

EDUCATION TO END VIOLENCE

Photo: UN Women/UN Trust Fund: Therisia Thyllin



Preventing violence against women and girls is a key element of most projects funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund). Because early intervention at an age when social attitudes are being formed is especially important for effecting change, the UN Trust Fund supports many projects that aim to make schools and other educational settings safe places for girls, where they are empowered to develop their human rights potential free from violence. Formal and informal education on gender-based violence, root causes of gender inequalities and gender equal norms are crucial in preventing and ending violence against women and girls, as well as in promoting youth and girls leadership and engagement in creating safe and prosperous communities.

The UN Trust Fund currently supports gender education programmes in 333 schools run by 17 grantees. Here are some of the examples of change they are creating:

National Federation of Female Communities of Kyrgyzstan (NFFCK) – Kyrgyzstan

The NFFCK developed the concept of the School of Life Without Violence programme, the first of its kind in the Kyrgyz language, to empower girls in rural areas to acquire vital skills to prevent and respond to threats and violence risks in the family, school and community. The school-based education programme aims to empower girls to claim their rights and end bride-kidnapping and early/forced marriage, a prevalent form of violence against women and girls in Kyrgyzstan.

“The programme School of Life Without Violence changed my destiny. After attending the seminar, my father began to communicate with me. I used to talk through my brother. I was afraid that I, as well as my sister, would be married at the age of 16... My father promised that I would study. Mom is also happy for me. I'm happy!” — Fifteen-year-old girl

The programme also contributed to transforming boys' perceptions of girls' activism and participation. Nearly two-thirds of the 130 boys interviewed said that the School of Life Without Violence programme had made it possible for girls to

live without violence and increased their potential to enjoy their human rights.

“The project has changed the lives of the girls in our school. Many of them not only became activists in the life of our school and municipality, but became leaders of the movement for the rights of girls throughout the country.” — Staff member at the Alybaev school, Otogon village, Kyrgyzstan

A survey reflected this assessment of the positive impact of the programme in the target communities. More than 91 per cent of adult respondents from

local government, community structures and community leaders noted that the programme was effective in helping develop a new generation of activists in the women's movement, promoting the rights of girls and women

The Mongolian Women's Fund – Mongolia

The Mongolian Women's Fund is working with local councils in Mongolia's Dornod Province and Baganuur District on gender-based violence awareness-raising programmes in schools. It proved to be an essential and effective way to change attitudes and behaviours of gender stereotyping that pave the way to violence.

The baseline study conducted in four schools found that nearly two-thirds of girls surveyed had experienced violence, – but more than a quarter of teachers and school staff believed there was no violence in schools.

The educational curriculum on GBV was piloted in four schools, and demonstrated that such educational content was needed and effective, as reflected in an improved understanding of violence against women and resulted in positive changes in the attitudes of both students and staff.

Over 340 teachers have been trained to teach the module, and the employment agreement for teachers has been amended to prohibit corporal punishment. The programmes increased the knowledge and understanding of

gender-based violence among boys and girls by 30-60 per cent. The four schools have already reported positive changes in behaviour.

A young man studying at the Bolovsrol School, Baganuur district, summarized the success:

"I now have a zero-tolerance approach to any type of violence. I will make sure to protect myself, my friends from it and will work closely with teachers and staff of this school to prevent it."

The Mongolian Women's Fund secured funding from the municipal government to ensure continued implementation of the piloted curriculum on ending gender-based violence.

Promundo – Brazil and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Promundo is implementing a project that builds on its evidence-based experience to prevent violence against girls in the context of high urban violence (Brazil) and in conflict-affected settings (the

Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Working directly with adolescent girls and boys who have experienced or witnessed violence, the project uses group education and counselling to foster critical reflections on their experiences and the adoption of healthy, non-violent attitudes and behaviour. Two Youth Living Peace manuals were tested and a 16-hour training programme based on the manuals is being delivered to facilitators. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 32 students of clinical psychology and psychologists from local universities have become education facilitators.

A principal of the Métanoïa Institute said, a school in Goma said, "I did not know that there are more teachers that reinforce children's trauma... Teachers should learn to listen to students rather than hitting them."



A school in Mongolia that teaches the curriculum on ending gender-based violence in schools.
Photo: MONES/Erdenekhuyag



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