 women and girls of Serengeti were reached and sensitized by the project on the health effects and human rights aspect of FGM – through meetings and trainings in schools, through SMS texts and age-specific forums, but also reaching out-of-school girls through cinemas and public meetings. In addition, the project engaged traditional leaders and circumcisers to effectively participate and trained 180 circumcisers on entrepreneurship skills and supported them with startup funds.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

To target secondary school students in particular, numerous CSOs employ student-led social media campaigns toward the goal of preventing SRGBV, an effective way to address social norms around gender and violence at a large scale. The Autonomous **Women's** Centre (AWC) in Serbia utilized social media for their “I can say **no**” campaign for instance. AWC aimed to raise the capacity of young people and teachers to understand and address violence against women, tackling gender-based violence (GBV) in 30 secondary schools in 15 cities and 8 university faculties in Serbia. Students created a music video for their online campaign regarding consent that is now popular on Youtube and circulating widely on social media in Serbia. The project also used vlogs and social network apps to reach students

and found those media particularly useful for secondary school students. One of the CSOs in the UNTF active portfolio, **Women's** Affairs Technical Committee, similarly aims to use social media for advocacy on access to justice on VAW/G in Palestine, specifically targeting refugees and IDPs. In parallel to strengthening referral systems and involving key stakeholders (school staff, shelter staff, health, police, social workers)) in identification, care and follow-up of cases, also aims to work with girls on feminist digital campaigning and promote the use of social media for advocacy on VAW/G. They aim to organize a call directed to youth and school students to develop online campaigns with a special focus on refugees and IDPs.

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## BOX 5: Grassroot Soccer, South Africa

Grassroot Soccer in South Africa utilizes a network of female soccer coaches to deliver the gender focused curriculum, mentor the girls and facilitate soccer-based activities. In this way, Grassroot Soccer, its coaches and partner organizations, tackle two of the main challenges that young women face, namely HIV/AIDS and violence including intimate partner violence. The project contains a number of innovative practices, including using soccer as a drawcard to involve young women in the project and utilizing coaches as mentors for both the soccer and the gender development components. Grassroot Soccer combines behavioural, structural and bio-medical intervention components, providing women with positive role-models to challenge social norms, such as those that portray men as the sole decision-makers and dominant partners in relationships. Strategies and activities include but are not limited to:

**Building connections with female mentors:** A nurturing relationship between coach and participant is developed, building trust and stimulating deep and honest levels of discussion, creating supportive relationships for young women.

**Mixed-sex activities:** The second stage of the intervention brings together girls who have completed previous activities with same-age boys. The mixed programme - Generation SKILLZ - consists of two sets of 7 interactive sessions that focus on reducing age-disparate sexual relationships, multiple partners and IPV. Generation SKILLZ is conducted in secondary schools with learners from Grade 9 and 10 in this project) and is led by a mixed sex coaching team, with a combination of mixed sex and breakaway single sex sessions.

**All-girls curriculum-based sessions:** The SSP curriculum has been designed to combine soccer themed activities and life-skills discussions to aid girls as they reflect on and make difficult life choices. The curriculum incorporates lessons from gender theory and risk-factors associated with HIV and violence.

**All-girls soccer league:** Non-elite soccer matches act to catalyze personal development amongst girls. Girls form teams of 10-players and play in 5-10 weekly fair play soccer matches as well as develop basic soccer skills.

**Access to services:** By fostering connections among and between participants, as well as with slightly older female role-models, safe spaces are developed where girls can engage in reflective dialogues on the topic of sexuality, in a non-judgmental and non-moralizing manner. Coaches may then link girls to services for abuse and violence, in order to assist them with these challenges. GRS and its coaches offer support to girls as they receive HIV test results and, if needed, help them enroll in requisite care or treatment programmes.

**Women's tournaments** All-women's soccer tournaments - with girls, their mothers, and grandmothers – are 1-day soccer and health events that accompany the curriculum-based activities. The tournaments bring together local health service providers, as well as fathers, boys and other men, all of whom function as visible supporters of this public event.

## THEATER, EDUTAINMENT AND MAINSTREAM MEDIA

CSOs also seek to tackle SRGBV through activities that take place outside of the school building. These activities can include theater, arts, and edutainment extracurricular activities pertaining to SRGBV, which are engaging ways for students to learn about GBV, much like sport, and offer a creative outlet for expression and confidence building. Concern Worldwide in Malawi found interactive theatre a particularly powerful medium to engage school students and teachers as well as the

broader community on GBV (see more details in Box 6). Similarly, Beyond Borders, a CSO in the UNTF active portfolio operating, targets engagement of girls and school-level stakeholders, specifically addressing harassment and violence against girls with disabilities at school, at home, and in the broader community is an example. To accomplish this goal, they utilize various strategies, including theater performances on relevant themes.

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Activities that take place outside of school and address out-of-school girls may seem counterintuitive to include in a discussion regarding school-related activities to EAWW/G. However, these interventions are critical in reaching those who are most vulnerable and may have already dropped out having a) experienced violence at schools, b) pulled out due to early marriage or forced labor, c) dropped out due to war, conflict and displacement or d) the barriers to entry to schools are high to begin with, given their specific intersection of vulnerabilities, for e.g. girls with disabilities, or LBT girls. Reaching these out-of-school girls is critical, because they are often at an elevated risk of gender-based violence and are more likely to be forced into

child marriage, with ensuring early pregnancies and childbirth that threaten their lives and health (UNICEF 2019). War Child Canada (WCC) for instance, operates two **women's** centres in Jordan that targets out-of-school girls among other beneficiaries and focuses on raising awareness on **women's** rights, runs a 15-session programme which includes psycho-social support and referral services for women survivors of violence and life-skills classes, for Syrian, Yemeni, Somali and Iraqi refugee girls and their families, as well as local Jordanian women and girls in the host community. Episcopal Relief and Development, also reaches out-of-school youth through Liberian Muslim and Christian faith-based organizations.

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## BOX 6: Concern Worldwide, Malawi<sup>3</sup>

Through a participatory approach involving multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement, Concern **Worldwide's** project aimed to catalyze changes that affect the experiences of female students within the school environment; the project targeted 17 primary schools within the two educational zones of Mpasta and Mlonda. The overall goal of the project was to encourage schools, communities and the State to actively promote the rights of girls to have access to education that is free from violence and discrimination. Through its activities the project established primary intervention structures, improved service delivery and strengthened institutional responses to SRGBV within the intervention area. Interactive theatre during 'Open Days' at school used a 'touch-tag' methodology as a channel through which everyone in the community had a chance to learn about GBV while using interesting and interactive methods through plays, poetry and songs put up by the Student Council. The project also used the Tisinthe radio programme to disseminate messaging.

## 4.2. INTERVENTIONS TARGETING SCHOOLTEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Most of the activities that CSOs deploy target students, empowering them to recognize violence and be the catalysts for change. However, it is also necessary to address the teachers and staff in schools and underlying social norms that influence who has authority (typically adult males), decide who possesses the legitimacy to teach, discipline, and

control students, and often validate violence as a means to maintain authority. Teachers must be sensitized to SRGBV and other GBV in addition to **students'** sensitization, because teachers can ultimately use their position to reinforce violence or use it to condemn SRGBV and become agents of change themselves.

### TRAININGS FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Trainings for teachers and school staff can be around gender sensitization, recognition of violence, violence prevention, or reporting violence. "...teacher trainings are important for SRGBV, as what children learn and how

it is taught are fundamental to their experiences in school. To tackle violence in and around schools, teachers need to be more aware of the various dynamics in their classrooms, including gender, power and racial or ethnic dynamics, as

well as being more aware of their own biases and behaviours. One key objective of more inclusive educational settings, building on Freire's principles (Barroso, 2002), is for teachers to make the 'hidden curriculum' – the attitudes, values and norms that pupils learn from the institutional structures, relationships and systems around them – more overt and visible and to teach children how to critically analyze these structures and norms" (UN Women 2016: 66).

An example of a CSO utilizing teacher trainings is the Autonomous Women's Center (AWC) in Serbia. In an effort to improve the response of educational

institutions to survivors, AWC trained over 400 teachers to improve their knowledge of SRGBV and responsibilities of school officials to report. In addition, in 34 high schools and 8 faculties, peer workshops for secondary school and university students on discrimination, gender stereotypes, GE and GBV, advocacy and practical action planning on the local level was completed. Another CSO, one in the active UNTF portfolio, called the Sexual Offences, Awareness and Response Initiative (or SOAR Initiative) in Nigeria developed trainings for school staff and female mentors to encourage reporting of SRGBV and to more effectively support survivors.

## PROVISION OF SCHOOL COUNSELING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

A major component of ending VAW/G is being able to recognize it when it happens and survivors' ability to obtain reliable support. Safe, easily accessible, child-sensitive, confidential and independent counselling and reporting mechanisms should be in place to address SRGBV incidents (UNICEF, 2011). Support should be provided to survivors of violence, but also to witnesses and perpetrators, especially students who should also be assisted to overcome the problems they face that trigger their violent behaviour.

Some CSOs recognize this, like Help and Shelter in Guyana, and make counseling provision it a specific goal of their project. Help and Shelter's overall aim

was to build consensus, engagement and competencies within a community-based framework for addressing and preventing GBV in three schools in two communities. Part of this involved the provision of on-site counseling support in schools, and implementation of referral mechanisms for follow up services. 60 women and girls were the beneficiaries of the psychosocial support implemented in the schools. Another example is the Alliance against Discrimination of LGBT people in Albania, which sought to train school psychologists in Albania to identify and refer cases on LBT girls specifically and equipped them with the relevant knowledge and skills.

## STRENGTHENING CODES OF CONDUCT AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Students and **staff's** ability to recognize and report instances of violence necessitates a comprehensive school policy regarding GBV and SRGBV. While prevention is key, adequate response mechanisms and policies must also be in place such that the violence is condemned, and students and staff have options for enforcing the policy. WHO's Practical handbook on Violence Prevention in Schools, notes that "...Developing a school policy to deal with violence can also help the school to agree on a shared vision and overall plan to tackle violence in schools. The policy should be based on existing data on violence and on evidence of what works to prevent and respond to violence. It should also be guided by the values and preferences of the whole school community, including students, teachers, administrative staff and parents, who should be given the opportunity to **contribute**" (page 14). CSOs have a strong role to play in helping schools coordinate and develop policies and protocols, empowering schools to understand and imbibe them and building their capacity to enforce them.

In Colombia for instance, Si Mujer empowers schools to understand how their own protocols, guidelines (wherever they have any) and response to sexual violence do not take into account gendered power dynamics, often re-victimize women and girls, and

resulting in many survivors not reporting violence or seeking care. In similar vein, the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Kosovo published teaching materials that were made available for free both in electronic and printed version (see Box 7 for details). Very often the specific needs of LBT girls and girls with disabilities are overlooked in school policies, and CSOs with expertise in these fields can contribute significantly to mainstreaming their concerns within existing policies. Rainbow Sky Association Thailand (RSAT) for instance, is a project which focused primarily on SRGBV against transgender girls in schools; most transgender women and girls had faced problems with teachers and school officials because of their dress. RSAT advocated for more inclusive policies and codes of conduct in schools - as planned in the **project's** design, eight groups of leaders (four LBW and four TGW) were formed to conduct advocacy activities; these women were drawn from the peer mentors who conducted the workshops rather than the participants. These working groups effectively shifted school policies and won the right for transgender girls to wear female school uniforms at several schools and universities. Another example is the the work of Leonard Cheshire Disabilities in Zimbabwe. Based on evidence that GWWD are more likely to experience violence, but

very specific barriers remain in accessing services – such as attitudes of public officials, lack of transport money to get to police, hospitals and courts, and inadequate sign language and intellectual impairment specialists in most institutions, the project built the capacity of DPOs across Zimbabwe to improve safety and reduce incidences of GBV against GWWD. Specifically it worked through schools for deaf and blind and DPOs, training to GWWD and

their caregivers on violence against women, conducted community awareness raising and sensitization of community leaders on violence against GWWD and strengthened their referral mechanisms with the Victim Friendly Unit of Police. They also provided disability expert services such as sign language interpretation, Braille reading and support persons within police and courts.

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### BOX 7: European Center for Minority Issue (ECMI), Kosovo

Minority women (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian or RAE minorities) in Kosovo face double discrimination and the two main forms of violence they are more likely to experience are forced, early marriage and intimate partner violence. ECMI addresses the three key gaps that exacerbate these vulnerabilities faced by minority women in Kosovo: limited access of survivors of GBV to adequate prevention and treatment services; Extreme socio economic vulnerability of minority women; a lack of awareness among both genders on **women's** rights, gender equality and mechanisms against GBV. The project used continuous awareness raising activities targeting teachers and school students and developed and implemented a school-based teaching program on **women's** rights. 674 high schools with large percentages of minority pupils were selected for participation. In addition it engaged and supported eight minority activists as community-based paralegals to offer continuous support to survivors in accessing relevant services.

### SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

In order for schools to be safe, the infrastructure of the school itself must be safe and supportive with appropriate physical facilities, including school buildings, grounds, water and sanitation facilities, furniture, lighting and security equipment. While the UN Trust Fund no longer funds building and infrastructure, prior to the guidelines shifting, one of the older grantees –

Skillshare Nepal – was funded for the same. Skillshare recognized this need for a safe and supportive school, and made one of its explicit goals the provision of separate toilets for boys and girls. As we will see in the results section, this has helped minimize incidence of GBV as many of the cases of violence would occur in the common toilets for both genders.

## 4.3. INTERVENTIONS TARGETING THE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

Schools neither create **society's** problems alone nor can they solve them alone. Hence any school-based intervention must be viewed within its larger context of gender norms and violence. Often the gender norms and attitudes that influence SRGBV are perpetuated at home. Without interventions that target parents and the community within which students are embedded, problematic gender roles and attitudes perpetuated in one of these spheres can serve to reinforce the same in the other sphere. **“Working with**

communities on SRGBV helps to raise awareness and **‘break the silence’** around this issue, as well as providing an important mobilizing platform for advocacy initiatives. Awareness-raising, mobilizing and advocacy are critical to challenging and shifting social norms that promote or tolerate violence. Community-based programming supports engagement with a wider group of relevant and influential stakeholders within broader school and community **networks”** (UN Women 2016:88)

### TRAININGS FOR PARENTS

In the same way that trainings are important for students and teachers, they are also important for the parents if VAG, including SRGBV, is to be ended. The Father Training for Violence-Free Families Project (FTVFFP) aims to prevent violence against women and girls (VAW/G) by engaging men in a comprehensive and community-based violence prevention program. Throughout the three-year project, fathers and their wives, were trained in a program that aims to foster democratic, anti-violent and gender sensitive attitudes and behaviors within the family. Schoolteachers and members of the school community, who initiated

Father Support Program (FSP) groups were also trained as trainers. The project also aimed to improve the awareness of communities and public institutions on their roles in preventing VAW. Concern Worldwide in Malawi mentioned above, was also successful in engaging men and boys at the community level. Men and boys were selected as community and school guardians through the establishment of Fathers groups, and a community Child Protection Committee (CPC) was mobilized to coordinate with social welfare officers from the Ministry of Gender. Community based legal advisors (CBLAs) and traditional authorities were also engaged.

## COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND TRAININGS

Few organizations bolster the school-based model with a community-based model (rather it is more common to see projects that are primarily community based to have one or two strategies disseminating messaging in schools). UNICEF's (2016) systematic global review on SRGBV notes that "...Approaches that recognize positive, dynamic features of cultural identities and practices can be effective ways of engaging communities in tackling violence." (page VIII). A strong example is Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS), a leading national women rights organization in Bangladesh, which undertook a project titled "Safe School Safe Community" (SSSC). The SSSC project improved the knowledge,

capacity, attitude and outlook of teachers and students in schools along with community members and government officials to create safe and violence-free environment. Several forms of violence were tackled, but the community in particular was mobilized to ensure the safety of girls on the way and back from schools. The project engaged local people prior to starting the activities in the schools, and the locals got together and discussed ways to make the way to school safe for girls. Their collective strength worked as a strong force to reduce teasing and other forms of violence, including physical, mental, and sexual violence in the community.

## WORKING WITH FAITH-BASED LEADERS

In communities where faith-based leaders and religious gatekeepers are the primary norm setters, it is essential that they are included in programming. An important example is the work of Episcopal Relief and Development in Liberia – they were funded in 2015 and then invited for a second round of scale up funding in 2018. In the first phase, they worked with members of faith and community-based organizations, such as Christian and Muslim faith leaders, school staff and in and out-of-school-youth in six districts of Liberia, in order

to re-examine gender roles and power, train them to take a leading role in speaking out against gender inequality and GBV, changing knowledge and attitudes towards GBV and through these actors, enhance multi-sectoral referral systems. The project also started school-based GBV Committees (with teachers, Parent Teacher Associations or PTAs and school leaders), youth drama groups and faith-based youth coalitions to increase the likelihood of reporting and continue activities beyond the duration of the project. In the second

phase, they are scaling up the project to include 8 more districts. Another important example is Trocaire, a CSO in Kenya that developed a rich community

mobilization and sensitization plan for their project to EVAW/G, which included the use of SASA! Faith Training (for more details see Box 8).

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#### BOX 8: Trocaire, Kenya

SASA! Faith is a guide to preventing violence against women and HIV in faith based communities and was co-created by Trócaire and Raising Voices. SASA! Faith takes the structure, process and content of the original SASA! and adapts it for use in Christian and Muslim communities. It is an initiative in which leaders, members and believers of a religion come together to prevent violence against women and HIV. In three years, the project led mass community sensitization and implementation of SASA! Faith targeting community members (women, men and boys) and community leaders on VAW/G to become agents of change. In addition, they conducted teachers, parents and guardians on IPV and inter-generational transmission of violence in 21 schools (7 secondary and 14 primary) and facilitated workshops with school management in order to develop mechanisms to document violence.

## 4.4. INTERVENTIONS FOR OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS AND POLICY MAKERS

SRGBV must be incorporated into national policies and action plans that recognize the need for prevention, responses to mitigate its impact and accountability. Commitment and effective leadership from national governments are a necessary starting point to achieve these objectives. Governments can demonstrate leadership at the national and local levels by: developing and implementing

relevant laws, and comprehensive, multisectoral national policies to prevent and respond to SRGBV; strengthening connections between education and child protection policies, procedures and systems; applying system-wide approaches to review and reform, to ensure that state education institutions comprehensively address SRGBV through strategies aimed at prevention, response and accountability.

## SHIFTING ATTITUDES OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Attitudes and practices of public officials in governing bodies must be aligned with the goals of EAW/G if substantive local or national action is to take place. The Mongolian Womens Fund (MONES), working to eliminate discrimination of women and girls and strengthen the **women's** movement through network building and collaborations, implemented a project to change the attitudes and practices of public officials in Mongolia – including

but not limited to officials in the Education Department, Crime Prevention Councils (CPCs), secondary schools of Baganuur district and Dornod province – to increase their support for education on prevention of violence against girls. They advocated for CPCs to not only shift attitudes but also bring about concrete changes in policies and budget allocation and published reports on CPC budget and policy monitoring with methodology.

## REFERRALS TO SERVICE PROVIDERS

Few projects have worked on improving referral mechanisms between schools and other service providers: Si Mujer in Colombia, Help and Shelter in Guyana, International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) in Malawi and one of the projects in the active portfolio – Center of Research of Democratic Processes (CRDP) in Kyrgyzstan. CRDP aims to build the capacity and strengthen the nexus and coordination between social workers and school psychologists and police professionals - Juveniles Affairs Inspectors (JAIs) – all three of who are housed within school premises as staff. JAIs are the primary government liaisons on criminal issue related to juveniles. At the individual level they will conduct awareness-raising activities with parents and school aged youth to share information on the risk factors of sexual violence, build skills for identification,

and provide referral to available services.

In IAWJ, Malawi the project was primarily designed to build the capacity of Malawian criminal justice stakeholders to effectively investigate, prosecute, adjudicate, and sentence sexual violence perpetrators, and treat survivors with respect and following human rights principles. In addition Malawian women and girls were empowered to access justice – the project targeted female refugees, Malawian women and girls, and women and minor girl survivors of violence from the four targeted districts of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Zomba, and Mzuzu. Awareness sessions were conducted in hard to reach areas, areas with high incidences of sexual violence and targeting schools and refugee camps.

In select schools, the project helped install boxes where children report incidents of sexual violence both in their schools as well their communities.

In other projects, while there has been a lot of advocacy to inform students, staff and communities on where to refer

cases, few projects have worked systematically to strengthen the nexus and coordination between school officials and service providers such that a survivor-centered, coordinated, multi-sectoral referral system for girls can be systematically built from the bottom up.

### ADVOCACY FOR POLICY SHIFT

In Liberia, Episcopal Relief and Development mentioned above is working closely with the Ministry of Education in order to strengthen school-based GBV and disciplinary committees; in Malawi, Concern Worldwide the Community Child Protection Committee (CCPC) were mobilized to coordinate with social welfare officers from the Ministry of Gender; and finally in Nigeria, collaborations were established between traditional and community

peer group leaders, the Gender Unit of the FCT Education Secretariat, School-based Management Committees (SBMCs), PTAs, the FCT Social Development Secretariat, the Child Justice Clinic, and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), which is the government agency responsible for responding to SBVAG in the FCT, amongst others to make this possible.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS, POLICIES AND NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

Finally, the implementation of existing laws, policies and national action plans is one of the key areas in which CSOs have worked, in order to spread awareness and bridge the gap between policy and practice. In China for instance, the work of Equality China helped spread awareness on existing laws and policies on SRGBV. In 2016, during project implementation, the first national Anti-Domestic Violence Law (the DV Law) was passed, containing important provisions that legally define

DV, identify which groups may be protected and define specific measures for protecting survivors. It identifies five groups as eligible for “**special protection**”: juveniles, elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and women with serious illnesses. Key elements however remained missing according to Equality China – i.e. it did not include sexual violence and economic control, and excluded same sex partners and partners who are not living together.

Equality China therefore sought to build awareness around the law, through lawyers, police, judges, doctors, social workers, **women's** federations, schools and communities. In schools in particular, Equality built awareness programs for higher secondary students on DV and the anti-DV law by conducting workshops on prevention and response.

In the active portfolio, one of the projects that is working in Cameroon to bridge the gap between the National Action Plan to EVAW and the lack of accessible quality services for survivors is Lukmef. The project aims to improve national multi-sectoral services, systems and response for women and girl survivors, especially those at risk. . Intended results are as follows: a) An adopted national minimum package of

services to help service providers to provide safe and adequate response and care, b) Service providers are better able to identify and refer VAW/G survivors or those at risk, c) A national referral network of multi-sectoral services is set up to improve access, d). Women and girls are sensitized as to the services available. The latter will be reached through school programmes. Specific regions have been selected where there are high levels of violence including child trafficking, child sexual exploitation, forced and early marriage and violence in schools. The East region has been selected as it has received high numbers of refugees and IDPs displaced by the conflict in the Central African Republic. Primary beneficiaries include refugees, women living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of VAW/G and lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

## 4.5. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Finally, a mention must be made of the “**whole-school approach**” (see UNGEI 2019 for minimum standards) i.e. interventions that implement activities in each of the quadrants from Table 1, in some capacity. Whole-school approaches involve various stakeholders not only at the school level, but also in the local community and government in a range of different activities with the aim of making schools safer, more child-friendly and a better environment for children to learn. CSOs are well positioned to take on this approach due

to their relative autonomy and pre-existing connections with various other service providers. In fact, wherever possible, CSOs have taken a multi-sectoral view of the issues to include both prevention and response efforts and see violence in schools as a continuum – an event that cannot be divorced from violence in the home or communities. In other words, they span across the four quadrants and target girls and all relevant stakeholders (parents, communities, school administration, service providers).

Leach, Dunne and Salvi (2014) distinguish between what they term ‘whole school’ versus ‘violence only’ SRGBV programmes, concluding that whole school approaches (that embed SRGBV issues within a broader programme of educational support) may have more lasting impact, but may risk diffusion and be more difficult to manage than programmes focusing directly on SRGBV, since the intervention is working at multiple levels simultaneously. However, they admit that the evidence here is limited. We find in our review that such projects, especially when they have the resources and capacity (i.e. typically large grants) are more likely to secure sustainable improvements than small grants working on whole school approaches (more on this in the results section). Moreover, in order to avoid diffusion, projects that have pivoted their whole school strategies around a single form of violence are more likely to be successful, rather than all forms of school-related violence against girls.

Plan International Vietnam, whose Gender Responsive Schools (GRS) model is a strong example for a whole school approach. It was conceived, piloted and scaled up in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training (DoET) and takes a holistic approach to promote non-discriminatory practices in school and positive changes in gender attitudes and behavior at the individual

level by engaging with adolescents, teachers, school management, parents, media, and the community.

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) is another example of CSO that takes a whole school approach in a post-conflict setting with IDP schools: first, they plan to engage with students and teachers through leadership and extracurricular activities on prevention and awareness of sexual violence, leaning on its expertise unpacking masculinity and building the capacity of male role models. 1500 female and male IDP students will receive training through extra-curricular activities, 15 teachers, 68 administrators and department of education staff will be trained on VAW/G prevention strategies and awareness, and 1500 students will participate in leadership activities through school clubs. SIHA also aims to take the combine the school-based model with a community-based model by providing training on protection, prevention strategies and leadership, and aims to conduct community conversations with leaders, who will act as mentors and champions against sexual violence. Finally, SIHA aims to conduct community outreach through local radio talk shows addressing sexual violence, as well as engage with the department of gender, cultural leaders, and other community actors to build awareness. All three schools are IDP schools.

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## BOX 9: Plan International, Viet Nam

Plan International in Vietnam collaboration with the Hanoi Department of Education and Training (DoET) developed the Gender Responsive School (GRS) model project to facilitate conditions for greater protection of adolescent girls from school related gender based violence (SRGBV) that includes the acts of sexual, physical or psychological violence inflicted on children in and around schools largely due to gendered identity and societal stereotypes. Plan International Viet Nam with its partners piloted an evidence-based GRS model in 20 lower and upper secondary and high schools in 16 districts in five zones of Ha Noi over a period of three years. Recognizing that early experiences of violence, both as direct victims and as witnesses, contributes to later aggression, intimate partner violence, and health problems such as depression and anxiety in adulthood, the project sought to address gender based violence (GBV) by engaging with adolescents in the school setting. The GRS model takes a holistic approach, effectively demonstrated in other contexts, to promote non-discriminatory practices in school and positive changes in attitude and behavior at the individual level by engaging with adolescents, teachers, school management, parents, media, and the community. It seeks to create an enabling environment within schools that could sustain these changes and influence societal norms. In terms of activities, the project first sought to build capacities of 20 schools in Hanoi for SRGBV prevention and response, provide adolescents, especially girls, with requisite knowledge and skills, and engage and influence the policies of Hanoi DoET and other government authorities and elicit their support for scaling up of the model; The project introduced the “**state-of-the-art**” of programming to respond to the issues of violence, abuse and exploitation that have serious impact on children, women, public health and security in Viet Nam and globally. The synergy of interventions was in accordance with the evolving discourse on protective environment, the systems approach and changes in social norms for achieving results. The model is specifically geared towards capacity enhancement of the Hanoi DoET for addressing SRGBV in areas under its jurisdiction. The project employed methodologies that are aligned with MoET’s education reform and promote **students’** participation through the Youth Team Leaders Clubs. The project also engaged with the mass media to spread the messages related to SRGBV, which resulted in a total of 36 reportages and 15 news on Hanoi television, 48 issues of Hanoi Moi newspaper and approximate 159 articles on 50 online press units. Finally, the project also advocated for comprehensive multi-sectoral programming for addressing SRGBV based on the experiences with the GRS model to facilitate implementation of the Law on Children, 2016, and the national agenda towards the SDGs.

# V. RESULTS

This section provides a breakdown of the different levels at which results have been measured and achieved by UNTF grantees. Like the activities, the results have been divided into four categories as well, based on what level the change is affected at: students / girls and boys, parents or community, teachers or school administration, and policy or legal change. It is important to note that the results cannot always be

attributed to interventions that targeted them directly – in other words, an intervention targeting the school administration or teachers may well show results for students. Wherever possible the methodology used for a particular finding in an evaluation has been highlighted. The aim below is to provide as much granularity as possible to the SRGBV debate by highlighting how certain interventions are effective.

## 5.1. FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

UNICEF's (2016) systematic global review of 171 SRGBV projects, points to certain components that are most effective for interventions tackling girls and boys – single sex groups, consciousness raising on norms and skilled facilitation. However, more unpacking remains to be done to show what forms of violence or who are these most effective for. Our review finds that most CSOs have been effective in

shifting norms and perceptions around violence for girls, increasing awareness on identifying and responding to violence, and building their collective capabilities. Often these are assumed to be key building blocks of behavioural shift but this not the case – only those projects that have specifically worked on affecting change at the behavioural level have achieved so.

### SHIFT IN NORMS AND PERCEPTIONS

All projects that target girls or girls and boys, have primarily measured individual-level drivers of SRGBV i.e. change in the gender norms and perceptions that justify violence in and around schools. For instance, the evaluation of AWC in Serbia, through

interviews and FGDs with girls finds that for girls, the trainings and workshops that question the underlying norms are particularly useful in changing their perspective on where the blame for the violence lies – shifting from survivor to perpetrator.

“...Before, I thought that the person that is exposed to violence must be somewhat responsible for what is happening; after education I’ve realized that it is not so.” They triangulated the qualitative data by comparing baseline and endline survey results – a question in the survey that asked if a girl wearing short skirts/tight shirts should be blamed if attacked, 35.5% of girls in the baseline study responded with yes; in the endline study, only 2% of girls that participated in the project responded positively. Evaluations note a shift not just in the percentage of girls that hold negative social norms and where the blame lies, but also a qualitative shift in

how a particular form of violence itself is perceived. For instance, the evaluation of Amref, Tanzania that took a holistic approach to ending FGM in Mara, quoted a primary school teacher on how FGM is now perceived in schools and communities: “Previously women and girls who had undergone the cut were seen as more important than those who were uncircumcised. But now the situation is different because now those who have not undergone the cut are seen as educated and more fitting members of the community. There are less circumcised girls at school.” – Primary school teacher, Mbalibali Village (Amref, Tanzania).

## AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE

Apart from normative shifts, there is also a noted increase in awareness about their rights due to participation in legal awareness sessions and life skills trainings. This evidence comes primarily from test scores (pre and post), and retrospective self-reports from

interviews and FGDs. For instance, due to the work of MONES in Mongolia and Equality in China, girls in schools demonstrated increased knowledge of GBV and more awareness on new laws pertaining to domestic violence respectively.

## BEHAVIOURAL SHIFTS

Behavioural shifts were also noted in interventions targeting girls and boys but far less so than norm change or awareness. This is in line with the findings from UNICEF’s (2016) systematic review of SRGBV, which states that often projects assume in their theory of change that a change in knowledge would lead to a change in

behavior, but behavioural change is harder to come about if the underlying norms justifying violence are not addressed. Our findings differ somewhat, in that we find that even when underlying norms are tackled, behavioural shift cannot be assumed. As mentioned above, projects that have been successful in shifting behaviours

are usually those that have specifically worked on affecting behavioural change, and worked with the wider ecosystem of SRGBV-related stakeholders as well. As we will see

below, prevention alone without sanctions, adequate response and referral systems can often have the perverse effect of reduced trust in existing institutions.

*“I am ready to react when I see violence, because I understand now that if we don’t react, it is going to happen again.”*

(AWC, Serbia)

In Promundo, Brazil, for instance, there was consistent reference in the evaluation, from various respondent types (teachers, school staff) regarding **students’** increase in confidence and ability to articulate, debate and advocate for themselves. This central finding was summarized by one of the teachers during a focus group, “The students who participate in the project are of a very different mind...its startling in the classroom when you bring up one of these issues, the way they conceptualize it, they have a certain ease in stating their case, in defending the issue. **It’s** impressive.” There is also an increased readiness to react and report when woman/girl from their environment are faced with violence as it demonstrates increase in solidarity among girls/women and again empowerment to react on violence. Other behavioural shifts include an increase in empathy and non-violent communication amongst students and improved relationships with families and peers. Specifically, notions of consent, mutual responsibility, equality

and protection were identified as key areas of awareness and knowledge development across projects.

Most critically, four of the twelve projects that worked on increasing reporting saw an increase in GBV reporting. With Plan Vietnam for instance, the evaluation noted that students who reported the experience of SRGBV to their parents increased from 19.6 per cent to 45 per cent and those who approached teachers, school staff and counsellors increased from 14.7 per cent to over 30 per cent. Other projects, while they did not note an increased reporting, they reported a shift in *who* is being reported – from ADR to formal justice institutions. For instance, in Malawi, the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) evaluation finds through FGDs conducted with schoolgirls in Chiradzulu that most sexual violence cases were previously not reported to the police or prosecuted in a court of law. The cases were being handled by traditional leaders, but after the

awareness raising almost all known cases were referred to the police and courts. In one example, in Machinga a grade 5 girl (aged 12 years) said that, “another incident occurred in my village where a standard 7 girl (grade 5) was being sexually harassed by her step

For Grassroot Soccer, the evaluation found some unique behavioural shifts on the **girls’** part -- girls reported that they talked to family members and friends more frequently about sensitive gender-related issues after graduating from the Skillz Programme. A number of girls described impressive decisions to terminate relationships when men pressurized them to have sex, or if they suspected that their partners were being unfaithful.

Few evaluations drilled down specifically to understand impacts on boys alone – only three evaluations reported on this, and they found significant behavioural shifts. In DRC, boys and their parents both attested to an increase in gender equality in the home (for instance through boys participating in household tasks) due to **Promundo’s** interventions on transforming masculinities. In Mongolia, **MONES’s** work resulted in 90% of the 11th grade classes in 4 target schools initiating and establishing “**Violence-Free Class**” code and boys were very active in enforcing the class rules. With Grassroot Soccer,

father who used to touch her sensitive sexual parts, the case was investigated and he was **arrested**” (Girls FGD in Machinga, AIWJ, Malawi). A key lessons here is that not just the number of cases, but who is being reported to post-intervention should be measured.

boys who had participated in Generation SKILLZ exemplified gender equality in their 49 attitudes towards women. However, they believed that violence was the fault of girls who cheated on their boyfriends. They understand that violence is wrong, but it is understood to be wrong unless there is some justification for the violence. The evaluators suggest that an initial solution could be to include some crossover information between different genders. For example, in the girls only programme, more information and different insights on the socialization of boys (masculinities), could be used to challenge **boys’** behaviours. Similarly, for the boys, the evaluators note that knowledge from the girls only programmes could be disseminated here to help them understand that girls are socialized to behave in particular ways, but that it is not mandatory for girls to act in that way. And finally, in Mongolia, MONES established a shift in school environment from GBV being accepted as part of life to GBV being recognized as unacceptable with a strong focus on its prevention.

Girls interviewed by the evaluation team discussed the issue of safety: 17 out of 20 girls who were interviewed expressed that their feeling of safety in school environment has increased. They attributed it to the project saying since the GBV prevention classes had been taught, boys have become less aggressive because “they, now, know

what they can and cannot do,” teachers “intervene when seeing boys bully girls.” However, some girls validate that it is not “totally safe” and raised a concern about toilets being a place where boys still can peek. Also, girls raised concerns about girls’ safety in Internet environment and public space on the way to school.

## BUILDING COLLECTIVE CAPABILITIES

There was evidence for increased cohesion and social support through solidarity with each other, access to wider community and confidence in the power of a group action. For instance, in Brazil an NGO called Camtra provided access to reading materials and open debates, which were conducive to participants openly sharing their experiences and realizing gender-based violence is not an individual problem, but a societal problem with deep cultural roots and hence solutions must come from the collective as well. This faith in collective capabilities is even starker for out-of-school girls, where

interventions helped create a social network where none existed before. For example, through War Child Canada’s work in Jordan, Syrian girls identified in their interviews and FGDs that socializing and forming friendships was the most important aspect of attending classes with other school-age girls. Most girls in Sahab and Nuzha explained that they would turn to their friends if anything ever happened that they needed to talk about and friends were largely considered the best source of support to talk to about psychological or physical violence.

## PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE

Prevalence figures are the most affected by data collection methodology and the context and are the hardest to interpret. Few projects have reported reduction in SRGBV prevalence – of the six that have reported a reduction, three are school-related – Promundo in Brazil finds a 28% decrease in being insulted or humiliated

at school in the last three months as reported by female participants and a 36.7% decrease in the experience of verbal and psychological violence amongst male participants. The Skillshare evaluation in Nepal finds that bullying, harassment and molestation against girls and boys in the school and

community has been minimized as shared by students during FGDs. It is important to note that Skillshare and Promundo all tackled school-based violence from a location outside schools.

The remaining reduction in violence are geared towards harmful practices and safety in the community on the way to schools – which begs the question, are school-based interventions better at reducing non-school related violence and vice versa? Restless Development in Nepal reports reduced child marriage as an unintended consequence and reducing the discrimination girls face during menstruation (compared to the baseline where 100% women reported having been discriminated at least once during the previous three months during menstruation, the endline was 70%). The Concern Worldwide evaluation from Malawi found that the project successfully prevented forced marriages and rescued victims of forced marriages as well. Similarly, Amref in Tanzania reports that sensitization efforts led to 762 girls (13%), who had been prepared to undergo the cut, escaping the practice and managing to

flee to safe houses and openly denouncing FGM. In Bangladesh, BNPS evaluation claims that the project was successful in ensuring the safety and security of girls on the way to school as well. The project innovatively engaged local people living around schools prior to starting the activities in the schools, the locals got together and discussed ways to make the way to school safe for girls and their collective strength worked as a strong force to reduce eve teasing and other forms of violence, including physical, mental, and sexual violence in the community. The evaluation noted that fewer women experienced gender-based violence in schools and on the way to schools as compared to the baseline survey.

While seemingly counterintuitive there is process data within evaluations that offer an explanation as to why it might be more effective to tackle violence that occurs within school premises from the outside, and violence that occurs outside in the community from within schools (i.e. interventions from the second and third quadrant in Table 1).

*“My daughter, (names her), is at a safe house in Mugumu. She ran because her fellow girls at school were laughing at her because she had not undergone the cut. But I support her decision (not to undergo FGM).”*

A mother in Machochwe

Evaluations from activities that took place off campus – play based interventions, edutainment, use of social media, use of peer-to-peer model to reach communities, etc – state that these spaces created by CSOs gave both students and teachers the opportunity to discuss SRGBV more freely in an unconventional space. As we will see for teachers as well, through **SOAR's** work in Nigeria for instance, doing all their trainings for SBMC members off school property gave them a unique opportunity to meet and learn together

and openly share their experiences on an otherwise sensitive and taboo topic such as school-based violence against girls in a neutral location. And CSOs are uniquely positioned to take this approach and work from the fringes, especially when institutional barriers are high – for instance, in Kosovo, ECMI could not get municipality permission to change curriculums but rather than ceasing the activity, they decided to implement it as an out-of-school activity.

## HUMAN CAPITAL OUTCOMES

A final set of outcomes is on health and education – but these are rarely measured, mostly based on self-reports and largely unintended consequences. For instance, one of the CSOs in Cameroon – APDEL – aimed to break the social consensus of silence surrounding sexual harassment in secondary school settings in Cameroon, particularly in the Western region (MIFI, and Menoua Noun) by collecting, analyzing and disseminating data on sexual harassment and used the data for advocacy purposes. The evaluation team for APDEL interviewed school administration and school directors, who established a causal link between the information, education and communication (IEC) activities of the project and decrease of pregnancies among girl students. In Nepal, **Restless Development's** work led to a reduction

in the incidents of girls sleeping in a *Chhaupadi* hut, according to a survey by the evaluators, an increase in intake a nutritious food and healthier menstrual hygiene. And **Skillshare's** play-based intervention strengthened the physical fitness and confidence of students. Finally, Help and Shelter, which provided psycho-social interventions in schools for survivors, the evaluation found that meeting the psychosocial needs of survivors to allow them to feel safe, empowered and have a healthy degree self-worth was accomplished by the counseling.

Similarly, the education outcomes for most of the organizations such as increased school attendance/less dropouts, or higher grades were unanticipated. For instance, both Restless Development, Nepal and

AMREF, Tanzania led to an increase in **girls'** school attendance without intending to do so – the former due to reduced instances of child marriage, and the latter due to reduced FGM. For Restless Development, there is improvement in **girl's** attendance in school during menstruation (in the endline survey there was a reduction by almost 65% compared to the baseline of girls reporting being out of school). For ACEV in Turkey, school community members, mainly teachers, also spoke of the positive impacts the trainings had on participating fathers and their **children's** attitudes towards their friends, such as an improvement in

**children's** exam scores. And finally, in Malawi, Concern **Worldwide's** evaluation found that over 120 girls were re-admitted into school following dropping out for reasons primarily based on parental neglect. However this is also a matter of framing because school dropout of girls due to menstruation or child labor or forced early marriage is a form of violence, so any results on these could be considered reduction in violence prevalence, rather than being considered an education outcome. Hence, evaluators should be encouraged to consider these outcomes when reviewing violence prevalence.

## 5.2. TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

### NORMS AND AWARENESS

When it comes to teachers and school administration, similar results have emerged from their trainings and workshops i.e. shift of norms and attitudes are a bulk of the positive outcomes. Most of this comes from qualitative data (for e.g. Promundo in Brazil, the educational staff provided accounts of their own development, of deconstruction of gender norms and identification of non-equitable attitudes and behaviours), surveys (e.g. ACEV in Turkey, findings of the teacher surveys

suggests that comparing pre- and post-test findings for the treatment group, the program had an impact on **trainers'** perceptions on violence and they also deeply internalized the gender equitable values of the training) and GEM or Gender Equitable Men scores and other indices (e.g. PLAN **Vietnam's** programs led to an increase in the GEM scores of male teachers indicating a gradual improvement in attitudes and behaviours).

## BEHAVIOURAL SHIFTS

Furthermore, in addition to normative shifts, a handful of programs also led to concrete behavioural shifts – increased responsiveness in reporting cases of abuse to the appropriate external bodies (such as child protection units / social services) and improved reactions to SRGBV for the first time and an ability to engage with legal and institutional frameworks to prevent SRGBV. An interesting example is from Skillshare Nepal, where 76% of the teachers who were not aware of gender responsive behaviours prior to the intervention were practicing gender responsive teaching methodologies in their classrooms directly contributed to

gaining the trust of students and making teacher-student interaction comfortable and effective which was documented during class observation of teachers at the end of the project. And finally, while very few CSOs have worked on psychological violence and training counselors, the few that have, have been instrumental in building their capacity, knowledge and skills during the trainings, to more efficiently respond to SRGBV – in case of the LGBT Alliance in Albania for instance, five cases of violence against LBT girls were reported and referred during the evaluation for more comprehensive support.

## IMPROVEMENTS IN OR ESTABLISHING CODES OF CONDUCTS, CURRICULAR AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Several evaluations have credited CSOs for introducing school policies, codes of conduct and sexuality education within curriculum for the first time in their countries, regions or municipalities. Most of the interviewees considered the Aman program in Palestine as one of the most important extracurricular programs adopted by the Ministry of Education, as Aman was the first to engage with a subject that was considered taboo despite its importance, in addition to being the first in raising the issue of sexual

violence and the ways of protection. In Jordan, ARDD girls and female teachers attested that this was the first time that they openly discussed topics such as sexual rights for women and girls in front of male teachers and students. In Cameroon, APDEL, the project has popularized the concepts of GBV, SV and SH within the target institutions, which made it possible to make it an institutionalized topic of conversation, to pinpoint the extent of the problem and to share the means to fight against its expansion.

Given that this is the first time this is being introduced in several schools, there has been pushback in some countries – for instance, in Bangladesh, initially, the board faced problems in attempting to include gender and sexual education related issues in textbooks, and this was reported in newspapers in 2014. However, these issues were gradually resolved, 25 schools have adopted anti-sexual harassment policy, gender and sexuality education have now been included in textbooks and curriculum and teachers trained to discuss these issues in the class at least twice a week. The evaluation nonetheless found that teachers in some schools (both men and women) did not discuss these at all. In countries where codes of conduct have been passed, CSOs have played a key role in galvanizing support to help operationalize COCs – in 2014, the Ministry of Education in Liberia issued a national Code of Conduct for Teachers and School Administrators and Episcopal Relief and Development in 2015 trained GBV school committees on the content of the COC, who then initiated action plans and activities – one of them being that they decided to create a ‘**letter box**’ which was used anonymously to provide information on CoC violations at the school, which enabled the committee to undertake

investigations. For instance, cases of early pregnancy, and sex for grades were reported and investigated, and the perpetrators were released from their duties according to the evaluation.

Several CSOs have also championed more inclusive codes of conduct, taking into account the specific needs of girls with disabilities and LBT girls. The LCDZ national office in Zimbabwe built the capacity of DPOs such as Nzeve Deaf **Children’s** Centre, Margaretha Hugo (Copota) Schools and Workshops for the Blind, Jairos Jiri Naran Centre and ZIMCARE Sibantubanye Special School to embrace the needs of GWWDs. Empowerment of GWWD as rights holders, their caregivers and DPOs (including the special schools) to improve safety and reduce incidences of GBV against GWWD. The schools now have a gender and child protection policy at various levels of operationalization, plus they are empowered to participate in community activities and fight against GBV among GWWD regardless of the status of perpetrators. Another successful case of making SRGBV policies more inclusive is from Thailand. RSAT through its peer mentors of LBT girls, effectively won the right for TGW to wear female school uniforms at several schools and universities.

And finally, in Malawi, IAWJ's work encouraged head teachers and principals to adopt policies against the transfer of teachers who have committed sexual violence to other schools, and Concern Worldwide successfully introduced **re-admission policies for girls that have experienced early pregnancies**.

While the adoption of a code of conduct or school policy is really an output, rarely have evaluations taken the next step of evaluating the outcomes of these on violence reduction among students, or even on norm change or behavioural change within teachers.

### PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE/CHANGE IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Several evaluations cite, that as a result of teacher trainings, changes in school policies and infrastructure, and shift in attitudes of school administration, schools are perceived as safer than before. In Nigeria, CCPC members trained by SOAR, reported that they succeeded in making girls feel safer and more supported because of their work on the project. Community girls and schoolgirls also reported that they felt safer and more supported because of the project. For Skillshare Nepal, evaluation found that with all project schools now having provided separate toilets for girl and boy students, schools have become safer places for girl students to pursue their studies in a

peaceful and dignified manner. From among the girls participating in project activities, 75% reported that the school has become a safer place for them to read, write and play, in the student perception survey carried out at the end of the project, compared to X% at the baseline. In Bangladesh, the BNPS evaluation found that post-training, teachers of 24 schools had taken the responsibility to patrol the areas adjacent to the school, two schools have arranged police patrolling in adjacent roads and eight schools' teachers have taken the initiative to remove explicit writings and pictures from the school premises, all of which has led to students feeling safer in schools.

## 5.3. FOR PARENTS/COMMUNITY

### SHIFTS IN NORMS, PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE

Reaching parents and communities to secure the gains made within school boundaries needs innovative approaches. In Jordan, the evaluation of WCC for instance found that the risk of harassment was also consistently raised as a main reason some parents choose to stop their **daughters'** education early; many parents fear their daughters walking to and from school alone. Mirroring these fears, all of the girls who participated in focus groups described being verbally harassed on their way to and from school. For these women and girls, War Child showed an ongoing ability to listen to feedback and modify the project implementation as

necessary to maximize participation. For example, by adopting the home visit approach, WCC was able to meet the information needs of older men and women with limited mobility to leave their homes while simultaneously addressing key barriers to school-age **girls'** participation in classes by securing **parent's** buy-in to the project objectives. Older men in Nuzha spoke at length about how dialogue tables conducted by WCC also opened their eyes to **children's** rights specifically, and they recognized that they needed to change some of their methods of disciplining their kids.

### SHIFTS IN NORMS, PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE

Using **father's** groups has also been effective in mobilizing community support for SRGBV and shifting norms. For instance, in Malawi, the use of **fathers'** groups by Concern Worldwide was considered very successful by the evaluation team. Moreover, the project was able to increase the knowledge and attitude of other men, women, boys, and girls, through community mobilization during Open Days. At least

27 communities adjacent to schools were actively involved in ensuring the safety and security of girls on their way to schools. The Open Days also allowed Student Councils to share skills on how to fight SRGBV in their schools and communities, and findings show that by the middle of third year the project reached a total of 40,000 students, parents, teachers, and community members through Open Days.

Using faith-based groups has also led to important shifts in behavior – in Liberia, evaluators found that through the use of the Experiential Learning Method (ELM), and Facts, Associations, meaning and Action (FAMA) toolkit, ERD invited faith-based leaders to reconsider their religious teachings and revise their own belief systems that justified gender stereotypes and GBV. This in turn promoted **individuals'** behaviour change from within, through a discovery, motivation, and possibility process. The four core learning themes/topics from the toolkit are: 1) Self discovery–recognizing our charge as faith leaders; 2) Understanding gender and its role in VAWG; 3) Understanding power and its role in gender inequality; and 4) GBV: A silent epidemic in your community. The trainings encouraged reusing, in new

ways, scripture and holy texts; some of which had been used to reinforce cultural traditions that perpetuate VAWG and are now reframed, while others used new pieces of text that carry more equitable messaging, and emphasis on respect, responsibility and dignity.

In general, the peer-to-peer model of training students and empowering them to act as leaders and change-makers in their communities has proven an effective strategy for shifting community norms for most projects. Some CSOs have also helped establish connections between local CSOs and schools that contribute to strengthening community networks against SRGBV (for instance, AWC Serbia's work).

*We have gained a lot of knowledge but without practice it is nothing, it will go away, we will forget. So we started getting together to talk to our friends in the community and to share what we have learned with others...The respect that the others show us in the community helps us to continue the work.*

Promundo beneficiary, DRC

## VIOLENCE PREVALENCE

There is relatively lesser evidence on working (only) with parents and communities to end violence. However a few projects did find some interesting linkages – Episcopal Relief and Development in Liberia for instance, through a combination of increased local participation in faith-based activities where GBV awareness was raised, knowledge about available support services was shared, and through the work of school-based GBV committees, the evaluation found that women and girls experience less physical and sexual violence from

intimate partners (baseline: 14.8%; endline: 5.0%) and less physical and sexual violence from non-partners (baseline: 16.1%; endline: 2.6%). Following the results of focus group discussion, all participants provided their perceptions on changes that have occurred in their communities and named reduced violence against women and girls, reduction of child marriage cases, improved understanding of women’s rights as some of the key changes that took place since project implementation.

## 5.4. FORGOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

### POLICY SHIFTS

While typically CSO’s role is seen as working from the grassroots, several of the organizations have also successfully leveraged governments and national level stakeholders to influence policy around violence against girls in schools. Plan **Vietnam’s** Gender Responsive School as a model for instance, has been recognized by central ministries namely MoLISA and MoET, while formulating the following: a) National Action Plan on GBV prevention and control, b) the Circular on implementation of school counseling services in all schools and c) the Decree on Friendly, Safe School and Prevention of School Violence. **Plan’s** insights based on the GRS model in was

included in MOLISA policy discussions. It also contributed to the inclusion of safe, friendly, violence-free schools model comprising of a comprehensive set of interventions in the National Thematic Project on Prevention and Response to GBV period 2016-2020 and Vision for 2030 which the Prime Minister approved on July 22, 2016. CSOs have not only affected policy change, but also influenced budget allocations around SRGBV – for instance, in Mongolia, the Crime Prevention Councils (CPCs) demonstrated awareness of GBV and willingness to include GBV prevention in their policies and budget allocation.

## VI. LESSONS LEARNT

There are some common features in terms of processes and mechanisms that make certain activities and projects

**1. Awareness is key, but shared awareness is more powerful.** We can learn from the few projects that have successfully impacted reporting – linking to group action, and empowering girls as a group seems to yield a stronger likelihood of reporting than as individuals. Projects that build confidence in **girls'** collective action, rather than relying on didactical trainings are more effective. Strong examples include **girls'** camps, martial arts camps, play-based interventions, etc. that leverage and strengthen an already existing group, or example of life skills training to refugee girls which creates a social network where none exists.

**a. Shared awareness and empowerment without sanctions however do not work:** Several evaluations note that there may be a disproportionate amount of training on skills, and on empowering without promoting the implementation of sanctions for perpetrators. It is vital that in-school GBV awareness programmes are accompanied by a response protocol, including a strict sanction system. In AMSOPT (Mali) and APDEL (Cameroon),

more effective than others. These cut across different project types and are as follows:

it was noted that by project end, the reporting of sexual violence/sexual harassment by young girls was still weak, evidencing the **girls'** persistent feeling of insecurity, largely attributed to the lack of sanctions for identified perpetrators and the fear of reprisal. Evaluations suggest incorporating messaging around sanctions specifically, if they are in the codes of conduct.

**b. Moreover, limited response and sanctions by justice institutions can also limit project impact:** International Association of Women Judges, Malawi for instance finds that many of the girls continue to view that some police officer are corrupt and do not handle forced marriage cases professionally. For example, “**one** of the girls (aged 13 years) was about to write her standard 8 exams (grade 7) and the parents forced her to get married. The girl refused and the issue was reported to police but the police were not helping because there was a good relationship between them and the parents of the **girl**” (Girls FGD in Machinga).

**2. Getting buy-in from ministries of education and local authorities:** this is particularly important for CSO-led projects and while typically projects have worked on this towards the end, it serves well to get buy-in and support in the early stages. For e.g. Nigeria (SOAR) the buy in and support from the management of the targeted schools was first secured from the FCT Education Secretariat, which is the government regulatory agency responsible for approving and supervising activities in schools. Moreover, within the FCT the focal officer for Gender was involved from the beginning and made a member of the Project Implementation Advisory Team (PIAT).

**a. Getting buy-in from school authorities:** While several projects factored in time for getting national stakeholders buy-in, they underestimated the time it takes to get buy-in from within schools, and how critical it is for sustainability. For instance, for AWC, Serbia, the evaluators noted that this was an ambitious project plan aiming for significant changes at different levels of educational system but that underestimated the level of efforts and time needed to achieve policy changes at the faculty level first – it points toward needing longer mobilization

periods prior to project roll out. Moreover, the turnover in senior management in schools has been identified as a challenge for the smooth functioning of established inter-institutional network for prevention of GBV at the local level.

**3. School-based interventions may be better at addressing the drivers of non-school related GBV, and visa-versa.** This is a provocative finding and counter-intuitive, but activities that address VAG in schools from outside schools and VAG in communities from inside schools are more effective than those that address the problem from within.

**a. Rigorous testing and experimentation is lacking:** There is a major lack of rigorous testing and experimentation on what activities and what locations are best suited for which forms of violence. Instead projects are evaluated and impacts tested en masse, rather than by strategy. This makes attribution of project impact to activities particularly difficult. Evaluating different combinations of the who, what and where for school-based interventions as different arms of an evaluation could yield some answers.

#### 4. Reinforcing the school-based model with a community-based model:

projects that have creatively involved the community and balanced school-based interventions with community-based interventions are more likely to be effective. A powerful example of this is Amref, which worked with schoolgirls to end FGM, but also recognized that community leaders and cutters who stand to gain from the practice may push back and created alternative means of livelihoods for them.

##### a. Projects may still be limited in their ability to tackle structural drivers of violence within 2 or 3-year timelines.

As evaluations point out, there may remain a gap in the project's ability to tackle some of the deeper structural constraints that lead to violence or buttress certain forms of violence. As the Grassroots Soccer evaluation points out, "Sexual violence remains an issue in this area because most of the parents force their girl children to get married so that they can stop supporting them financially and they also discourage their children from going to school because they say that school cannot provide them with their immediate daily needs" (Girl FGD participant in Luwani). Another example from the Restless Development evaluation in Nepal, where the study notes that even though the school attendance increased and girls were more likely to be sent to school during menstruation post-project than before, 46% of the girl respondents

reported that they are still prohibited to participate in family/community events during menstruation.

#### 5. Peer-to-peer model works for bringing the community on board with SRGBV:

for e.g. the Africa Alliance of YMCAs trained boys in schools and football academies as ToTs and they were then deployed to create awareness using open forums for discussion (Bunge la Jamiii or slang for community participation method in Kilfi), mediating conflicts in homes and in the community, engaging the community leaders on controversial and gender conflicting issues, being providers of food, shelter, clothing and education, reporting criminal and harmful tendencies to the police, patrolling as vigilante groups within communities, assisting the police safeguard the community, accepting their responsibilities, admitting their wrongs, supporting initiatives that lead to the formation of women association group. Peer to peer is also cost-effective: for instance, one of the activities implemented under the Amref project for instance, was sensitizing targeted groups, including women and girls, on health effects and human rights aspect of FGM using SMS texts and peer educators to extend project activities to the wider community – both activities turned out to be cost-effective and contributed to project efficiency. A cascading, peer-to-peer approach is key.

**a. However, the peer-to-peer model is also the least institutionalized:** given that the students relied on are typically senior or higher secondary students who are likely to graduate soon, several evaluations pointed out that the model may require re-building of foundations each time without proper institutionalization within school systems. As mentioned above, the internal monitoring of the peer-to-peer model and finding the right indicators for it to measure progress has also proven difficult for CSOs, particularly small grantees.

**6. Skills and gender of frontline facilitators:** a seemingly obvious notion, but a lot hinges on the skills of those who are training the students – i.e. whether they have internalized the values of the training themselves and whether they are trained in ethics and safety. Moreover, the presence of female mentors and facilitators made a big impact, especially in contexts without enough female teachers and role models. For instance, in the evaluation of the Promundo program implemented by HEAL Africa in DRC and CARE in Cambodia, it was found that schoolgirls were extremely receptive to female role models - which empowered them to challenge the status quo and made them realize women and girls could have a life outside of domesticity. In the same DRC case, the fact that there was a lack of female teachers in the school and the lack of female role models

outside of schools, made the presence of female trainers more critical and compensated for the absence. However, few projects have taken this into account – in Mali, Cameroon, Malawi and DRC for instance. In Malawi, the evaluators noted that “**female** students may not want to tell adults, they may want to tell other students what their problems are for a number of **reasons**”.

**a. Tailoring approaches to the context is rare:** there is limited evidence that approaches were tailored to the variation in the context in the frontlines. Several evaluations point out that because the same intervention was used across the board (both for boys and girls, or both for host community girls and refugee girls) this led to less impact on one group than another. It is critical that implementers (and evaluators) assess whether activities are tailored, in particular to the marginalized – whether that is an ethnic or religious or linguistic minority, indigenous girls, girls with disabilities, LBT girls, displaced and out-of-school girls. Or even when targeting parents or the community, activities have to be tailored – for e.g. ACEV, Turkey evaluation points out that there is a self-selection into the program by fathers who have above-average educational attainment and employability levels – hence, the current targeting of the program is not necessarily pro-poor.

**7. Co-creating a discourse with girls and survivors is key, rather than working off a script:** While CSOs are often encouraged to keep survivors at the center of project design, they struggle to operationalize this. One of the key ways in which effective projects do so is by carefully co-creating a discourse with girls and survivors through careful groundwork and creative improvisation to bring them into the center of project design, versus working with a homogenized and fixed training script without tailoring it to them.

**a. Contexts where pedagogical training is the norm, facilitators often fall back on scripts:** An interesting example is pointed out by the Grassroot Soccer evaluation, which finds in its observation of the SKILLZ Street Plus in schools, that coaches were regularly reciting scripted lessons, following the pedagogical practice of pre-determined scripts and looking for pre-decided answers to aspects of intimate partner violence and HIV/AIDS prevention. According to the evaluators, this is both one of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme: it ensures that young people gain vital knowledge regarding social problems, invaluable information that clearly buttresses personal health. Simultaneously, it creates an atmosphere where learning is based on prescribed correct and incorrect answers rather than personal exploration of difficult socio-emotional challenges.

**8. Staying agile and adapting project / mid-course correction:** This is important because trainers and facilitators must be incentivized to learn, adapt and improvise on the frontlines by gathering input from those who are beneficiaries of the project. e.g. WCC continued to monitor access and participation and was able to identify mid-course that engaging school-age boys was not progressing as expected. To address this problem, WCC developed MoUs with public schools to increase participation of male youth. In another example, WCC also overcame community push back by adopting the home visit approach mid-course: the organization was able to meet the information needs of older men and women who **couldn't** leave their homes because of reduced mobility but were preventing girls from attending schools, thereby simultaneously addressing key barriers to school-age **girls'** participation in classes by securing family buy-in to the project objectives.

**a. Lack of resources** to do M&E, and a culture of prioritizing quantifiable targets over slow experimentation and mid-course adaptation. Many organizations, regardless of the **grant's** size (small vs large), have been recommended to strengthen their internal monitoring processes. Improving the tracking and measuring of results via systematic data collection and analysis could better inform day-to-day decision making, and the ability to adapt and stay agile.

## 9. Allowing baselines to inform project design:

related to the point above, we found that some projects have benefitted greatly from thorough baseline surveys that ask the right questions not just for establishing a starting point but also for informing project design. An interesting example is of a project in the active portfolio in Kyrgyzstan that is training juvenile police inspectors (whose offices are in schools) to detect and respond to violence against girls in schools and communities as per a new decree by the government. The project was designed with the assumption that the primary form of violence experienced by adolescent girls is bride kidnapping / early and forced child marriage – also a primary reason for school dropout. However, their baseline survey with schoolgirls found that instead the two main forms of violence experienced by the girls were on their way to and from schools, and on their cellphones via SMS. Partly this could be because the girls interviewed were schoolgirls, while a majority of those that have experienced early and forced marriage may have dropped out of school already. The project is now re-considering their

design to either shift their focus to these new forms of violence or complement their school-based model with a community-based model to tackle early marriage.

**a. Very few projects have the capacity and resources for baselines and even if completed, they rarely inform project design.** There are limited preparatory diagnostics informing the choice of who (beneficiary), what (form of violence) and where (entry point) when it comes to determining activities for holistic approaches. Understanding the local context through analysis of the drivers of violence or stakeholder mapping is crucial and need not be a formal baseline study as long as it asks the right questions necessary for project implementation. Moreover, **given donor timelines**, CSOs do not always have that long a gestation period to complete a baseline and re-design their projects within the first six months and they often feel committed to what was proposed. This has broader implications beyond CSOs to donors, i.e. allowing for longer inception periods, where project design can be truly data driven.

**10. Marginalized girls face very specific vulnerabilities** when it comes to SRGBV. Expand.

a. There is room for specific guidance on SRGBV against LBT girls, girls in religious schools, informal schools in refugee camps and special needs schools. The toolkits produced by RSAT Thailand, Episcopal Relief and Development in Liberia, SIHA South Sudan and LCDZ,

Zimbabwe respectively can pave the way for not only demonstrating what can be done within such schools and surrounding communities, but also what can be done to mainstream policies on SRGBV and marginalized girls and taking into account their specific vulnerabilities within existing school policies and codes of conduct.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNT

	WHAT WORKS	WHAT DOESN'T WORK
1	Shared awareness and confidence in collective action	Lack of sanctions within and outside schools
2	Getting buy-in from ministries of education and local authorities	Underestimating buy-in from school authorities and high turnover in senior management
3	School-based interventions that address the drivers of non-school related GBV and visa versa	Lack of rigorous testing and experimentation on what activities and what locations are best suited for which forms of violence
4	Reinforcing the school-based model with a community-based model	CSOs may still be limited in their ability to tackle structural drivers of violence in 2- or 3-years' time
5	Peer-to-peer works to make connections between schools and communities	Peer-to-peer is the least institutionalized and least measured for internal monitoring
6	Skills and gender of frontline facilitators	Lack of tailored activities
7	Co-creating a discourse with girls and survivors is key	Contexts where pedagogical training is the norm, facilitators often fall back on scripts
8	Staying agile and adapting projects / mid-course correction	Lack of resources to do M&E
9	Allowing baselines to inform project design	Donor-driven timelines and structures do not always allow for this gestation period or complete re-visit of project design
10	Mainstreaming marginalized girls within existing SRGBV policies and codes of conduct	Room for specific guidance on SRGBV and LBT girls, girls in religious schools, informal schools in refugee camps and special needs schools

Some **specific lessons** on project design as emerging from evaluations are as follows:

1. Build on whats already there: if there are any organic structures within schools, it is crucial to build on those or at least take them into account during project design, rather than creating parallel structures. In Malawi, for example, the IAWJ evaluation found that in select schools there were ‘**children corners**’ even prior to the project, where school children lead, discussed and reported cases of sexual abuses. The issues discussed by children were then referred to the head teacher for action. The evaluation suggests documenting the process in such children corners for lessons learning and replication, rather than creating parallel structures.

2. Using extra-curricular activities such as sports or theatre as an entry point is effective: e.g. with Skillshare Nepal the adoption of football as a tool to engage students was the most preferred activity among all as reported by students during FGDs. They shared (during FGDs) that football was their initial motivation to participate in the project activities and what made them stay in the activity.

3. Not taking into account school calendar programmes and the commencement of exams which delay and shift activities significantly. Better fit between project activities and school schedules might make implementation easier

4. Making sure legal texts on children rights and **women’s** rights are available to peer educators in local language: often evaluations find that even though peer educators are trained in implementation of laws and policies, they **don’t** often have access to the main body of the text in their local language.

5. Challenges with interpretation of outcomes: for instance, in Serbia, **AWC’s** evaluation survey results indicates that girls in the intervention group feel less safe post-intervention than girls in the control group. Interviews reveal that the reason girls feel less safe post-intervention is because they now know how to recognize violence, know the different forms of violence, but feel that despite their knowledge the “**cannot influence the outside world**”. Interpreting perceptions of safety post-intervention is complex and any interpretation on whether the project was effective or not in light of this nuance has to be carefully interpreted.

6. There are some forms of violence that are not sufficiently addressed during project design, but they are addressed by evaluations. For instance, three evaluations found that psychological violence and cyber-bullying were some of the most frequently occurring forms of violence on school sites, but the project did not have the skills to address either.

7. Several evaluations mention that 'catching them early' is key, but none of the 51 projects have any early childhood interventions or beneficiaries even up to the age of 12.

8. Need to involve survivors in project design. Awareness sessions in Malawi were observed during evaluation, where survivors were not given the chance to speak, rather they were informed of their options. Involving them could have given the stakeholders the opportunity to understand how SV affects them.

9. Introduce refresher trainings, and even if there are single trainings, especially with the peer-to-peer model – incorporate some follow up surveys into project design to see if they undertook any activities as envisaged.

10. Evaluations are still heavily skewed towards testing whether the strategies training girls and boys are effective or not – as we go down the chain of teachers / school administration, then parents / community and finally service providers, lesser and lesser is being evaluated in terms of the direct link of strategies involving these actors and impacts on violence reduction on girls.

11. Lack of clear performance indicators for internal monitoring of certain key activities such as strengthening of referral systems through school-based interventions, or awareness of SRGBV through advocacy, hinders the ability of projects to carefully measure their progress. More capacity building efforts are needed on data collection, and co-designing the right indicators in order to support day-to-day decision-making. It is also critical that projects reflect deeply at the very beginning on what can be achieved in the time horizon of 2 to 3 years.

# ENDNOTES

- 1 Ellsberg et al. (2015) conclude that the lack of robust, quantitative studies means that evidence on school-based programmes from high-income countries ‘has not been encouraging’ (none of the interventions in low- and middle-income countries met their criteria for inclusion). Fulu (2014) concludes that there is insufficient evidence about school interventions on violence against women and girls to make recommendations. And finally the RESPECT Framework (2019) finds that prevention programming on safe schools and school-based curricula are lacking sufficient evidence in high income countries and at best, have conflicting evidence in middle- and low-income countries.  
Note that a separate paper on the quality of the evaluations themselves (methodological rigor, types of methods, sampling frame, quality of contextualization and limitations) has been commissioned to external meta-evaluators and is available upon request.  
The project also employed several strategies at the national, regional and school-level (see Annex 1 for more details), making it a strong example of a Whole School Approach as well (see Section 5.5 for more information on Whole School Approaches).
- 2 This could be due to the UNTF’s focus on girls as primary beneficiaries, and evaluation guidance being focused on girls as well.
- 3 The project also employed several strategies at the national, regional and school-level (see Annex 1 for more details), making it a strong example of a Whole School Approach as well (see Section 5.5 for more information on Whole School Approaches).
- 4 This could be due to the UNTF’s focus on girls as primary beneficiaries, and evaluation guidance being focused on girls as well.

# REFERENCES

UNESCO and UN Women (2016): “Global violence on addressing school-related gender-based violence”. France: UNESCO.

UNICEF (2009). Manual – Child friendly schools. New York: UNICEF.

WHO (2019): School-based violence prevention: a practical handbook. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

## Links to UNTF Evaluations:

Skillshare Nepal: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/04/final-evaluation-of-kick-against-violence>

Restless Development, Nepal: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/02/final-evaluation-of-abolition-of-chhaupadi-in-the-far-and-mid-western-regions-of-nepal-project>

AWC, Serbia: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/02/final-evaluation-of-abolition-of-chhaupadi-in-the-far-and-mid-western-regions-of-nepal-project>

War Child Canada, Jordan: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2019/03/safeguarding-women-and-girls-affected-by-the-syrian-crisis-in-jordan>

AIWJ, Malawi: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2019/03/women-judges-lead-the-fight-to-demand-justice-and-accountability-for-sexual-violence-survivors>

ACEV, Turkey (1st round of funding):: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2014/03/final-evaluation-father-training-for-violence-free-families-turkey>

ACEV, Turkey (2nd round of funding): <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2019/03/final-evaluation-fathers-are-here-for-gender-equality>

IIRR, Kenya: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2019/03/stop-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-samburu-marsabit-and-isiolo-counties-in-northern-kenya>

AMREF Health, Tanzania: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2019/03/female-genital-mutilation-elimination-project-in-the-serengeti-district>

Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz, El Salvador: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/04/improvement-of-conditions-for-access-to-a-life-free-of-gender-violence-for-women-in-el-salvador>

Promundo, DRC and Brazil: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/03/final-evaluation-engaging-youth-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-brazil>

Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe (1st round of funding): <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/02/final-evaluation-access-to-justice-for-girls-and-women-with-disabilities-zimbabwe>

Episcopal Relief and Develop (1st round of funding): <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2018/02/final-evaluation-engaging-faithbased-organizations-to-prevent-violence-against-women--girls>

Equality China: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/evaluations/2017/12/final-evaluation-promoting-justice-for-survivors-of-genderbased-violence-in-china>

Note: Remaining evaluations available upon request

# ANNEX 1: LIST OF PROJECTS

Year	Cycle	Country	Organization Name
2012	16	Armenia	Women's Resource Center
2012	16	Libya	International Medical Corps - UK
2012	16	Malawi	Concern Worldwide
2013	17	Cambodia	CARE International in Cambodia
2013	17	Kosovo	European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo
2013	17	Ukraine	Ukrainian Women's Fund
2013	17	Armenia	Society Without Violence NGO
2013	17	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
2013	17	Vietnam	Plan Vietnam
2013	17	South Africa	Grassroot Soccer
2015	18	Nepal	Restless Development Nepal
2015	18	El Salvador	Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz
2015	18	Thailand	Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand
2015	18	Zimbabwe	Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe Trust
2015	18	Albania	Alliance Against LGBT Discrimination
2015	18	Kyrgyzstan	NFFCK
2015	18	Brazil, DRC	Promundo-US
2015	18	Mongolia	Mongolian Women's Fund
2016	19	Kenya	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)
2016	19	Kenya, Zambia	Africa Alliance of YMCAs
2016	19	Nicaragua	MADRE
2016	19	China	Equality
2016	19	Jordan	ARDD-Legal Aid
2016	19	Pakistan	Sindh Community Foundation
2016	19	Turkey	The Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV)
2016	19	Palestine	Women's Studies Centre
2016	19	Serbia	Autonomous Women's Center (AWC)
2016	19	Tanzania	Amref Health Africa- Tanzania
2016	19	Brazil	Casa da Mulher Trabalhadora - CAMTRA
2016	19	Cameroon	ASSOCIATION POUR LA PROMOTION DU DEVELOPPEMENT LOCAL (APDEL)
2016	19	Guyana	Help & Shelter
2016	19	Nepal	Skillshare Nepal
2017	20	Jordan	Arab Women Organization of Jordan (AWO)
2017	20	Jordan	War Child Canada

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2017	20	Malawi	International Association of Women Judges
2017	20	Solomon Islands	Family Support Centre
2017	20	Cameroon	LUKMEF-Cameroon
2017	20	Kenya	Trócaire
2017	20	Madagascar	ECPAT FRANCE
2017	20	Malawi	AMSOPT
2017	20	Belarus	Belarusian Association of Young Cristian Women (YWCA Belarus)
2017	20	Nigeria	SEXUAL OFFENCES AWARENESS & VICTIMS REHABILITATION INITIATIVE
2017	20	Serbia	Center for Girls
2018	21	Palestine	Women's Affairs Technical Committee
2018	21	Colombia	Fundación Servicios Integrales para la Mujer- Si Mujer
2018	21	Haiti	Beyond Borders (known in Haiti in Haitian Creole: Depase Fwontyè yo)
2018	21	Liberia	Episcopal Relief & Development
2018	21	Morocco	Association Ennakhil
2018	21	Mexico	Ciencia Social Alternativa AC
2018	21	South Sudan	The Strategic Initiative for Women in The Horn Of Africa (SIHA) Network
2018	21	Kyrgyzstan	The Centre of Research of Democratic Processes



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[www.youtube.com/UNTrustFundtoEndViolenceagainstWomen](https://www.youtube.com/UNTrustFundtoEndViolenceagainstWomen)