



SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBAL INITIATIVE

THIRD INTERNATIONAL COMPENDIUM
OF PRACTICES

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Cover photo: A campaign on sexual harassment was carried out during the Barranquilla Carnival where female leaders and public officials used various platforms to raise awareness about sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in public spaces. UN Women/Tico Angulo.

SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBAL INITIATIVE

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OF PRACTICES

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SECTION
UN WOMEN
2025



Commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
FGD	Focus group discussions
GBV	Gender-based violence
ICT	Information and communication technology
IEC	Information, education and communication
KII	Key informant interviews
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
LNOB	Leave no one behind
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-government organisation
SC	Safe City
SC SPS	Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SH	Sexual harassment
SV	Sexual violence
SVAWG	Sexual violence against women and girls
TF SH	Technology-facilitated sexual harassment
TF VAWG	Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence against women
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WRO	Women's rights organisation
WSA	Women's safety audit

INTRODUCTION

The UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces (SC SPS) Global Initiative has been implementing comprehensive programming to prevent and respond to sexual harassment (SH) in cities and public spaces (e.g. transportation, commodity sectors, schools, online, etc.) since the inception of UN Women in 2011 and currently spans 68 cities in 38 countries. The Global SC SPS Initiative is grounded in the principles human rights and leaving no one behind (LNOB) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It addresses the urgent call to respond to the global scourge of SH that affects women and girls, communities and countries, including in lost opportunities for women and girls to realise their full potential when the causes and consequences of sexual violence (SV) are not urgently addressed. By fostering local ownership through multi-sectoral partnerships in support of programming, local and provincial/state governments, grassroots women, women's rights organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and other partners have received a wide range of support under the SC SPS Global Initiative to develop and implement comprehensive initiatives to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in urban, rural, humanitarian, and other settings.

Across all programming contexts, comprehensive SC and SPS initiatives include efforts across four action areas: 1) ensuring that locally relevant and owned solutions are identified; 2) strengthening laws and policies; 3) investing in the safety and economic viability of public spaces; and 4) fostering transformative social norms that promote women and girls' rights to use public spaces free from SH and other forms of SVAWG.

This Third International Compendium of Practices illustrates some of the ways cities in the Global Initiative are working to implement concerted action in these four areas. In doing so, city partners are committed to work to advance their integrated approaches to reduce the prevalence of SH against women and girls in public space, increase women and girls' feelings of safety, and increase women and girls' autonomous mobility.

The compendium includes practices in SC SPS initiatives implemented between January 2022 and January 2025. It follows the COVID-19 pandemic in a period characterized as a polycrisis context, referring to the interconnected nature of the multiple crises facing the world today, including climate, conflict, health pandemics, and democratic erosion. On their own, each of these can be devastating, combined they are even worse, with women and girls disproportionately affected and with enormous impact on cities. A study by UN Women across thirteen countries noted an increased in violence against women in both private and public settings. During this time, 6 in 10 women felt that sexual harassment in public space has worsened.¹

1 UN Women (2021) Measuring the Shadow Pandemic, available at: <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf>

Marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women launched the Beijing+30 Action Agenda with six key areas for catalytic progress to achieve gender equality and the global goals, including a vision of zero violence against women and girls.²

These areas are aligned with the six SDG transitions that outline the systems transformations needed to achieve the SDGs, including critical issues facing cities across the world, namely food systems, climate, energy, digital connectivity, education, and social protection.³ Localizing the six transitions and the Beijing+30 Action Agenda, including through SC SPS initiatives across the world is essential, as local governments, often being positioned closest to the community in creating cities that are safe, healthy, caring, and sustainable for all women and girls and—piloting concrete actions that can be built to scale in other districts, cities, and embedded in national and global frameworks.

Cities can ensure women's full participation in public life, benefiting from their know-how and their skills, especially in times where VAW continues to be exacerbated by the polycrisis: economic, conflicts, climate, and intensified pushback in response to the critical achievements that continue to be made to advance women's rights.

The compendium showcases resilient action and innovation in this context in addressing new and emerging issues, including technology-facilitated SH and other forms of SVAWG. Promising practices have been selected among those that have led to positive outcomes, involve collaborative partnerships, and illustrate innovative action on women's safety in public spaces in different settings, including urban, rural, and online.

It is important to note that while SC and SPS partnership initiatives featured in this compendium include most recent action taken in one outcome area, other city initiatives included may have advanced their actions across several outcome areas in the pathway to change. Also, as this is an evolving area of research and practice, it is also important to recognise that what works well in one context may not always be easily transferable to another.



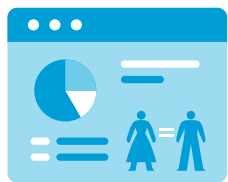
² UN Women (2025) Beijing+30 Action Agenda: For ALL women and girls, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/03/brochure-beijing30-action-agenda-for-all-women-and-girls>

³ UN (2023) Six Transitions: Investment Pathways to Deliver the SDGs, available at: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/six-transitions-investment-pathways-deliver-sdgs>



1

**LOCALLY OWNED
SOLUTIONS
IDENTIFIED**

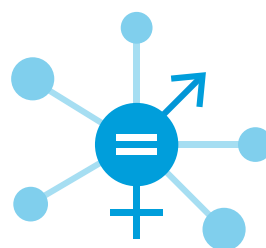


1. LOCALLY OWNED SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED

Each city participating in the UN Women SC SPS Global Initiative adapts a global framework and accompanying package of tools to their local context. The first critical step each participating city in the SC SPS Global Initiative takes is in to conduct a scoping study on SH against women and girls in public spaces. The design and implementation of the scoping study across cities is informed by global guidance, which mainly consists of qualitative data collection and a review of quantitative data which helps to generate specific data on the local experiences of SVAWG, the places SH occurs, and deepen understanding about the nature and extent of SH, its forms and impacts, including data on groups of women who are most likely to experience heightened risks to this form of violence, and identify interventions to address it.

The scoping study also identifies the key relevant stakeholders to include as partners in SC SPS programming. For example, this can include partners who may be working to prevent and respond to VAWG, and those partners in different sectors who may not yet be working specifically on eliminating SH but who can contribute their expertise and integrate the prevention of SH in their work. Some examples of partners include urban planners, transport authorities, local government working on environment and climate change, innovation and technology, economic development, women's rights organisations and other civil society groups. Engaging stakeholders early in the process is important and allows for co-creation and shared ownership of each SC SPS programme developed at the local level. As part of this process, SC SPS programme teams create space to bring in the voices of diverse women, especially those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on factors such as age, disability, Indigenous status, sexual orientation, and ethnicity to ensure they can inform the design, implementation and assessment of the programme as agents of change.

Following the results of the scoping study, a participatory SC SPS programme design session is held with key stakeholders (local government, women's rights groups, NGOs, the police, local businesses, etc.) to discuss and validate the findings of the study and enable partners to develop a holistic SC and SPS with women and girls' programme, guided by a global theory of change. This process ensures that **gender responsive locally relevant and owned interventions are identified** and that interventions are prioritised with a set of agreed upon results and indicators to ensure shared accountability among programme partners.



Locally Owned Solutions Identified: Key Takeaways

- Supplementary scoping studies can be conducted in SC SPS programmes as partners continue to build on their first set of priorities identified in earlier stages of programme development, and also identifies one of the ways city partners may choose to build to scale their programmes by including interventions in other public spaces that they may have not have prioritised or included in their initial scoping study.
- Engaging multiple stakeholders with different outreach strategies from the inception of the programme fosters community solidarity and further works to empower all women. Co-creation processes with diverse stakeholders ensure that solutions to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of VAWG in public spaces take account of the different needs, concerns, and perspectives shared by women and girls.
- Regular monitoring and assessment of SC and SPS interventions allows city partners to share learnings and challenges. This process helps build upon successes and refines strategies for better SC SPS outcomes in the future.
- Establishing a coordination mechanism is important for implementing and sustaining partner contributions to strategic and effective comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of VAWG.

1.1 MULTI-CITY SUPPLEMENTARY SCOPING STUDIES ON TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (CUENCA, GUAYAQUIL AND QUITO, ECUADOR, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA)

Description

While there are gaps in women and girls' access and control over information and communication technologies (ICT) including the Internet⁴, many women across the world are connected online and increasingly face technology-facilitated SH and other forms of violence⁵. It is important to address this form of violence at national and sub-national levels, including through evidence driven SC SPS programmes in UN Women's SC SPS Global Initiative to further deepen understanding of different stakeholders including local governments, women's rights organisations, the private sector, civil society organisations (CSO), schools, and other partners of the **continuum of violence and spaces** (online and offline).

To respond to the growing urgency to address TF VAWG, UN Women developed for participating cities in the SC SPS Global Initiative a *Global Guidance Note on Supplementary Scoping Studies on Technology-facilitated Sexual Harassment and other forms of Violence against Women and Girls*. The guidance aims to support country teams in collecting data to inform targeted interventions that address technology-facilitated sexual harassment (TF SH) and other forms of TF VAWG within their comprehensive SC SPS programmes.

There are important knowledge gaps on TF VAWG that supplementary scoping studies seek to address and includes different lines of enquiry that SC SPS partners can use information as the basis for designing their locally adapted study on TF SH and other forms of TF VAWG. Supplementary scoping studies are intended to be completed in a short period of time and include a desk review of available quantitative and qualitative data, identifying findings of previous research conducted at national and/or subnational level.

4 For example, evidence suggests that women in low- and middle-income countries are 15 percent less likely than men to use mobile internet. GSMA (2024). The Mobile Gender Gap Report. Available at: <https://www.gsma.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2024.pdf>

5 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/a-79-500-sg-report-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-2024-infographic-and-recommendations-en.pdf>

The supplementary scoping study also includes primary research using qualitative methods, such as key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) to inform specific interventions to address TF SH and other forms of VAWG.

The *Global Guidance Note on Supplementary Scoping Studies on Technology-facilitated Sexual Harassment and other forms of Violence against Women and Girls* was piloted and adapted initially in two countries, Ecuador and Ethiopia, building on existing SC SPS programmes in each country. Following the local adaptation of the Global Guidance Note, findings from each local study in 2023 helped to further refine the Global Guidance Note.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

In Ecuador, the supplementary scoping study on TF VAWG was conducted in three cities: Quito, Cuenca and Guayaquil and in Ethiopia, the supplementary scoping was conducted in the capital city of Addis Ababa. Each scoping study revealed that there is a digital divide in the country, including limited access of women and girls to digital tools, including ICT and meaningful connectivity.

Across the three cities of Ecuador, many women, adolescent girls, and men participants shared that they had experienced attacks on the Internet and when using other types of ICTs. Some FGD participants also revealed that they knew someone who had experienced a form of TF VAWG.

The forms of TF VAWG that women and girl participants perceived to be the most prevalent were online harassment, identity theft, non-consensual access to accounts and devices, extortion, and exposure to discriminatory content.

Preliminary findings from the scoping study in Ethiopia revealed that TF VAWG is highly prevalent in Addis Ababa, there is a general lack of awareness about this form of violence, and TF VAWG is often normalised. The study revealed that across major social media platforms, women and adolescent girls and boys frequently experience online violence, including online SH, doxing⁶, and non-consensual distribution of intimate images and videos.

In Ecuador, the results of the supplementary scoping study were validated in a multistakeholder programme design workshop to address TF SH and other forms of TF VAWG and helped to inform the first set of priority actions (2024 to 2025). These include the:

- Development of guidance in consultation with representatives of social organizations based in Quito, Cuenca and Guayaquil entitled *Protected Online: A Digital Care Guide for Women's Social Organizations*, for use by women's rights organisations in Ecuador to strengthen their protection against TF VAWG.
- Implementation of comprehensive training in each of the three cities, including nearly 50 women from 27 organisations who attended training sessions on digital self-care, risk analysis and reporting mechanisms on TF VAWG. These workshops were also used to test and validate the content of the Digital Care Guide, with recommendation to further strengthen the final version of the guide.
- Production of user-friendly communications material, including social media cards that helped to share some of the main findings of the supplementary scoping study on TF VAWG in Ecuador. The cards included information on what TF VAWG is, detailed impacts of TF VAWG on victim/survivors, provided information on the national legislation to address TF VAWG and tips on how to stay safe in digital environments.

6 Doxing refers to gathering an individual's personally identifiable information and releasing it publicly for malicious purposes.

- Additional research in Ecuador was undertaken in response to the gaps identified in the supplementary scoping study on TF VAWG, and a recommendation to conduct research to identify and understand the barriers related to access to justice for victims/survivors of TF VAWG. The report Barriers to Access to Justice for victim/survivors of TF VAWG was prepared and reveals a lack of awareness on TF VAWG among stakeholders, insufficient specialised training for police and justice, loss of digital evidence, and the absence of effective reparation measures.

1.2 STRENGTHENING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION FOR SAFE CITY ACTION (TUNIS, TUNISIA)

Description

From 2023 to 2024, the Tunis SC SPS programme began to implement action to address SH and other forms of VAWG in public space and create safer urban environments for women and girls. Tunisia has a strong enabling environment for the implementation of the SC SPS programme, including for example ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), comprehensive laws against gender-based violence (GBV), and a new national strategy to end VAW. Government leadership alongside multistakeholder engagement (e.g. women's organisations, NGOs, businesses, and other civil society partners) is crucial to effectively implement a comprehensive SC SPS approach, including the implementation of existing policy frameworks.

The first set of activities in the Tunis SC SPS programme included the development of a scoping study to generate evidence on SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces, and awareness raising sessions on the SC SPS programme framework. It also included the implementation of a participatory programme design workshop to inform the development of SC SPS programme and prioritised establishing key multi-stakeholder partnerships including with the mayor's office, representatives from 15 municipal districts, women's organisations, and educational institutions.

Engaging diverse stakeholders from the inception of the programme helped to ensure that the results of the study would include the different perspectives of different groups of women in the city and different sectors (businesses, schools, youth groups, transportation, etc.) in order to identify gaps in knowledge, policy and practice on SH and other forms of SVAWG in public space, and solutions that would be needed to address these gaps.

Programme partners intentionally focused from the start on identifying the roles of different stakeholders in creating safe and empowering public spaces for women and girls and developing a shared understanding of main programme partners on the need for complementary expertise and shared accountability, and outlining areas of responsibility. For example, partnerships with the Municipality of Tunis and its municipal districts are essential for policy support, including the integration of gender equality and women's safety across municipal portfolios and dedicated technical expertise and budgets to implement SC SPS programme interventions. Civil society organisations (CSOs) including grassroots groups with expertise in gender equality, women's safety including support to survivors of violence and women's economic empowerment were identified as collaborators and also potential implementation partners for priority action to prevent and respond to SH in public space. Involving different CSOs at the inception of the programme is also critical for reaching different groups of women, including those who are most often excluded, and creating space to hear their needs and concerns, and recommendations for action. Schools and universities were also approached to support the goals of the scoping study and engage young women on urban campuses in the study and programme design. To further formalise engagement, select multi-stakeholder partners were invited to participate as **Advisory Committee** members to oversee the development and implementation of the Tunis Safe City programme.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The participatory methodology of the scoping study, which included KIIs and FGDs with CSOs, representatives from different sectors in the municipality and differently-positioned women allowed the research team to capture the different forms of SH experienced by women and girls in Tunis, the areas where it takes place most often, and the consequences on the women and the choices they make. Study participants also identified several locally-relevant solutions to address SVAWG in the city including: making improvements to public space in the markets and transport to support women's economic empowerment and safety, promoting social norms change for gender equality and non-violence, and investing in prevention to change institutional norms, and attitudes and behaviours that normalize SH, including through different strategies to engage men and boys.

Early results show that multistakeholder engagement and opportunities for co-creating the Tunis Safe City programme have increased community solidarity and strengthened the empowerment of women who participate in the programme.

Several start up actions have also been prioritised from 2024 to 2025 and shared in short [video](#) presentation of the programme in early 2025.

To address the gaps in knowledge and experience related to addressing SH in public spaces in the city, capacity strengthening activities are required to be conducted with CSOs and government partners to build a shared understanding of the problem and how it can be addressed. Building local capacity of partners also helps to promote sustainable community involvement in efforts to address SH in public space.

While it can be a challenge to ensure continuous community engagement and not lose the momentum of efforts to promote public spaces free of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces, it is important to leverage partnerships and identify sustainable funding mechanisms for women's rights organisations contributing to comprehensive action in the Tunis Safe City programme, as medium and long-term partnership engagement is needed to reduce the prevalence of SVAWG and ensure safe, healthy and sustainable cities and public spaces for all.



The Tunis scoping study identified the need to raise awareness about sexual harassment in public spaces, including through the use of creative means. UN Women Tunisia/Ali Mghirbi.

1.3 EFFECTIVE LOCAL MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT SAFE AND EMPOWERING PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS (HAWASSA, ETHIOPIA)

Description

UN Women Ethiopia has been supporting the implementation of a SC SPS programme in the City of Hawassa. An multisectoral Advisory Group for the programme was created in 2022, including representatives of the city administration, the department of women and social affairs, education, transport, justice, police, health, tourism, industrial park, faith-based organisations, and other civil society organisations.

The SC Advisory Group was formalized following the completion of the scoping study on SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. The study recommended the need to set up a multisectoral coordination platform under the leadership of the City Administration to help support the collective achievement of results by partners and ensure sustainability of the programme.

In establishing the Advisory Group, seventeen government sector offices and member organisations expressed their commitment to the goals of the programme and signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the aim of creating safe and empowering public spaces for women and girls free from SH and other forms SVAWG in the City of Hawassa.

Key results and Lessons Learned

Since its establishment, SC Advisory Group member organisations have implemented women's safety action in line with their commitments made. The Advisory group has facilitated better coordination and collaboration among SC partners and helped to build local ownership and accountability of the city government in mainstreaming SC SPS focused interventions in their annual plans, budgets, and strategies.

UN Women has strengthened the capacities Advisory Group members by holding a series of workshops on how to address SH in public spaces through concerted action. Significant progress has been made with key action launched on the prevention and response to SH and SVAWG in public spaces, particularly in the transport and police sector, through continued support and engagement of the SC Advisory Group.

For example, the transport bureau, in consultation with the public transport association has developed a new bylaw to address various forms of violence in and around transport, including SH. The bylaw is applicable for public transport owners, drivers and assistants and it includes guidance on what to do in cases of incidents of SH or SVAWG. Following the adoption of the bylaw, an Ending Sexual Harassment Committee was created by the association, with clear roles and responsibilities of members, which has helped to increase awareness on SH in public spaces among drivers and assistants, identification and reporting of cases, and measures to address perpetration. As part of awareness raising efforts, megaphones were installed in the public bus station/terminal to disseminate messages related to ending VAWG, gender equality, and creating safe public spaces for all. The public transport providers were actively engaged in community mobilisation activities and closely worked with the legal bodies in their role on prevention and response.

The ongoing capacity building, advocacy, and close follow up of other actions by transport significantly contributed to enhancing the safety and mobility of women and girls, while waiting for and using public transport in the city.

The Hawassa City Police Department, a member of the SC Advisory Group, established an additional 26 new community police stations, thereby increasing the number of community police stations from 16 to 40. The expansion of community police stations and police services in priority locations of the city contributed to an increase in women's feelings of safety, strengthened coordination on VAW, and has improved the handling and reporting of VAWG cases.

“THE SIGNING OF THE JOINT MOU BY ALL RELEVANT ACTORS ON CREATING SAFE CITIES WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS ACCELERATED THE COORDINATION NEEDED AMONG PARTNERS AND ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXPANSION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY POLICE STATIONS”.

(POLICE COMMISSIONER, INSPECTOR MELKAMU AYELE, CITY OF HAWASSA, ETHIOPIA)



A trained minibus taxi driver, wearing a vest with a key message calling for the public to act against sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women in Hawassa. UN Women Ethiopia/Norwegian Church Aid.

1.4 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE/VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SECTOR FORUM (OTTAWA, CANADA)

Description

On April 12, 2024, the City of Ottawa, in partnership with the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Interval House of Ottawa, hosted the gender-based violence (GBV)-VAW Ottawa Forum. The Forum aimed to share and discuss the findings of the GBV-VAW Scoping Study prepared to inform the interventions the city would implement as part of the Ottawa SC Initiative. A comprehensive asset mapping study was conducted to identify the needs for survivors of GBV and service availability and to initiate the design of a collective priority setting and action planning process that would reflect a wide range of perspectives and expertise. The Forum included participation of diverse stakeholders who reflected on the findings of the GBV-VAW Scoping Study and participated in the initial processes to develop an action plan. Sector feedback was also provided.

The forum used an intersectional anti-racist, anti-discrimination, decolonial, survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach. It also adopted a collective impact approach, fostering structured collaboration between different levels of government, community organisations and residents, and promoted a community-led initiative that emphasized shared responsibility and integrated solutions to address the root causes of GBV and VAW.

A decompression room with yoga mats was provided in the forum for volunteers to take a walk with people who were overwhelmed or needed to step away. Noise-cancelling headphones, colouring books, and fidget toys were also provided to facilitate participation for all attendees.

Key Results

Ninety participants, including representatives from 32 organisations, who participated in the Forum increased awareness and deepened understanding of the current available services and gaps to address for GBV survivors based on the findings of the GBV-VAW Scoping Study. Forum participants developed preliminary components of a strategic action plan for 2024-2025 to improve prevention, service delivery, and housing options for GBV survivors.

The inclusive and participatory nature of the Forum was highly effective in generating comprehensive feedback from all participants and contributed to increased opportunities for networking and collaboration among different stakeholders, leading to potential new partnerships for a more cohesive approach to GBV-VAW response.

Furthermore, working to establish the Forum as an annual event will help sustain the dialogue and collaboration efforts among participants.

More information about the Forum can be found [here](#).





2

**COMPREHENSIVE
LAWS AND POLICIES**



2. COMPREHENSIVE LAWS AND POLICIES

Several cities participating in the UN Women SC SPS Global Initiative have been working to respond to the gap on comprehensive laws and policies on sexual harassment (SH) in public spaces. This work includes support of government partners to introduce or strengthen local laws and policies, capacity building and other measures for stakeholders to effectively implement laws and policies on the prevention and response to SH in public spaces, monitor implementation, and advance policy by reflecting on the international knowledge base on how to effectively address SH using a comprehensive approach. These efforts are occurring at different levels, from local to national.

With support provided to cities under the UN Women SC SPS Global Initiative, a growing number of laws and policies have been introduced and/or strengthened to address SH in public spaces, generating several lessons learned that can be applied by cities across the world. Some of these include: the importance of having diverse local women agents of change inform the development and implementation of laws and policies on SH, reviewing

laws, policies and plans periodically to better understand what is working and not working well, and to adjust as needed. It is also important for local governments and other partners to ensure flexibility and quickly adapt policy responses in response to multiple crises (e.g. COVID-19, humanitarian and conflict settings, pushback on women's rights) to ensure women's and girls' rights to live a life free of violence.

Comprehensive Laws and Policies: Key Takeaways

- Reviewing laws and policies on SH, including in public spaces helps to identify gaps to ensure that laws, policies and plans are gender responsive by taking account of the needs, perspectives, and experiences of women and girls. A growing evidence base on effective strategies to address SH in public spaces can be consulted as part of regular monitoring of each SC SPS programmes, in addition to a policy review that is undertaken as part of a scoping study on SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces to identify legislation and policy gaps and how to address them.
- Involving multiple sectors in the developing and reforming laws and developing policies and plans is critical. It helps contribute to their enactment; raise awareness about the roles different stakeholders can play in addressing SH and enhance the effectiveness of interventions.
- A robust monitoring and evaluation strategy helps to inform upgrades in policy and plans to prevent and respond to VAWG.
- Providing longer-term grants ensures financial sustainability for grassroots organisations, enabling them to consolidate their services and plan future work. This stability is important to ensure the sustained impact of their work.

2.1 CRIMINALISING SEXUAL HARASSMENT (BANJA LUKA, REPUBLIKA SRPSKA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA)

Description

In early 2022, the United Women Foundation, recognizing the critical need for legislative reform on SH, launched an initiative to amend the Criminal Code of the Republika Srpska to address the criminal offense of SH in line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.

In August 2023, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted amendments to the Criminal Code related to SH, marking an important step in strengthening the protection of women and girls against harassment. The amendments were initiated by the Banja Luka-based civil society organisation United Women, as part of the project "Banja Luka - A City with Zero Tolerance for Sexual Violence and Harassment" as part of the Banja Luka Safe Programme, in collaboration with UN Women and with the support of Sweden.

The amendments have extended the scope of protection to all victims/survivors of SH, regardless of their relationship to the perpetrator. Previously, the law primarily protected victims who were in a subordinate or dependent relationship with the perpetrator, such as persons with disabilities or children. By extending protection to all victims/survivors, the new provisions ensure that everyone has equal access to justice in cases of SH.

Key Elements

Research and Drafting: The United Women's Foundation led the drafting of the proposed amendments to the legislation. This process included thorough research of existing laws and international standards, in particular the Istanbul Convention, and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Office of the Mayor in Banja Luka, civil society organisations, and professional associations representing those groups of women who face heightened risks to SH and other forms of violence.

Special attention was paid from the start to ensure that the perspectives of marginalised and vulnerable groups were included and respected in this process.

Members of academia, who brought in-depth knowledge and research-based insights, and a trade union representing workers, were also actively involved. A series of structured consultations, workshops and meetings provided a platform for stakeholders to voice their concerns, share their experiences and contribute to the drafting of the proposed amendments. This collaborative effort was critical in identifying gaps in the current legislation and understanding the practical challenges faced when implementing laws on SH.

Lobbying and Advocacy efforts: The United Women's Foundation engaged in extensive lobbying and advocacy efforts to garner support from key stakeholders, including policymakers, representatives of different sectors of government, civil society organisations, women's rights activists, and survivors of violence. The Foundation organised a series of workshops, seminars and public fora to raise awareness of the importance of the proposed legislative changes and to build a coalition of support.

Validation: Validation sessions were organized after the Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska formally accepted the initiative in mid-2023. Key stakeholders, including members of the judiciary, law enforcement officials, healthcare professionals, and representatives of civil society organisations, attended the sessions to critically review and fine-tune the proposed amendments.

Feedback from these sessions was instrumental in making final adjustments to ensure that the amendments were comprehensive, workable, and effective in strengthening protections.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The participatory approach adopted in the programme with wide stakeholder engagement helped create a powerful movement for legislative change. Investment in advocacy interventions were also critical to help secure the necessary political endorsements and facilitate a smooth legislative process.

The involvement of various stakeholders also ensured that the amendments reflected the practical needs of the community, particularly with regard to increasing the responsibility of the police and the judiciary in receiving reports and prosecuting SH cases, as well as encouraging reporting by affected victims/survivors.

It is important to continue to socialise the legislation among community members, invest in measures to break the silence on SH which is often normalised in cities across the world and strengthen essential services on SH which will help to inform choices survivors make in reporting SH.



Multi-stakeholder conference for the legislative process. Municipality of Banja Luka.

2.2 DIGITAL COORDINATED RESPONSE SYSTEM TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS SEXUAL HARASSMENT (MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY)

Background

The city of Montevideo, Uruguay has been working across its eight municipalities and various city departments to strengthen prevention and response efforts to address SH within the Montevideo SC SPS Programme since 2017. The city has implemented a coordinated and institutionalised response to effectively implement the Protocol of Action against Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces.

In support of the implementation of the Protocol, the [website “Montevideo libre de acoso”](#) (Montevideo free of sexual harassment) was developed. The website aims to be a central resource for the public to report cases of SH and gain access to additional information about what it is, how women are impacted, and what local services are offered, including those related to prevention.

Description

The Montevideo Protocol of Action against Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces, approved in 2021, aims to promote a city free of violence against women, promote the right to the city and territory, and fulfil a women's right to live a life free of violence.

The city has developed a strategy to anchor the SH protocol across the entire institutional framework of the Municipality.⁷ There are a number of different elements to the protocol spanning both prevention and response. One of the elements calls for the development of an **institutional response mechanism** to effectively respond to cases of SH in specific settings, notably in workplaces, public transportation, and other public spaces.

As a result, a centralized institutional response mechanism for cases of SH was developed for Montevideo and its eight municipalities, in the form of dedicated webpages available on the Montevideo Free of Sexual Harassment website. The website was developed using a collaborative approach seeking inputs from different stakeholders and sectors (e.g. the Gender Equality Advisory Division, the Department of Mobility, the Department of Urban Development and Planning, and others). Multi-sectoral contributions to the development of an institutional response mechanism also served to raise awareness among representatives of different sectors about how other stakeholders could contribute to addressing SH in their respective areas of responsibility, including parks, and those who work on road safety.

The city's *Departamento de Desarrollo Sostenible e Inteligente* (Department of Sustainable and Intelligent Development)⁸ worked in collaboration with the Gender Advisory Team to then design and launch the website where relevant local information on SH would be consolidated for the public to be informed about local efforts to prevent and respond to SH and make available an online reporting system.

The website is a tool used by the municipality as part of its comprehensive SC SPS approach to address SH, including a focus on education, capacity strengthening, and working on positive masculinities.

The website provides a detailed definition of SH and uses examples to enhance understanding of its different manifestations. It provides step-by-step guidance to confidentially report incidences of SH in public spaces and in transportation. It provides victim/survivors with clear information about the path that each request follows until its resolution. It also offers the possibility of submitting queries should someone need more information.

Once the website was launched, a dissemination strategy was put into place. This included developing and sharing an explanatory note about the tool to key stakeholders, and linking the website to those of important partners, for example the Transportation Division of the Mobility Department,⁹ to ensure that information is embedded in various websites. From the onset, a monitoring and evaluation strategy was also activated, to assess the quality of the response system and also to inform recommendations for continuous upgrades and improvements.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The website is being used by the public to report cases of SH. In 2023, 153 reports were filed and in 2024 164 reports were filed through the online system.

Developing this new integrated tool expanded multisectoral collaboration to address sexual SH in the municipality, bringing in new partners such as the Department of Urban Development and Planning. This served to increase understanding and awareness about how SH often occurs in different spaces, including in public squares, parks, and streets, and is also informing plans for new actions that further leverage the use of technology in the Montevideo SC SPS initiative, such as the geo-referencing of reports of SH.

⁷ See page 25 of the Harassment-Free Montevideo Plan, Institutional Framework: <https://montevideo.gub.uy/sites/default/files/biblioteca/planmvdlibredeacosoversionweb050.pdf>.

⁸ For more information, visit: <https://montevideo.gub.uy/areas-tematicas/servicios-digitales/desarrollo-sostenible-e-inteligente/estructura-del-departamento>

⁹ See: <https://montevideo.gub.uy/areas-tematicas/movilidad/protocolo-de-actuacion-ante-situaciones-de-acoso-sexual-en-el-transporte-publico-colectivo>

It is important to be able to introduce progressive improvements to the integrated response system. For example, in Montevideo, pop-up messages with critical information were added to the website after it launched to provide victim/survivors with information about how to access immediate support.¹⁰

The addition of new questions to the reporting templates, including forms of SH, served to generate more information to understand SH in the municipality to help strengthen the institutional response.¹¹

2.3 SAFE SPACES FOR WOMEN IN CRISIS CONTEXTS (MULTI-CITY, UKRAINE)

Background

Following the Russian military invasion in Ukraine, many women, men, and their families experienced internal displacement. Responding to calls for spaces for women to gather safely to meet, learn, share and practice self-care, the Safe Spaces for Women and Girls pilot initiative was launched in four cities in Ukraine in September 2022. The spaces offered multidimensional forms of support, which responded to the needs identified from women in each of the four locations. Safe and child-friendly spaces were also provided, allowing women to bring their children with them, knowing that they will be cared for and be engaged for the women to be able to participate fully in the activities and services offered by the Safe Spaces project.

Description

The lives of people across Ukraine have been profoundly impacted by the humanitarian crisis brought on by the invasion on 24 February 2022. While millions of Ukrainians fled the country, millions more experienced internal displacement, leaving behind communities, social support networks and their homes.

Women constitute the majority of those displaced within and outside of the country and face increased safety and protection risks.

A Rapid Gender Analysis,¹² carried out by UN Women and CARE International in May 2022 revealed that women were being disproportionately affected by the crisis. In the face of ongoing security threats, women and girls were experiencing increased forms of GBV—including intimate partner violence, SH, and conflict-related SV. Deteriorating socio-economic conditions with the invasion further exacerbate this threat, heightening rates of sexual exploitation, trafficking and other forms of violence, while services for VAWG survivors are not provided in full.

Key Elements

UN Women with its partners began to respond to these challenges through the Safe Spaces for Women and Girls Pilot Initiative. The initiative builds on the experiences and lessons learned of the SC SPS signature interventions which had been operating in Ukraine prior to the invasion. The objective was to empower war-affected women and girls (in particular, internally displaced women and refugee women) through the arrangement of safe spaces in easily accessible spaces where they can access multidimensional forms of support and information, develop social support networks, and strengthen their capacities on certain topics, including to end VAWG.

The Safe Spaces for Women and Girls Pilot Initiative was implemented in four sites in two regions of Ukraine: Zaporizhzhia and Ivano-Frankivsk. The development of the site, the programming and the amenities were adapted to each site and informed by a local needs assessment to respond to local priorities.

10 One of the pop-up messages requested to the IT technician was to add the following text to appear to website users after filling out the report form: "If you need to receive care now, dial 099 019 500 on your cell phone. Enter WhatsApp and write the text *You are not alone*. You can chat with a member of the professional team from 3 to 9 p.m., every day".

11 The types of harassment that are detailed (this is not exhaustive) are unwelcome acts: Persistent stares, whistles, or other sounds, sexual comments, rubbing and touching intimate body parts, exhibition, masturbation, photographs or recordings.

12 UN Women (2022) Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/rapid-gender-analysis-of-ukraine>

In each of the sites, childcare services were provided, with a dedicated child-friendly space in each site. While their children play, women have lots of opportunities to recharge, heal and learn.

Each space also provided crucial resources and services that displaced women had had trouble accessing. They distribute hygiene kits, educational resources, and offer multidimensional forms of support, including psychological counselling for both adults and children, access to legal advice, and information about local employment and housing resources and survivor services.

Support is also offered to the partners operating the safe spaces, who have participated in discussions about the importance of self-care and techniques to deal with vicarious trauma.

From time to time, women in the safe spaces have met with local decision makers and service providers, including a city council deputy, representatives of local employment centres and representatives of NGOs offering legal services to internally displaced peoples. During these meetings, women are able to voice their needs and concerns and to learn about available opportunities in their host communities, such as access to education and employment.

“I HAVE FOUND MY SAFE SPACE HERE. I ATTENDED A WORKSHOP ON WRITING A RESUME AND EVENTUALLY FOUND A JOB. I HAVE MY FRIENDS HERE, AS WELL. SO NOW, I DON’T FEEL ALONE IN THE CITY. I FEEL SECURE AND SURROUNDED BY THE GROWING COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS”

WOMAN PARTICIPANT



Dedicated child-friendly spaces allow women to access a range of services to meet their needs, while their children receive care. NGO UkrProstir/Zaporizhzhia, Mykola Kolodiaznyi.

2.4 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS GRASSROOTS FUND (LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM)

Description

The long-term goal in London is to eliminate VAWG in the city. The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is committed to building a safer city so that every woman and girl can participate fully in life in London without experiencing or fearing SH, and other forms of violence.

There are a range of structural challenges to addressing VAWG in London, with minority women (including racialised women, disabled women, LGBTQI+ people and migrant women) facing additional barriers to accessing appropriate and equitable services, safe housing and justice. In addition, the city has contended with multiple crises in recent years, and the post-pandemic cost of living crisis has impacted grassroots organisations working on VAWG with an unprecedented increase in both demand and complexity. This cumulative impact has exacerbated structural inequalities affecting women and girls, particularly from minority communities, and highlights the critical importance of funding and supporting grassroots specialised VAWG service providers.

In recognition of this situation, the Violence Against Women and Girls Grassroots Fund ("VAWG Grassroots Fund") was launched by MOPAC in 2021 to strengthen the grassroots response to VAWG in London, in order to prevent and end VAWG in minoritised¹³ and marginalised communities. The VAWG Grassroots Fund has provided a total of £6 million (7,941,600.00 USD) in funding and capacity building training to grassroots organisations working on VAWG issues.

Key Elements

Funding: To respond to the need to provide more funding to grassroots initiatives to address VAWG in London, the city earmarked special funding and launched a VAWG Grassroots Fund.

Prior to launch, surveys and sessions were held with grassroots organisations to help co-design the fund. Grassroots organisations working in London were then invited to apply, with the aim of providing selected applicants with funds to support their initiatives to tackle VAWG in London.

The Fund offered the potential to receive two-year grants of up to £100,000 (approximately 132,360.00 USD), up to £50,000 (66,180 USD) per year. It was also possible for organisations to apply as a consortium of partners, with up to three organisations jointly applying for two-year grants of up to £120,000 (158,832.00 USD), up to £60,000 (79,416 USD) per year).

Learning Programme: The Learning Programme, which included both group sessions and one-on-one support, was provided by the London Community Foundation to the grantees. This programme aimed to provide grassroots organisations with opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing, as well as access to key decision-makers, to complement the funding they received from the VAWG Grassroots Fund.

Evaluation and Impact Analysis: The VAWG Grassroots Fund conducted 1:1 interviews and feedback surveys and receives interim monitoring reports from grantees.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The first round of the fund opened for applications in November 2020, and 41 organisations were awarded funding of up to £60,000 (79,416 USD) per year for up to two years to support women and girls affected by domestic abuse and other forms of violence in London from 2021 to 2023. The first round developed and strengthened the understanding and evidence of the value and needs of minoritised and marginalised groups for VAWG in London, and the critical role that grassroots VAWG-focused organisations - particularly those run "By and For" the communities they serve - play in addressing VAWG.

13 The term "minoritised" (rather than "minority" or "minority ethnic") is used to highlight that "groups and communities do not occupy the position of 'minority' by virtue of some inherent property (of their culture or religion, for example), but rather that they come to acquire this position as the outcome of a socio-historical and political process" (Burman, 2005, p. 533).

In all, 76% of the funded organisations were “By and For” Black and Minority Ethnic organisations, delivering dedicated services to women from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

A total of 24% were specialist grassroots organisations delivering services for women from marginalized and minoritized communities, including LBTQI+ women, women involved in prostitution, women considered to have “No Recourse to Public Funds”¹⁴ and women with disabilities.

Aiming to build on the success of the first round of the Fund, a second round was launched in July 2023. It aims to increase specialist and locally tailored support in London to respond to the needs of women who are structurally excluded from accessing mainstream and/or statutory services. Within the fund, a minimum of 60% of funding was dedicated for “By and For”, Black and Minority Ethnic led specialist organisations and a maximum of 40% for specialist grassroots community organisations supporting marginalized and minoritized groups, including disabled women, LGBTQ+ women, women with “No Recourse to Public Funds,” and women involved in prostitution and exploitation. The application process, which included information webinars and one on one sessions, received 162 unique applications - with 35 organisations awarded £3 million (3,970,800.00 USD).

Another key achievement of the first round of funding was the increase in capacity of grassroots organisations to respond to the need to address VAWG. Feedback from grantees spoke of increased staff capacity, the ability to develop new services to respond to emerging client needs (including counselling, wellness workshops, and campaigning), and the improvement of existing services by deepening work in different areas. All grantees said that the grant had increased the reach of their services by connecting with new client groups and working in new areas of London.

The first round contributed to the organisational sustainability of vital grassroots services for VAWG. This was achieved by grantees using the funding to increase staff stability, retain trained professionals and build staff resilience. Feedback highlighted the importance of the two-year grant, unlike most emergency funding that was distributed over the course of the pandemic with a shorter duration. This provided longer-term financial sustainability, helping grassroots organisations to consolidate their services and plan further ahead. The funding also helped grantees to shift priorities and secure the infrastructure needed to apply for additional funding and focus on developing longer-term funding strategies.

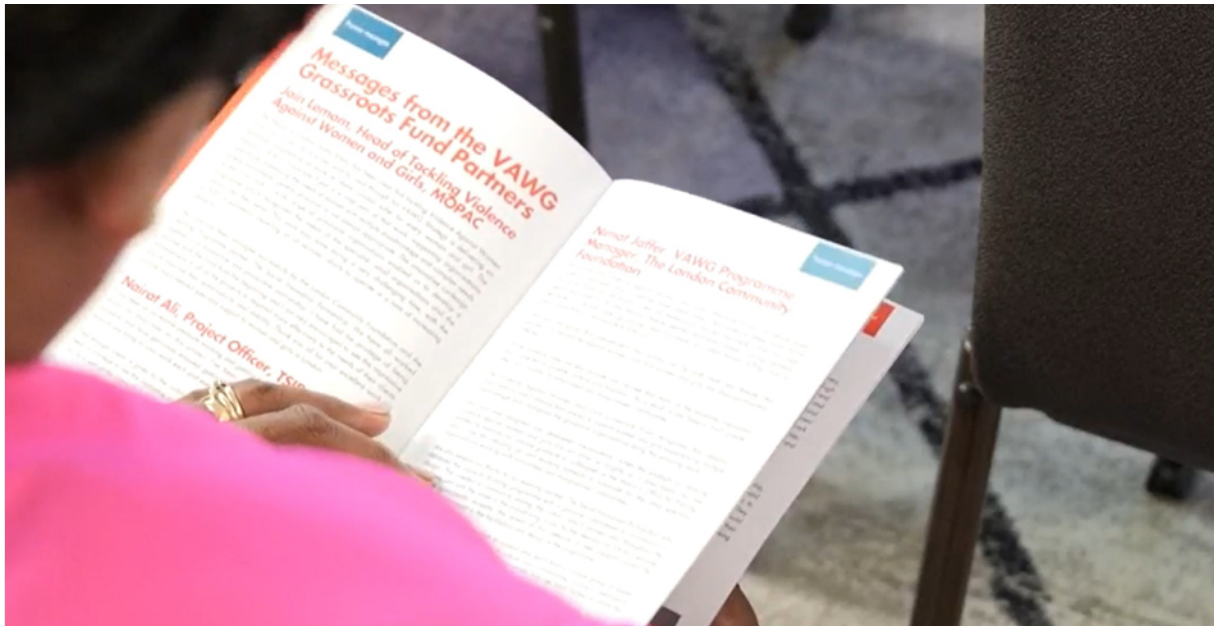
The funding also enabled grantees to build new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships, including with key decision-makers such as MOPAC. This allows grantees to be more embedded in their communities and to develop networks of experts in services that address VAWG to build overall sector capacity.

The VAWG Grassroots Fund 2021-2023 demonstrated the importance of partnerships, open communication, and responsive approaches to funding grassroots organisations for an equitable VAWG sector overall.

Through increased communication between grantees and MOPAC through the VAWG Grassroots Fund 2021-2023, challenges faced by grassroots organisations and women and girls were highlighted.

These included addressing the increasing complexity of women’s needs due to systemic issues (immigration, housing), the consequences of working in a sector that perpetuates inequality and manoeuvring around funding barriers. This provided insights and ensured that gaps or areas for improvement were embedded in the VAWG Grassroots Fund for 2023-2025.

14 “No Recourse to Public Funds” means a condition attached to most temporary migrants’ permission to enter or stay in the UK for the purpose of restricting access to a range of benefits which are listed as public funds for immigration purposes. [Guidance Public Funds \(accessible\)](#), Government of UK



The first VAWG Grassroots Fund was a £2m programme that ran from March 2021 to March 2023. MOPAC.

2.5 BUILDING ON EVIDENCE TO UPDATE MUNICIPAL STREET HARASSMENT BYLAWS, CALGARY, CANADA

Description

In December 2020, Calgary City Council passed a [Notice of Motion](#) directing City Administration to review current bylaws related to public safety and identify gaps related to street harassment. To respond to this, a rigorous methodology was carried out to ensure that any changes to the bylaw are responsive to local priorities and informed by the growing evidence base on what works to address SH in public spaces.

This review included:

- *International and Municipal Scans:* City staff evaluated rules in both local and international cities to understand how street harassment was being addressed in their communities.
- *Public Opinion Research and Engagement:* Calgarians were surveyed to understand their perception of, and experience with, street harassment. This revealed that nearly 45 per cent of Calgarians felt that street harassment has a moderate to major impact on their quality of life.
- *Equity Analysis Bylaw Review:* City bylaws related to public safety were analysed using an equity lens that revealed gaps with respect to street harassment.
- *Community Partner Engagement:* Community partners, including the Gender Equity Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee of the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee, shared how they view street harassment, its causes, and ways they support victims.
- *Peer-reviewed research:* Research was examined for concepts and direction to further understand the sociological factors influencing this issue.

It indicated that while Calgarians tend to feel safe on streets and in public spaces, street harassment was disproportionally experienced by women, racialised or Indigenous persons, people who wear clothing or symbols that indicate their religion, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. In addition, Calgarians and internal staff were engaged to share views on the definition of harassment, existing gaps, and potential action to address it.

In March 2022, Calgary City Council approved a report that amended the Public Behaviour Bylaw (15M2022), prohibiting street harassment with a fine of \$500. The changes were intended to make clear that street harassment (including forms of sexual harassment, racism, xenophobia, and harassment based on sexuality or gender identity) will not be tolerated in Calgary.

A public awareness campaign running from October 24 to November 25, 2022, was delivered to further inform Calgarians of the amendment and how to report incidents. The goal was not only to spread awareness, but also to convey support to victims/survivors and those at risk. The city consulted with community partners and reviewed the findings of public opinion research, to determine the focus of the campaign – “Silencing haters” and reporting street harassment. The campaign consisted of advertising through online, radio, digital posters, outdoor advertising and paid social media. Project research indicated that most incidents of harassment occurred in businesses open to the public (bars and restaurants), on public transit, and in the downtown (central business district) of the city. Businesses were identified as important locations for campaign advertisements, and translation needs were prioritised, based on multicultural population density. Advertising placements were recommended to reach people while they commuted and where they socialised.

Further public education efforts continue in collaboration with community partners and businesses. For instance, in 2023 two Community Liaison employees were hired to provide public education to high school students and to learn from them how the city can refine its services to encourage an environment that allows the students to feel safe. Work is also ongoing to enhance understanding amongst peace officers of equity, diversity and inclusion community issues and service considerations. This helps officers to better implement the bylaw with compassion for Calgarians in all their diversity.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

In 2023, a total of 65 street harassment calls were received by the City of Calgary’s 311 public information and complaints line. Of those, five resulted in a summons issued. The City of Calgary did not have a baseline to compare to before the bylaw was in place to best measure the success of implementation. However, during the awareness campaign, reported incidents of street harassment increased by 114 per cent, which indicates an increase in public awareness of the bylaw.

There are challenges in enforcing street harassment, as it is a transient offense and bylaw officers may not have enough information (e.g.: name or address) to locate perpetrators. However, there have been instances where officers were present when an incident of street harassment occurred, and the bylaw gave them the tools to immediately respond.

3

**SAFETY AND
ECONOMIC VIABILITY
IN PUBLIC SPACES
(GENDER RESPONSIVE
PLANNING)**



3. SAFETY AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY IN PUBLIC SPACES (GENDER RESPONSIVE PLANNING)

A gender responsive approach to urban and transportation planning ensures that the needs and concerns of women and men are considered in all phases of the planning, from conceptualization, implementation, budgeting and monitoring. The process of gender responsive planning approaches involves bringing in the voices of local women and girls which can create opportunities for women's and girls' public participation in local governance and recognizes their contributions as agents of change to shaping city developments and spaces.

SC SPS interventions in cities participating in UN Women's SC SPS Global Initiative has resulted in increased investments in improving public infrastructure to respond to the needs identified by local women and the solutions they propose. Examples include improved sanitation and public toilets, increased lighting in public

spaces and on roads, market improvements such as the creation of stalls for women vendors, safe play spaces for children. These improvements can increase women's sense of safety and belonging, while also increasing their access to basic and essential services for women in the city and community.

Safety and Economic Viability in Public Spaces (Gender Responsive Planning): Key Takeaways

- Effective gender responsive urban and transport planning requires cross-sectoral coordination and information sharing among different administrative areas. This collaboration leads to more coordinated and effective interventions. Through the establishment of thematic working groups within gender responsive planning, women's safety concerns can be addressed in the built environment.
- Engaging various stakeholders, including women, men and young children, in advocating for gender equality and positive change is key to social transformation. Individual commitments from government plays a significant role in gender budgeting, data collection systems, and essential services.
- Involving women and girls as agents of change throughout the process ensures that interventions are relevant and effective. Their local knowledge is invaluable in identifying priority areas and needs.
- Acknowledging the contributions of women in the informal sector, such as recyclers, challenges preconceived notions and highlights their role in environmental sustainability. Integrating them into formal initiatives enhances their impact on women's safety and environmental goals.
- Awareness raising alone is insufficient; it must be coupled with community mobilization, and use effective communication strategies.

3.1 STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES OF PARTNERS TO IMPLEMENT NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE URBAN PLANNING (MULTICITY, MOROCCO)

Description

In 2020, Morocco's Ministry of Housing developed National Guidelines on Gender-Responsive Planning with an intersectional approach. These guidelines were developed with the support of UN Women to the Marrakech SC Programme, which was the first city in Morocco to participate in the UN Women Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces (SC SPS) Global Initiative. The guidelines aimed to ensure a coherent approach across cities working to implement gender responsive planning with the vision that all women and girls living in Moroccan cities can safely access and use urban public spaces free of fear and SH and other forms of SVAWG. The Guidelines include good practices for accessible public spaces for women and girls and how urban public spaces can be renovated and created, and how public services can better respond to the multiple needs and concerns. The Guidelines aim to facilitate dialogue on gender mainstreaming in urban policy initiatives and improve capacity of institutions, project owners, local actors and civil society organisations involved in urban planning at national and regional levels on how to mainstream gender in policy and programme action.

Following the adoption of the guidelines, a memorandum of understanding was signed in March 2021 on the implementation of the guide "For public spaces that are accessible and safe for women and girls" elaborated by the Ministry of National Planning, Urban Development, Housing and Urban Policy in partnership with UN Women. To support implementation efforts, a training programme for gender-responsive urban planning was developed and carried out between September 2022 and February 2023. The training programme was developed in partnership with the Ministry of National Planning, Urban Development, Housing and Urban Policy and the Ministry of Interior – General Directorate of Territorial Authorities.

The overall aim of the training programme was to strengthen the capacities of relevant stakeholders to be able to effectively implement the gender-responsive urban planning guidelines at scale.

Participants attended capacity building training sessions in two phases.

The first phase aimed to enhance understanding and familiarity with the necessary concepts and mechanisms associated with local gender-responsive planning, in order to subsequently prepare them to integrate a gender approach into urban planning practices at the local level and adopt the appropriate methodology.

The second phase of the training cycle aimed to solidify participants' knowledge and skills to enable them to apply in-depth knowledge of gender-responsive planning for the development of safe urban spaces for women and girls free of SH and other forms of SVAWG.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The National Guidelines have been adapted and applied in over 7 cities in Morocco to date and demonstrate how local government programmes can generate tools for national uptake and adaptation in the SC SPS Global Initiative, as one way to scale up interventions as part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring safe and sustainable cities.

While not the stated intention, the training programme provided a unique opportunity to also increase awareness about the SC SPS programmes in Morocco (Rabat and Marrakech). This awareness helped to contribute to the mobilization of municipal teams from the cities of Fes and Agadir to learn more about the Global Initiative, which has now led these two additional cities to participate formally in the programme, contributing to building the SC SPS programme to scale in the country.

3.2 STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES TO INTEGRATE GENDER AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS INTO TRANSIT SYSTEMS (HALIFAX, CANADA)

Summary

As part of its multisectoral collaboration strategy for Halifax SC and SPS Programme, on September 28th and 29th 2023, a two-day capacity building workshop for municipal staff and partners, focused on how gender impacts experiences of safety, well-being, and mobility within municipal public transportation systems was hosted in partnership with Halifax Transit. The workshop also served to break down siloes to promote a coordinated reflection on how to integrate considerations around women's safety and SH more specifically in transportation planning.

Description

Halifax hosted a two-day workshop with 36 staff from 14 municipal teams. Representatives from two external partner organisations also joined, namely, staff from the provincial partner Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the IWK Mental Health and Addictions Health Promotion Team (a team focused on supporting the conditions for safe and healthy communities where children, youth and families live, play, learn and work). A key goal of the workshop was to bring together staff who contribute to or make decisions about municipal public spaces to learn, build connections across diverse teams and foster a deeper understanding of how the design and implementation of transportation systems can impact the safety, well-being and livelihoods of women, non-binary and gender-diverse residents.

In the day session, Emily Grisé and David Cooper, authors of a comprehensive Canadian study¹⁵ to assess women's experiences with transit, led the workshop, which included classroom components, conversations, site visits, and an experiential ride on the transit system.

In the evening session, participants travelled to two transit terminals to experience and better understand safety at these sites using a safety audit tool that combined best practices from a consultants' work and research with principles and approaches from the Women's Safety Assessment Tool facilitated by Halifax's Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Programme.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The workshop supported several of Halifax's Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Programme's key objectives:

- Foster a culture within the municipality that integrates women's, girls', and non-binary people's safety in municipal plans, capital projects, strategies, and services, and develop processes to track, measure and report on these efforts.
- Support municipal Business Units to take action to make public spaces safer for women, girls, and gender-diverse residents through changes in built, natural and social features of municipal public spaces.
- Seek opportunities to build our collective understanding of and capacity to respond to safety issues in public spaces, emphasizing the voices and experiences of women, girls, and non-binary residents.

The workshop offered an opportunity for staff and partners in Halifax to engage with innovative research and practices from across the country regarding gender, safety and transit, to engage in dialogue about these issues in the Halifax context and to leave the workshop with new lenses, tools and relationships to enact these important considerations in their respective areas of work, contributing to collective efforts to make public spaces safer for all.

In a post-workshop survey, many participants indicated that they had successfully deepened their understanding of the experiences of women and gender-diverse residents using public transportation and public spaces, as the workshop aimed to do. Participants also shared that they most appreciated the experiential elements of the workshop and the opportunities to discuss, problem solve and identify solutions to key issues with their colleagues.

15 Understanding and Responding to the Transit Needs of Women, January 2022

The Halifax SC and SPS Programme hopes to host more capacity building workshops in the future, bringing together city staff with partners, community members, and people and organisations leading innovative responses to creating safer public spaces for women, girls, and gender-diverse residents.

They aim to incorporate the experiences and feedback from this first workshop into the next phases of our work, to provide opportunities that are responsive to the needs of their partners, and to create the best conditions for collaborative approaches to promoting public spaces free from SV and other forms of VAWG.



Participants engage in a nighttime safety assessment at a transit terminal. Halifax Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Programme.

3.3 INTEGRATED APPROACH OF CARE AND WOMEN'S SAFETY: LOCAL AUDITS BY WOMEN CAREGIVERS (MONTERREY, MEXICO)

Description

The “Monterrey Me Cuida” initiative, a collaboration between the Municipality of Monterrey and UN Women Mexico, aims to build the foundations of the municipal care system. This strategy focuses on the redistribution of unpaid domestic and care work performed by women, and the promotion of the right to care and a life free of VAWG in Monterrey.

As part of this project, UN Women Mexico developed a manual for conducting gender-responsive women's local audits to ensure that all caregiving areas in Monterrey are safer, free of GBV, and conducive to caregiving activities.

The goal is to empower and promote women's autonomy through socio-cultural transformation and the redefinition of public spaces.

Gender Responsive Local Audits aim to assess and provide situated contributions from caregivers to make public spaces around the “Monterrey Me Cuida” care centers safer and more welcoming.

This will be achieved by analyzing how physical, material, and social elements condition perceptions of safety and hospitality for caregivers. By amplifying the voices and experiences of women caregivers, the initiative aims to make progress towards safer and more caregiver-centered urban communities.

The specific objectives were

- Promote a participatory design process for more inclusive interventions in public spaces, incorporating the voices and experiences of diverse people including women caregivers, girls, and gender diverse people.
- Identify the specific situations of women from Monterrey, especially women caregivers, girls, and gender-diverse people, in relation to the urban environment, and involve them in the design and implementation of safer, more accessible, protective, and caregiver-friendly spaces.
- Contribute to the creation of urban environments, public spaces, streets and care centers that are recognised as more comfortable, accessible, enjoyable and welcoming, especially for unpaid women caregivers, girls and gender diverse people in specific areas.

To enrich this exercise, UN Women Mexico partnered with Georregias, a local feminist collective that focuses on gender issues in public spaces in the Monterrey metropolitan area. They co-facilitated the audits and conducted a social cartography exercise in which caregivers mapped their perceptions of the safety, inclusivity and accessibility of the “Monterrey Me Cuida” care centers and their surroundings.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

A manual was produced to support safe, caring and inclusive urban planning. It includes an observation guide based on the 7 principles of feminist urbanism to promote a safe, caring and inclusive city.

As a result of the pilot project, three audits were carried out in February and March 2024, with the aim of testing the methodology of women’s safety audits in the context of a municipal care system. The audits involved 25 participants, including caregivers and public officials actively involved in the “Monterrey Me Cuida Municipal” care system, as well as experts in gender-responsive urbanism. Based on the findings of the pilot project, a report was issued with key recommendations for the municipality to create more “Monterrey Me Cuida” centers in the short and medium term.

Community organisations are an important asset. In this project, networks of caregivers established contact with local government to report local concerns.

Bringing together urban planning experts and caregivers has added valuable perspectives that help create better urban environments. This blend of grassroots knowledge and professional insight makes projects more effective in addressing complex urban challenges.

The gender-responsive local audits carried out in the context of the municipal care system have confirmed that at the municipal level there must be the capacity to create optimal material conditions that support the social organisation of care through equipment, infrastructure and common public spaces that allow these tasks to be carried out safely.

3.4 ENSURING WOMEN'S HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SAFETY IN RURAL SPACES IN THE TEA SECTOR IN ASSAM, AND SPICE SECTOR IN RAJASTHAN AND KERALA, INDIA

Background

UN Women India is adapting [UN Women's Global Women's Safety Framework in Rural Spaces](#) with women workers in 10 tea gardens in Assam situated in the Nagoan, Udalgiri and Sonitpur districts in Assam. The programme was further expanded to women workers, small farmers, women small landowners in spice sector in two districts in Rajasthan (Baran and Ajmer) and two districts in Kerala (Idukki and Wayanad). The Global Women's Safety Framework adapts UN Women's longstanding SC SPS Global Initiative through incorporating experience in the tea sector in rural spaces. With its strong focus on prevention of violence against women and girls in public spaces, including harassment, the framework helps to build a common understanding in the tea sector that is applicable to other commodity sectors in agricultural value chains.

In August 2021, UN Women India launched a programme for women tea garden workers, focused on health, wellness, and safety. The programme was developed to address the unequal and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls, and the essential role they play in responding to the crisis and designing a coordinated response that considers the gender dimensions of the outbreak. The programme was implemented in the tea sector from August 2021 to April 2024, and in the spice sector from May 2023 to April 2024. The information shared below draws from this time period. It is important to note however that the work continues in both sectors in 2025.

Description and Key Elements

The programme is divided into five key action areas: (1) understanding the community, (2) co-creating the programme strategy, (3) increasing awareness and engaging the community, (4) change management, and (5) sustainability.

Action included:

Conducting scoping studies in Assam, Rajasthan, and Kerala to inform the priority actions of the programme in each setting. The scoping studies increased understanding of multiple stakeholders (general managers, management, industry partners, associations, NGOs, women and men workers, different government departments) about the local issues related to health wellness and safety, including harassment in tea community and spice sector in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and informed the programme design. For example, FGD participants in the study conducted in Assam with women and men workers, and frontline workers,¹⁶ and management revealed deteriorating mental health including stress and anxiety since the start of the pandemic and noted the lack of available professional mental health services. Women workers and other stakeholders recommended that mental health be a critical area for intervention in programming.

In Assam, women also shared the need to address health challenges related to anemia, as well as those related to sexual and reproductive health, menstrual health, nutrition, mental health, and access to services.

Developing information, education and communication (IEC) materials to convey important messages about women's health and safety that were distributed to women working in the tea and spices sectors. To respond to the challenge of low literacy rates in the area, UN Women developed engaging and visual IEC materials, including video messages, role play theatre, picture cards in vernacular language.

Maintaining community engagement through the implementation of key programme interventions including through community meetings, health camps, legal camps, art competitions, football tournaments, visits to challans, awareness campaigns, capacity building of women workers, small farmers and small landowners, tea management, local government personnel through training sessions on health, wellness and safety and training local young men and women as community champions.

Raising awareness through the "Mera Swasthya- Mera Haq, Meri Zimmedari" (My Health- My right and My responsibility") initiative. Young men from the local community served as "community champions" to deliver key messages as part of this initiative, since they knew the local socio-cultural environment and could communicate the messaging effectively in the local language. Another important activity was street theatre performed by women workers in different locations on the topic of women's health, wellness, and safety. The street plays scenes depicted related situations facing women workers to create a space for conversations on these issues and to identify solutions to address them.

16 Frontline Workers: also known as Community Health Workers, are those who take health services directly to communities, where access is often limited. They are women who come from the communities that they are serving; they act as an essential link to health facilities by bringing services to people's doorsteps. Appointed by the government, there are three primary positions of frontline workers in India related to health – Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife and Accredited Health Social Activist.

Mobile essential services were brought to the locations where women work in order to respond to the lack of available health and legal services. In Assam, a “health camp” was introduced by the district National Health Mission, where a team of health care professionals including doctors, pharmacists, nurses and midwives, set up a Mobile Medical Unit in the tea gardens. This activity was later replicated in Kerala.

- Women workers in the tea estate in Assam and in the spice sector in Rajasthan and Kerala have a deeper understanding of and adopted the “Tiganga Thali” (food plate looking like a tri-colour flag of India) to ensure a balanced diet to combat anemia.
- Increased awareness and acceptance of mental health struggles among programme participants and community members in intervention sites, and how to seek professional help and support.

“I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN THIS TEA GARDEN. MY FATHER WAS AN EMPLOYEE HERE AND TODAY I AM VERY HAPPY TO HELP THE WOMEN WHO NEED SUPPORT. THERE ARE LOTS OF PRENATAL AND ANTENATAL PROBLEMS REGISTERED.”

DR ANAMIKA BASUMATARY, HEALTH OFFICER, NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

“WE USED TO THINK THAT WE NEED TO EAT EXPENSIVE FRUITS FOR GOOD NUTRITION. NOW THROUGH THESE VIDEOS WE UNDERSTAND THAT HOW WITH SMALL TIPS WE CAN MAKE THE FOOD NUTRITIOUS THAT WE CONSUME ON REGULAR BASIS”.

WOMEN TEA WORKER, ASSAM

Legal clinics were also conducted in tea gardens with legal experts on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act of India.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The importance of partnership and engagement of key stakeholders, including the sub-national government and the industry partners is essential, and Memoranda of Understanding are an important tool to formalize partnership and agree to specific terms and expectations.

Some of the main results in 2024 include:

- Improved awareness about vaccination, health and safety at workplace and received COVID vaccine boosters of 13,144 rightsholders including the women workers in the tea estates in Assam
- 141 members from Internal Committee for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and related stakeholders in 6 tea gardens in Assam received regular training on the implementation the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act of India.

3.5 CAMPAIGNS TO MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS (MULTI-CITY, COLOMBIA)

Description

Medellin, Popayan and Cali have launched SC and SPS programmes and have developed comprehensive strategies, including campaigns to make public transportation safer and more inclusive. Each campaign includes the training of all personnel in charge of the transport system, with actions to raise awareness among transit users using innovative tools, and a system in place to respond in the event of an incident.

#PuedesExpresarlo (You can express it) is the campaign of Medellin. A city with 2.5 million inhabitants and an average of 1.5 million daily metro passengers which has created an intentional space for women and girls to inform the campaign and outreach strategy. The Women's Secretariat of the Metro of Medellin has trained all its employees on SH, ways to respond, positive masculinities, and violence prevention.

At the same time, they carry out awareness-raising activities with transit users, especially men on ending SH. Their innovative strategy of “mobile dialogues” reaches users with educational tools such as the “acosómetro” (harassment meter), which allows them to identify SH and challenge sexism.

The city of Cali, with a population of just over 2 million, in addition to campaigns and awareness-raising processes to prevent VAWG in public transport, has developed an important alliance with a private taxi company. The “Taxi Drivers in Gender Equality” became an innovative strategy. The drivers of this company are trained in the prevention of GBV (including SH), non-sexist language, equality and diversity, male co-responsibility in prevention of VAWG, and the identification of risk situations for women and girls.

This not only provides women with safe transportation but it also promotes the transformation of the sexist culture that prevails in the drivers’ union.

Popayan, with a population of just over 300,000, has implemented its “Safe woman, mobilise safely” campaign, which has three components: training for public transport operators, the marking of vehicles with badges against VAWG, and the sensitisation of users by publicising the services of the Women’s Secretariat to respond to VAWG.

Lessons Learned

- The awareness and commitment of transit workers or taxi drivers to participate in the programme sends a strong message to citizens about the prevention of VAWG in the city
- Integrating information, education and communication through innovative awareness-raising tools and through community mobilisation is the key to creating long-term change. Providing information and messaging in campaigns alone is not enough.
- The engagement of men in campaign messaging with a clear message of transformation of machismo is critical in campaigns focused on preventing and addressing SH.

- The sustainability of these initiatives is linked to the implementation of comprehensive actions to end SH against women, coordination between sectors in prevention that acts beyond the implementation of campaigns, and the establishment of procedures that have been formalised in the city through directives, manuals, decrees, etc.

3.6 INVESTING IN SOCIAL NORMS CHANGE ON WOMEN’S SAFETY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (NYARUGURU DISTRICT, RWANDA)

Description

UN Women Rwanda conducted a scoping study and women’s safety audits (WSA) in the Nyaruguru District of Rwanda. The result showed that the heavy burden of unpaid care work on Rwandan women not only limits their ability to engage in income-generating work, but also contributes to heightening the risk for VAWG, and recommended prioritising the creation of a safe space for childcare to reduce this burden.

Creation of Early Childhood Development Centers

UN Women established three Early Childhood Development Centers in the Kibeho, Munini and Mata sectors of the tea plantation area, where professional caregivers look after children while parents work. The centers are run by the Early Childhood Development Centers Committee, which is made up of caregivers, parent representatives, and cell secretaries. The centers also offer educational activities and serve as a good platform for parents and other community members to gain skills and knowledge on GBV prevention and response, nutrition, health, hygiene education, protection, care and development of their children and their families. In 2023, UN Women Rwanda equipped the centers with chairs, kitchen materials, mattresses, indoor and outdoor play materials and supplementary food to strengthen the work of the Safe Rural Public Spaces project in Nyaruguru District. The facilities help develop the children’s creative and active play skills throughout the day.

On 23 August 2023, UN Women, in partnership with Nyaruguru District, ActionAid Rwanda and the Rwanda Men's Resource Centre, convened a high-level advocacy meeting to raise awareness on unpaid care work and gender inequitable prevailing social norms. The meeting brought together over 100 high-level government representatives from different sectors.

Among the participants were the Mayor of Nyaruguru District, the Deputy Mayor in charge of Socio-Economic Affairs, all Sector Executive Secretaries for Kibeho, Munini and Mata, District Education Officers, School Head Teachers, Cell Executive Secretaries, Nyaruguru District Police and Army Commanders, National Youth Council Representatives, National Women Council Representatives, District Hospital Directors, Rwanda Investigation Bureau, major media houses, civil society organisations and Sector Social Welfare Officers.

During the meeting, participants discussed unpaid care work, challenged prevailing social norms, highlighted the importance of gender equality, and encouraged commitments to advocate and work for change. Songs, dance, drama and a symbolic football match with mixed teams of boys and girls were also included to help bring the message of the event to a wider audience.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

As of May 2024, 89 children (55 girls and 44 boys) and 88 families have benefited from the Early Childhood Development Centers. With the Early Childhood Development Centres, women share that they have enough time to work with the assurance of safety and good nutrition for their children, which helps increase their productivity. The centers also contributed to improved child health, hygiene, child protection and reduced malnutrition.

“IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOK AFTER MY CHILDREN AND REMAIN PRODUCTIVE, WORKING ON THE FARM ALL DAY. HAVING JOINED THE ECD IN MUNINI, THERE HAS BEEN A BIG DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE, AND THAT OF MY FAMILY. MY CHILDREN ARE SAFE, THEY CAN PLAY AND LEARN, GET A BALANCED DIET, BUT ALSO HAVE STIMULATING ACTIVITIES TO LEAD THEIR DEVELOPMENT.”

WOMEN TEA WORKER, NYARUGURU DISTRICT, RWANDA

The engagement of various stakeholders, especially men and young children, in advocating for positive change was highlighted as a key driver for social transformation, as was the call for individual commitments and advocacy to promote gender equality and the commitment of government officials to address unpaid care work.

After the meeting, community awareness continued, and government officials added some gender equality indicators related to unpaid care work to the district performance contracts.

During the meeting, a couple from the Munini sector shared their testimony that as a result of the training on men's involvement in unpaid care work provided by *Action pour le Développement du Peuple* (Action for Human Development) and UN Women through the Safe Rural Public Spaces programme, the husband has changed his ways and beliefs. They shared that he has stopped beating his wife, and contributes regularly to household chores and responsibilities, creating more harmony in the household.



Children playing at ECD Mata, Nyaruguru District at outside playing materials provided by UN Women. UN Women Rwanda CO.

3.7 REALISING GENDER EQUALITY BY EMPOWERING WOMEN AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS (MSALALA DISTRICT OF SHINYANGA REGION, TANZANIA)

Summary

From July 2020 to June 2023, UN Women Tanzania supported the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the Safe Market Initiative in Segese Market, Msalala District, to create a safer and more inclusive public space. The initiative focused on infrastructure development, capacity building, GBV response and prevention, and gender-responsive governance.

Description

UN Women and UNFPA in Tanzania, with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency, launched a three-year joint programme entitled "Realizing Gender Equality through Empowering Women and Adolescent Girls" in Ikungi District, Singida Region and Msalala District, Shinyanga Region.

Improving the social and economic status of women and adolescent girls is a key focus of the programme. UN Women Tanzania has supported its efforts to promote anti-GBV advocacy and support women working in Segese Market in Msalala district.

The initiative, informed by longstanding Tanzania SC SPS partnership actions, involved many stakeholders, including local government authorities, market committees and community members. The Segese Market Committee, in partnership with the District Council and the Ward Office, has been actively involved in the development and maintenance of the infrastructure, and has led the development of the market bylaw and the code of conduct to ensure the sustainability of the facilities. The committee has also been involved in awareness raising activities with the market vendors and traders.

UN Women Tanzania supported the market committee to improve public safety for women and strengthen good hygiene practices and COVID-19 prevention efforts.

Under the initiative, the market committee successfully developed market bylaws on governance, sanitation and a gender-responsive code of conduct for market members. It also established public toilets for women and men, including persons with disabilities, and developed the toilet management structure and maintenance plan, as well as hand-washing facilities to local standards.

Local women traders have partnered with UN Women as champions of the anti-GBV campaign to support action to eliminate all forms of violence, including SH and sexual extortion in markets and surrounding areas. The champions were trained to understand protection laws and strategies they can use to prevent GBV and increase reporting of all cases.

Capacity training sessions on business management and GBV awareness were provided to local market vendors and community members, and materials with key EVAW messages were distributed in Segese market to raise awareness on GBV prevention and response.

Key Results

As of June 2024, 5 toilets (4 for women, 1 for men) and hand washing facilities were constructed in Segese market along with the management and maintenance plan. A market by-law and code of conduct for the maintenance of the facilities have also been developed and implemented.

Over 120 local people were trained in GBV response and prevention, and over 80 market vendors were trained in business management and linked to district-level soft loan opportunities. A total of 14 (8 women and 6 men) market committee members and 11 (6 women and 6 men) market and community leaders were trained on market committee responsibilities in GBV response and prevention.

70 anti-GBV champions were recruited and trained on GBV core concepts and referral pathways.

500 awareness raising materials with key EVAW messages were distributed throughout the programme.

Lessons Learned

Community-Led Development: The active involvement of the Segese Market Committee in the planning and decision-making processes ensured that the solutions were tailored to the local context and needs. This participatory approach empowered the community and fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Gender-Responsive Initiatives: The development and dissemination of gender-responsive bylaws and the installation of toilets designed specifically for people with special needs highlighted the commitment to inclusivity and gender equity, as the market was not previously safe for women and girls. This ensured that the market space became safer and more accessible for women and vulnerable groups.

Capacity Building and Sustainability: By providing business management training and facilitating access to financial opportunities, the initiative not only improved immediate market conditions, but also built long-term economic resilience among market vendors. The development of a toilet management structure and maintenance plan further ensured the sustainability of the facilities.

Holistic GBV Prevention and Response: Comprehensive sensitization and capacity strengthening on GBV prevention and response, embedded in market management practices, has created an environment where GBV issues can be addressed more effectively and systematically. The establishment of a referral mechanism directly linked to key response actors is one example of this. The active participation of community members in planning and decision-making processes is critical to the success and sustainability of such initiatives. Combining infrastructure improvements with capacity building and governance reforms can address multiple needs and create improvements in support of the integrated SC and SPS approach.



Bolivia's women recyclers are increasingly recognised for their important contributions to caring for the environment and creating safe cities and public spaces. UN Women Bolivia/Mariela Miranda.

3.8 SAFE CITIES AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN RECYCLERS (LA PAZ, BOLIVIA)

Summary

UN Women Bolivia has implemented the Safe Cities and Spaces for Women Recyclers project, financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), within the framework of the SC SPS. The programme aims to strengthen the autonomy and safety of women recyclers and contribute to environmental sustainability in the neighbourhoods of the southern and central zones of the city of La Paz.

Description

Women recyclers play a key role in reducing environmental risks in La Paz. They have acquired a working knowledge of recyclable and non-recyclable materials, and a Bolivian law requires that women recyclers be recognised and integrated into municipal waste management.

However, the law is often overlooked and women recyclers have remained invisible and widely misunderstood by the population, in part because the women are regarded as elder women with limited education.

The scoping study conducted as part of the SC and SPS Women programme revealed that women recyclers have experienced SH and other forms of violence. The city of La Paz has set as one of the project strategies to create mechanisms for society to recognize the importance and impact of the women recyclers' work, to make them visible and integrated into environmental initiatives.

One of the main components of the project includes training and capacity building. Women recyclers were trained in interpersonal, communication and leadership skills, and some of them became "Eco-Educator Recyclers" to train teachers and young urban educators on waste segregation, recycling materials and the role of women waste pickers. In addition, a participatory process with recyclers was promoted to create educational materials that will be distributed in schools to reinforce the messages.

Key Results

Munasim Kullakita Foundation, the implementing partner of the programme, trained 100 women recyclers through 6 workshops to strengthen their interpersonal, communication and leadership skills and prepared them to conduct trainings with greater confidence. 20 of the recyclers became “Eco-Educator Recyclers” and conducted training sessions with more than 800 teachers from 70 educational units and 100 young urban educators. As a result of the training, the educational units have proposed the implementation of campaigns to collect recyclable materials and deliver them to the recyclers.

308 banners and 6,000 guides on waste separation and recycling were prepared and delivered to the Sustainable School Program, which will benefit 70 educational units.

One aspect still identified as a challenge in this process is that women recyclers may often feel uncomfortable speaking in public, especially older women, and with support, women can increase their skills and confidence to feel at ease in public speaking.

Lessons Learned

Waste separation and recycling are relatively new concepts in Bolivia. Communities are becoming more aware of the importance of changing habits to preserve the environment. Understanding the recyclability of plastics or paper remains a challenge for many people.

Allowing people with limited literacy and formal education to train trainers is a means of empowering them, creating more stakeholders who recognize the need to segregate waste and create mechanisms for social inclusion. Women recyclers have a unique understanding of waste management and recycling practices because of their first-hand experience. Their ability to educate others, including teachers, bridges socio-economic divides and challenges conventional notions of who has expertise in environmental issues.

Recognising the contribution of women recyclers to society is innovative because it challenges preconceived notions about the importance of the informal sector.

By recognizing their role in environmental sustainability and integrating them into formal environmental initiatives, the community begins to appreciate the significant impact of the informal sector on broader environmental goals. The innovation lies in generating knowledge transfer processes to empower through recognition of their contribution to mitigating global warming.

3.9 TOWARDS GENDER RESPONSIVE INDUSTRIAL SPACES (MADRID, SPAIN)

Description

Madrid has been implementing its *Plan de acción Madrid Ciudad Segura para mujeres y niñas* (Madrid Safe City for Women and Girls Action Plan) for several years. The Action Plan was developed by a multi-sectoral group to respond to the priorities and recommendations articulated in the scoping study on the nature and extent of SH in public spaces. The Action Plan is comprised of 7 key action areas, which collectively group a total of 55 identified activities. One of the action areas is focused on generating knowledge and analysing information, including an intervention on the creation of a working group to analyse industrial and productive spaces from a gender responsive perspective.

The scoping study identified industrial spaces as being a priority area requiring more information and analysis, given their economic and production value for the city. These spaces tend to have high density usage during working hours, due to the number of workers who are present in these spaces. In addition, industrial areas face significant challenges related to urban and transportation planning, including the lack of adequate public transportation and poor urban planning which has resulted in an inhospitable urban environment and a lack of sense of safety among women workers and other women who use the space.

The City of Madrid's Gender Responsive Industrial and Productive Spaces Working Group was established in the Spring of 2023, housed within the broader cross sectoral working group set up to implement the Madrid SC Action Plan.

The working group is composed of professionals from different administrative units of the Madrid City Council, as well as representatives from the departments of urban planning, culture and urban landscape, territorial coordination, mobility – including the municipal transport company, statistics, equality, and the environment. In addition, the Municipal Policy and Emergencies also collaborate on the work of the working group.

Different methodologies were used in 2023 and 2024 to analyse Madrid's industrial spaces from a gender perspective. Notably a desk review that drew largely from two reports, a study on the industrial spaces in Madrid, and a study on gender in industrial spaces in Spain (at national level). In addition, primary qualitative data was collected through KIIs with experts in the field, and an exploratory walk throughs of industrial estates in two areas of the city: Villaverde and Vicalvaro.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The Madrid SC scoping study recommended the need for cross-sectoral coordination and information sharing among different administrative areas of the city. This type of collaboration enabled synergies across work areas, which result in better coordinated interventions that can deliver more effectively. This collaborative public management style is also required to further implement the Madrid SC Action Plan and its activities, including the study on gender responsive industrial spaces.

The work of the working group has identified a number of recommendations for future action:

- The need for quantitative data disaggregated by sex and gender to inform gender-responsive decision-making and planning.
- The need to undertake gender impact studies to better understand what impacts an initiative would have on women and men, including on their access to industrial and economically productive spaces, to better inform gender-responsive decision-making and planning for such spaces.

- Mixed methods studies, that combine quantitative and qualitative data collection, using participatory methodologies including surveys and focus group discussions can allow for collecting different opinions and experiences from diverse women and men.
- It is critical to make use of lived experience by engaging different users of a space, including women in all their diversity, to ensure that studies about a particular area reflect the realities of those who inhabit it or who pass through it regularly. In particular, by taking an intersectional approach to ensure that the different realities and ideas of women are reflected in studies and plans to build inclusive and gender responsive public spaces.
- Ensuring that women are included in technical and management teams is fundamental.
- Establishing coordinated cross-sectoral working groups can address women's safety concerns in the built environment, through urban planning and design, transportation planning and design, and management of public infrastructure and facilities.



4

**CHANGING SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL NORMS TO
PROMOTE THE SAFETY
OF WOMEN AND GIRLS
IN PUBLIC SPACES**



4. CHANGING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS TO PROMOTE THE SAFETY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN PUBLIC SPACES

Transforming social norms for women's empowerment and ending violence against women is critical to ensuring the sustainability of efforts to challenge and transform gender-based discrimination that can act as a driver of violence against women. Throughout the period covered by this Compendium, UN Women has been investing in generating the knowledge and evidence on impactful social norms change¹⁷, considering how to shift power, institutions and ideologies that discriminate against women into ones that empower them

The emerging evidence on what works to transform social norms highlights that there is no one way to achieve this. Rather efforts to transform social norms must be localized, and social norms themselves must be understood within the local context. Approaches are therefore most successful when they use a bottom-up participatory approach that is co-created and tailored to the local context.

UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces global initiative has integrated localised social norms change since its inception. Through capacity strengthening of institutional actors to better prevent VAWG and provide support and services to victims/survivors, to awareness

raising campaigns that use innovative methodologies to maximize their reach, participating cities and their partners including male champions of change and faith-based leaders, among others, have worked to challenge discriminatory attitudes, expectations, and behaviours at multiple levels, from the individual, to the community, to institutions, and society more broadly.

Social norms change is a core element and part of a comprehensive approach to ending SH and SVAWG, where it is also supported by effective laws and services, and a strong women's movement at the local level to ensure accountability and redistribution of power and privilege to benefit all women equally.

¹⁷ UN Women (2025) Feminist Collaborative Evaluation of UN Women's Approach to Social Norms Change, Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/feminist-collaborative-evaluation-of-un-womens-approach-to-social-norms-change-en.pdf>

Changing Social and Cultural Norms to Promote the Safety of Women and Girls in Public Spaces: Key takeaways

- To effectively challenge and transform institutional norms to shift gendered power structures, a participatory approach supported by strong political will and long-term investment is required. Measures to strengthen internal capacities ongoing monitoring for accountability is essential.
- Deepened engagement of community members is critical to change social and cultural norms at the local level. Engaging women from diverse backgrounds fosters opportunities for dialogue, information sharing, and peer support. Encouraging male participation and providing supportive spaces for discussion on ending VAWG issues also helps sustain engagement and promotes gender equality. Male gender champions at the community level require time to reflect on concepts related to prevention, positive masculinities, and other awareness raising material.
- Cultural and contextual adaptation is important. Ensuring the appropriateness of interventions by localising materials and content is essential. Investing in the capacity building of local facilitators and promoting volunteerism supports ongoing sustainability of social norms change action. Designing intervention schedules, including by accommodating seasonal, agricultural, and cultural events, enhances participation and relevance.
- Collaborating with local organisations is invaluable for reaching broader audiences and ensuring impact. Clearly defining and understanding the roles of stakeholders from the beginning helps to contribute effective interventions. Maintaining good relationships among partners through regular communication is crucial for accountability and successful implementation.
- Campaigns with clear and relevant messaging receive positive feedback and are more effective in promoting change. Working with feminist community partners and adapting messages to reflect local realities, including the needs of women facing multiple forms of discrimination, is crucial for success.

4.1 ENGAGEMENT OF FAITH-BASED ACTORS IN THE HAWASSA SAFE CITY AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES PROGRAMME (ETHIOPIA)

Description

In Ethiopia, Faith-based actors (such as formal and informal faith-based leaders and organisations) play an important role in the prevention of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces due to their strong presence in the country and influence among followers. Faith-based actors can promote beliefs, norms and practices that support and enable prevention of VAWG¹⁸. However, in the early stages of the Hawassa SC SPS programme, work was needed to build the case among Clergy members, as some believed that spiritual life was the only issue to be addressed in the church.

UN Women Ethiopia, in partnership with Norwegian Church Aid and local faith actors, have been working to support faith-based organisations in Hawassa on how to integrate SH and SVAWG prevention into their activities and institutional structures for over 4 years, with support by the governments of Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Clergy members of the faith-based organisations have attended regular VAWG training sessions and developed various materials, theological reflections, and contextual teaching guidelines to reach their followers and community members, with the technical support of UN Women, women's rights and other NGO partners.

The Hawassa SC SPS programme engages Women of Faith structures, taking into account their position and ability to reach out to mixed groups of women from different cultures, and economic and social status, helping to support and further empower women who face heightened risks to SH.

The Women of Faith are structured women groups in different faith settings that includes Tsewa Mahiber¹⁹, women prayer group, women pastors, women religious leaders, deaconesses among others, and through technical accompaniment on social norms change (Institutional, community and local level) are helping to increase women's access to opportunities for dialogue, information sharing, and peer support.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

As of May 2024, seven Evangelical churches, three Catholic parishes and twelve churches under the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church have mainstreamed SVAWG prevention work into their spiritual teachings and services in the church. This includes the religious services, Sunday school teachings and monthly informal residential gatherings. These interventions were also expanded to three church owned secular schools and their gender clubs in the city of Hawassa. Another achievement is the inclusion of a module that focuses on Gender and GBV in the curriculum of Hawassa Clergy Training Center, which has a diploma training programme for clergy for up to two years. This helps to ensure sustainability and build to scale community mobilisation action in SC SPS programme.

The module includes a focus on the causes and consequences of VAWG, the role of church and the clergy in prevention and enhances their skills on cascading messages of VAWG to the church community.

As part of regular monitoring and the different capacity building measures supported under the Hawassa SC and SPS programme, clergy members are active agents of change. For example, clergy members have refused to mediate cases of violence reported to them and instead provided information to survivors on where to seek legal and other types of support.

18 Le Roux, E. and Palm, S. (2021), Learning from Practice: Engaging Faith-based and Traditional Actors in Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls (New York, United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women). Available at: <https://untf.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/synthesis-learning-from-practice-engaging-faith-based-traditional-actors-in-preventing-vawg.pdf>

19 Tsewa Mahiber refers to a traditional Ethiopian religious association. It serves as a philanthropic organization that provides support and community for its members.

In situations where families of the perpetrators approach the clergy members so that the perpetrator can elude legal consequence, clergy members have shared important messaging on the role of the courts in addressing violence.

Since 2019, the capacity of 41 women of faith structures of the Ethiopian Orthodox, Evangelicals and Muslim faith have been strengthened in Amhara, Sidama, Gambella and Somali regions through different capacity building support.

Before the SC SPS programme intervention started, the focus of the women structures was purely spiritual. However, VAWG prevention work has been mainstreamed overtime as the Women of Faith structures advocated for leadership commitment and ownership. Through these structures, more than 4,000 women were reached. Through outreach strategies, the Women of Faith reached the wider community- beyond the women from their respective congregation. This contributed to expanded community awarenesses raising efforts in the community, the establishment of networks, and referral of cases.

"For a long time, the Women's Ministry at our Church was only focused on spreading the Gospel. Following the engagement of our church in the Hawassa SC SPS programme, as leaders of the Women's Ministry we began to participate in training sessions on VAWG prevention and response. We did not know how we could contribute to VAWG prevention. With technical support of UN Women and partners, we could successfully integrate VAWG prevention action within the church setting. Through regular training, we were able to recognise various forms of VAWG. We advocated for change, calling attention to church leadership that violence is happening and we succeeded in making the case to the church leadership to allocate a budget in our annual work plan to address VAWG through various strategies. We improved the skills and knowledge of 75 participants including Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, and parents to reach their constituencies including adolescents, and youth to promote favorable and respectful relationships. We helped to build trust among congregation members and women and girls in the church now have the confidence to report VAWG cases."

Woman Leader of Women's Ministry in Hawassa

4.2 THE USE OF MALE ADVOCATES CLUBS IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (DA NANG, VIET NAM)

Summary

Since 2015, as part of a comprehensive prevention approach, Male Advocates Clubs (MACs) have been used to mobilise men to advocate for gender equality and VAWG prevention in Da Nang City, Vietnam. Since 2023, MAC members have contributed to catalytic partnerships aimed at creating safe spaces in the city with women and girls, including with Da Nang City, which is the third city to participate in UN Women's SC SPS Global Initiative.

Description

In 2015, UN Women Vietnam established the first MAC to mobilise men to stand up for gender equality and contribute to the prevention of VAWG. MACs were included as part of a broader community mobilisation package to support the prevention of violence and are implemented by the Da Nang Women's Union with technical support of UN Women Vietnam and in cooperation with the government of Australia.

MACs work with men with no history of violence, and who serve as influencers in the community with certain positions/roles to make them advocates for gender equality. Members of MACs are from different age groups and work together to build gender-equitable attitudes, develop healthy relationship skills, promote positive masculinities, and engage men to become male advocates for violence prevention in their communities. Facilitators were elected from the membership and trained to conduct regular participatory men's learning workshops and engage in other volunteer activities to promote gender-equitable norms.

Key Results

As of October 2024, there are more than 30 Male Advocates Clubs, including those in the police sector, with nearly 1,000 members in Da Nang city.

Men who participate in the intervention have increased their knowledge on gender issues and have taken action to ensure more respectful relationships with women. They became volunteers to promote gender equality and GBV prevention in the community.

MAC members have formed a critical mass of male advocates for Da Nang city to contribute to along with other partners to build a Safe City of Da Nang, free from violence against women, youth and children, as stipulated in the city's two key policies: Directive No. 39-CT/TU of April 24, 2020, issued by the Standing Committee of the City Party, and Decision No. 1006/QĐ-UBND of March 29, 2021, issued by the Chairman of the City People's Committee. These are the concrete foundations for the city's official participation in the SC SPS as of November 20, 2023.

The success of the city of Da Nang has inspired other municipalities in Vietnam to establish MACs in 2025.

Lessons Learned

It was important to ensure that each stakeholder understood their role and accountability in the implementation of the social norms intervention.

Engaging male participants through a participatory learning methodology informed by a review of effective approaches in engaging men in other violence prevention programmes was key. Participation was encouraged by following up with male members to understand if there were barriers that needed to be addressed to ensure their participation and identify ways to improve and sustain members' attendance. It was important to create a space where men were encouraged to open up about VAWG issues, share solutions, and encourage each other to continue attending the clubs' regular sessions. Another lesson learned is that the clubs' regular session schedules should be designed with local customs in mind to accommodate seasonal, agricultural and cultural events in the community.

Sufficient time should be allocated to review and adapt materials and contents to the local context to ensure that they are more easily understood by local facilitators. Ongoing training and support for facilitators was needed throughout the signature intervention, as well as coaching and quality control by key partners to ensure that the workshops were engaging and effective. MAC members were expected to be volunteers in advocating for gender equality in the community. It was also important to set clear expectations, guidelines and goals to provide MAC members with the necessary tools to be successful in their outreach.

4.3 OPPORTUNITIES TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN PUBLIC SPACES DURING FESTIVALS (BOGOTA AND BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA)

Description

According to the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences of Colombia, in 2023, 1,049 medico-legal investigations were carried out for sexual crimes that occurred during cultural and entertainment events.

Bogota, the vibrant capital of Colombia with over 8 million residents, hosts numerous cultural events, including music and public festivals. While these events offer enjoyment and entertainment, they can also be sites where different forms of VAWG can occur. To address this issue, the District Secretariat for Women, in collaboration with the National Women's Network and other municipal bodies, launched the "Kiosks for Parties Free of Violence Against Women" in 2019, an intervention which forms part of the Bogota SC SPS programme.

Since 2022, the initiative has established safe points at multiple major city festivals, aimed at creating a safer environment for women and girls during festival season. These safe points serve as hubs for disseminating key messages aimed at raising awareness and preventing VAWG and provide information on how to access available response services.

The local government collaborated with various institutions that contribute to event logistics, including the National Police, and private sector companies.

Barranquilla hosts the second largest festival in the region, Cultural Heritage of the Nation, and a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity - UNESCO, which brings together 3.3 million people. In 2023, the local government launched the "No es No" (No is No) campaign in partnership with different sectors focused on the prevention of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. Three types of actions, accompanied with messages were developed with women, such as "Dancing alone is my decision", "I dressed for myself, not for you". The actions include:

1. Prevention, with sensitisation and training of the personnel participating in the carnival, as well as key persons (e.g. Directors of folklore groups, women's organisations, taxi drivers, etc.).
2. The development of a contingency plan for the prevention and response to VAWG during the carnival. This includes the review of protocols and routes with the people in charge of carnival security (police and judicial sector) and technical security committees, and the creation of a purple night service point for women, offering psychological and legal assistance.
3. Advocacy, communication and dissemination action in public spaces, including disseminating key messages in the airport due to the large number of travellers and tourists. Promotional materials and various cultural actions were also carried out with women's organisations in the city.



Women riding in a bus during the Barranquilla Carnival as part of the “No Means No” campaign to prevent and address violence against women in public spaces during festivals. UN Women/Tico Angulo.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

In Bogota, from May 2022 to May 2024, safe points have been established for the following 7 festivals:

EVENT	DATE
Baum Festival	May 20 and 21, 2022
Monumentum Electronic Party	September 30, 2022
Festival Hip Hop al Parque	July 22 and 23, 2023
Monumentum Electronic Party	September 30, 2023
Festival Rock al Parque	November 11, 12 and 13, 2023
Festival Estéreo Picnic	March 21, 22, 23 and 24, 2024
Baum Festival	May 24 and 25, 2024

In Barranquilla, the “NO is NO” campaign is estimated to have reached at least 800 public officials and more than 50,000 people.

The initiatives in each city both succeeded in engaging all strategic actors towards a common objective: to ensure safety of women and girls at city festivals. Women’s organisations have informed the development of key actions in each city intervention and further increased the access and empowerment of women in public spaces. The strategies developed have been incorporated into the city’s development plans, ensuring their long-term sustainability and continued focus of women’s safety. SH is now recognised as a critical issue in the cities’ safety strategies, with dedicated resources to address it.

4.4 ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING AUTHORITY (ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA)

Description

UN Women Tanzania has partnered with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training under the Vocational Training Authority to implement a project intervention on ending VAWG and promoting safe public and private spaces in tertiary education in Zanzibar. The programme supports a safer environment by ensuring that all tertiary education institutions adopt prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by developing policies and identifying focal persons to address concerns related to GBV. It uses a mixed intervention model that starts with a macro approach to support Zanzibar's gender machinery, particularly the Vocational Training Authority, and a bottom-up approach to gain gold standard experience in managing GBV by piloting the intervention in a small area to address knowledge gaps, document early results, and generate insights that would then be used to inform the development of a future model to be adapted and replicated throughout Zanzibar.

Key Elements

UN Women Tanzania has trained the staff of the Vocational Training Authority on VAWG in educational settings. The Vocational Training Authority is a key stakeholder and active in addressing VAWG in Zanzibar.

To improve the environmental safety of public transport for adolescent girls and boys in tertiary education, the Vocational Training Authority partnered with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communication and the Public Transport Drivers Association to develop and enforce a code of conduct for public transport operators.

So far, 35 key stakeholders from: infrastructure; communications; public transport drivers; heads of public and private transport associations; the Director of Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children; the Director of the Vocational Training Authority; the Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation; representatives of the Tertiary Education Students' Association; and the Vocational Training Center teachers have participated in consultative meetings and developed action plans to:

- develop slogans that denounce VAWG and negative practices, while engaging public and private transportation drivers as key facilitators in the process;
- strengthen systems under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communications and public transport driver associations by ensuring that associations comply with existing rules and guidelines, and register all public and private transport and drivers to facilitate tracking and reporting of VAWG incidents;
- awareness and training of public and private transportation drivers on VAWG;
- raise awareness of VAWG prevention and response among college students and support their participation in the programme; and
- conduct mass awareness raising campaigns alongside community activities as part of a comprehensive approach to prevention.

Key Results

As of 2024, 73 (43 men, 30 women) employees of the Vocational Training Authority have participated in safe public spaces action in tertiary education in Zanzibar. Training sessions included technical staff, the board of directors and senior management. Based on the training, the Vocational Training Authority is currently developing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for tertiary education that will serve as a guideline for handling GBV incidents in education and contribute to a safe space in tertiary education in Zanzibar.

The tool is intended to be adapted for different audiences and replicated during and beyond the duration of the programme. Initially, the tool will be presented to four key stakeholder groups: the Board of Directors, senior and junior management of the Vocational Training Authority, Vocational Training Center staff in Unguja, and Vocational Training Center staff in Pemba. By involving senior management, the Vocational Training Authority will ensure ownership and commitment of the stakeholders involved, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the changes brought about by the programme in the future.

As of May 2024, 200 youth and 193 vocational training center staff have increased their knowledge of VAWG through the programme. 500 students have received information, education and communication materials on ending VAWG and prevention and response mechanisms and procedures.

Future Plans

In the future, the Vocational Training Authority, with technical support from UN Women, will conduct a scoping study on GBV experienced by students while commuting to and from tertiary vocational training facilities, which will facilitate the development of recommendations for the joint action plan and validation. The results of the study will be disseminated, and the joint programme will be publicly launched to inform responsible actors in ending GBV, amplify the magnitude of GBV issues and contribute to ending violence against girls and boys on public transportation.

The Vocational Training Authority will also conduct a communication campaign to raise awareness of VAWG among students of tertiary vocational education, with specific messages being disseminated through 1,000 brochures and 35 banners. An app is currently being developed by the Vocational Training Authority, with technical support from UN Women, which will include information on VAWG prevention and response in tertiary vocational education. The app will allow messages to reach a wide audience.

4.5 ACTIVE BYSTANDERS CAMPAIGN ON ENDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT (MONTREAL, CANADA)

Description

In 2023, the City of Montreal, the *Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM)* (Montreal Police Service) and the *Société de transport de Montréal (STM)* (Montreal Transport Authority) launched a broad awareness raising campaign on SH in public spaces in Montreal. Beyond simply denouncing SH, the campaign aimed to sensitise the population about their roles as bystanders who witness SH. Specifically, the campaign sought to provide information to potential bystanders to know what tools were available to them should they witness SH on streets.

This campaign aimed to respond to the results of a groundbreaking study on SH in Montreal carried out in 2021, which showed that 65 percent of Montrealers said they had experienced some form of harassment and that in 53 percent of cases, no help had been offered by witnesses.

The communications strategy proposes five actions that a person can take to support a victim/survivor of SH the moment it is happening:

1. Create a distraction
2. Join forces with another person
3. Call for help
4. Document the incident
5. Provide support to the victim/survivor

Diverse communication tools and strategies were used to reach a wide audience. Specifically, the campaign consisted of posters being put up in public spaces throughout the city over a 5-week period, the development of a microsite: www.temoinsagissons.ca, and a digital campaign broadcast on several different online platforms to reach a diverse audience. The microsite provided victim/survivors with front-line community resources offering a 24-hour listening and support services should they need it.

The content and messages used in the campaign were developed by a working group composed of the local government and its partners, including various community organisations and women's rights groups, to take better account of the specific realities of public space users.

In parallel to the wide-reaching public campaign, the transport authority developed its own tools with the intention of raising awareness among its employees on how to best receive and support victim/survivors of SH and to refer them to the appropriate services and resources.



Montreal's active bystander campaign was widely displayed through public spaces across the city. City of Montreal.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

The Active Bystanders campaign was made visible in 1,785 public spaces owned by the transport authority, including public bus stops, metro stations, and on buses. Posters were also put up in Montreal's 45 municipal libraries and in the city's most used public spaces. In addition, more than 44,000 people accessed the microsite that was created for the campaign period. The digital outreach strategy was viewed more than 8 million times across different online platforms.

After the initial campaign period, Montreal conducted an evaluation to assess the impact of the campaign and how well it was received, or not, by the local population.

The results demonstrate that it was very well received, with positive feedback about the clear and relevant messaging put forth through the campaign.

During the campaign period, the SV Helpline reported receiving more calls about street sexual harassment, which can be indicative of increased awareness among victim/survivors about where to access support, and an increasing recognition of the seriousness of street SH.

In response to the feedback, the city of Montreal will further build the capacities of potential bystanders to intervene safely by equipping them with additional tools to take concrete action.

Collaboration with feminist community partners was essential to the success of the intervention, since their contributions to the working group enabled the city to adapt the messages to better reflect local realities, including to respond to the needs and experiences of women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. It is thanks to the efforts of local feminist movements and the *Centre d'éducation et d'action des femmes de Montréal (CÉAF)* (the Centre for Women's education and Action) that has been working for years to raise awareness about SH and other forms of VAWG in Montreal, together with the Montreal Council of Women and the study that they have done on the safety of women and girls in Montreal that this campaign was able to realized. Their advocacy encouraged the city to work collectively with its partners to launch the campaign.

Through concerted effort and action, leveraging respective spheres of influence and listening to feminist organisations, local government could address women and girls concerns and work towards the transformative change which is needed to ensure all women and girls are able to enjoy public spaces free of SH and other forms of VAWG.

4.6 BYSTANDER INTERVENTION TRAINING OF CITY STAFF ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CANADA, LONDON)

Summary

The City of London has launched a comprehensive Bystander Intervention Training Programme as part of its ongoing commitment to "Creating a Safe London for Women, Girls, Gender Diverse and Trans People" in Council's 2019-2023 and 2023-2027 Strategic Plans and the SC SPS programme. The training provides the city staff with the knowledge to recognise incidents of SV, and the practical skills to intervene.

Description

Developed in 2022 in collaboration with Anova, a local sexual assault center in the City of London, and other partners, the training is designed to equip City staff with the skills to safely intervene in situations of SV.

The programme has undergone several iterations based on feedback from pilot sessions and surveys conducted with City staff, including managers and supervisors.

The training covers a wide range of areas related to bystander intervention, with a particular focus on non-confrontational intervention techniques using the "5D" method: distract, direct, delegate, delay, and document. It uses a "calling in" approach to engage participants, especially men, in discussions about privilege and its relationship to public spaces and SV with guidance from Changing Ways, a London-based organisation that engages men in violence prevention. Training sessions are face-to-face and last 2 hours. They include small group discussions on using the "5D" method in SV scenarios, followed by a larger group discussion.

Since its launch in November 2023, the training has prioritised staff working in public spaces, such as garbage collection and road operations, due to their frequent presence in public spaces and frontline workers in the community. The programme was extended to to accommodate the high demand, and with the goal of training all Environment and Infrastructure staff and expanding to other departments over time.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

As of April 2024, the City of London has successfully trained around 330 staff in bystander intervention on SV. The training has attracted interest from different departments, highlighting its relevance and importance across the organisation.

Working with *Changing Ways* has been invaluable. This partnership has enriched the training, particularly in discussions about individual privilege in public spaces and the profound impact of SV on victims/survivors.

The process of developing the Bystander Intervention Training was instrumental in identifying gaps in information availability and understanding among staff. Lessons learned from the surveys and pilot sessions have led to significant improvements in training content and secondary improvements in staff support for physical and psychological safety.

The programme continues to evolve in response to participant feedback. The training identified broader resource gaps, such as the accessibility of mental health and family support information.

To address this gap, the Wallet Card, an employee resource, was introduced to allow easy access of employees to support services without having to contact managers directly.

5Ds Bystander Intervention

The goal of bystander intervention is to create more options for the target while maintaining your personal safety.

Key points:

- No wrong choice
- Different tools in the toolbox
- You won't stop everything

Distract Approach the problem and create a moment long enough to allow the target to leave the situation.
REMEMBER: We are not trying to rescue anyone here.


Delegate Asking for help from someone in a position of authority .
REMEMBER: Stay safe and call for help if it seems too risky to get involved personally or if the situation escalates. Pause before calling the police. If you are wearing a City shirt or driving a City vehicle, you may be delegated to intervene.

Delay After the incident is over, check in with the person.
REMEMBER: if it's stranger based, you won't necessarily get the chance to check in with that person. This is most effective in a peer situation when you will get the chance to see them again.


Document It can be helpful for the target to have a video of the incident. Remember that the video should always end up in the hands of the target. Follow any directions from the target (for example, delete the video if that's what is being asked).
REMEMBER: make sure it ends up in the hands of the target- not posting it online and not only taking it to your supervisor.

Direct Approach the situation and directly address the target. (example: "Are you okay?", "Do you want to come wait with me).
REMEMBER: The goal is to create more opportunities for the target to leave the situation- not to confront the perpetrator.

anova



Changing Ways



London CANADA

Handout of the 5Ds that form the core of London's bystander intervention training. City of London.

4.7 ACTIVE BYSTANDER TRAINING PROGRAMME (BRUSSELS, BELGIUM)

Description

In February 2022, the City of Brussels launched an action plan called *"Rien sans mon consentement"* ("Nothing without my consent") in response to the high number of testimonies about experiences of SH on social networks under the hashtag *#Balancetonbar*. Testimonies exposed SH in nightclubs and bars in the city. In response to this, an action plan to address SH in public spaces, and in particular in nightlife was developed, including over 75 actions.

An Active Bystander Training Programme, informed by social design thinking, was developed by the Brussels Equal Opportunities Unit between April and August 2022, adapted to the local context. Pilot testing of the Active Bystander Training Programme began in September 2022, led by 2 members of the municipal administration jointly with 2 employees of BRAVVO, a non-profit organisation working on crime prevention, with the goal of increasing a sense of safety in public space. By the spring of 2024, around 320 people had been trained as active bystanders, including 270 *gardiens de la paix* (peacekeepers) and 50 members of the non-profit organisation, Brussels Major Events, which organizes large public events for the City of Brussels and other government bodies.

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It soon became clear that the Active Bystander Training Programme needed to be expanded to train as many people as possible. Therefore, in February 2024, the City of Brussels opened a call for internal

and external partners to apply to complete a train the trainer programme to create a pool of around 40 trainers who would have the skills and capacities to deliver the training sessions on a large scale in the coming years.



Image of the 'Nothing without my Consent' campaign in Brussels. City of Brussels.

Key Elements

Training Programmes: All candidate trainers participated in a two-day training provided by *Le Monde selon Les Femmes (the World according to Women)*, a non-profit organisation, which highlighted the basic concepts of gender and VAWG, privilege, with a focus on the impact of SH on victims/survivors. Candidate trainers also attended a one-day training which was focused on how to deliver the Active Bystander Training Programme. Part of the methodology included mastering the content of the Active Bystander Training session and then practicing in small groups.

Active Bystander Training Toolbox: An Active Bystander Training Toolbox was provided to all candidate trainers. The original Active Bystander Training Toolbox created by the Brussels Equal Opportunities Unit was redesigned in collaboration with a local design studio using more sustainable materials so that it could be easily replicated and stored. It contains the tools needed to conduct the various workshops of the training, including role-play cards, a USB with the PowerPoint presentation of the training, and all related administrative documents (e.g., attendance sheets, etc.), as well as small communications material (e.g., stickers) to distribute to participants at the end of each training.

Communications Campaign: A communications campaign will be implemented by the end of 2024 to inform the public about the availability of the Active Bystander Training Programme.

A distinctive logo was created for the campaign, which became the symbol of the Active Bystander Training Programme and is being used on various communication tools, such as displays in public spaces, clubs, bars, and public transportation, social media, and various types of materials, such as badges and stickers, to make trained active bystanders identifiable at all times.

Key Results and Lessons Learned

By May 2024, nearly 30 candidate trainers had registered for the train the trainer program, including 13 members of the public administration - including from the local public social assistance center and Brussels community centers, and 14 people representing 8 local partner organisations. The 8 local partner organisations were recruited through mail, local coordination meetings, etc. and are in contact with a diverse public, including refugees, homeless people, job seekers, etc. of different ages (average 16-65 years). The candidate trainers who completed train the trainer programme received an Active Bystander Training Toolbox and committed to conducting at least three Active Bystander Training sessions per year.

Working with local actors has the advantage of reaching an audience beyond the administration. Although it is too early for an evaluation, there is no doubt that the large number of local actors will have an impact on the number and diversity of people reached by the Active Bystander Training Programme. In the programme, various communication channels and interfaces have reinforced the visibility and the key message aimed at making women and girls feel more supported and safer in public spaces. The uniqueness of the programme also lies in the fact that active bystanders are made visible, and that establishments, including bars and nightclubs, commit to creating safer zones. Together, these efforts can actively contribute to building and strengthening a community of active bystanders.

UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviours and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.



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