



# ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: IT'S ALL OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY



**DOMESTIK  
VAELENS**

**Wanem ya  
Domestik Vaelens?**

**“** *There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.*

– Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General

# CONTENTS

<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: THE FACTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The numbers: Violence against women in the Asia-Pacific</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: WHAT DOES A SOCIETY FREE FROM GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE LOOK LIKE AND HOW DO WE GET THERE?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A world where women can live free from fear of violence is a world of better social and economic outcomes for individuals and societies</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Best practice in tackling the problem of violence against women in the Asia Pacific</b>	<b>10</b>
Recognising the causes of violence against women	10
Taking preventive action based on our understanding of the underlying causes of violence	10
1 Change social norms related to the acceptability of violence and the subordination of women	11
2 Promote non-violent masculinities oriented towards equality and respect	11
3 Address child abuse and promote healthy families <sup>11</sup>	
4 Work with young boys to address early ages of sexual violence perpetration	11
5 Promote healthy sexuality for men and address male sexual entitlement	11
6 End impunity for men who rape	11
7 Develop interventions that respond to the specific patterns of violence in each context	11
What is already working elsewhere?	12
<b>What can you do to combat violence against women in the Asia-Pacific region?</b>	<b>13</b>
Government and Community Organisations	13
Individuals: Everyone can contribute to making a difference for women	13

*The Australian National Committee for UN Women would like to thank Roseanna Bricknell for her valuable contributions to this report.*



## FOREWORD

I am shocked and saddened by what it has taken to get the issue of violence against women on the national agenda. I cannot accept that violence against women is inevitable, and am committed to raising awareness, challenging attitudes and personally investing in organisations that are working to eliminate violence against women.

I thank and share the resolve of the women and men who have worked in the area of violence against women – providing support, shelter and services – for far longer than I have worked in this sector. Their work is essential for freeing the women and children of Australia and our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific from the fear, violence and abuse that many women, across the world, endure each day.

I hope that between the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November and International Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, we can reach into homes, into companies and into governments – to engage the heads and hearts of individuals in how they can make a personal difference of changing the violent experience of far too many women in our region.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Julie McKay'.

Julie McKay  
Executive Director  
Australian National Committee for UN Women

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: THE FACTS



Violence against women has been described as a global issue of ‘epidemic proportions’,<sup>1</sup> and is perhaps the most widespread and socially tolerated form of human rights violations.<sup>2</sup>

Women are affected by different forms of violence at different stages of their lives. These include (but are not limited to) violence by intimate partners and family members, sexual violence, trafficking, femicide (including dowry killings), female genital mutilation, and child or forced marriage.



Globally, 35.6% of women experience physical or sexual intimate partner violence, or sexual violence by a non-partner in their lifetime,<sup>3</sup> and almost 40 per cent of female homicides are at the hands of victims’ male partners.<sup>4</sup>



Violence against women is a universal problem. Our region has the worst record of gender-based violence in the world. With 2 in 3 women experiencing violence in their lifetime, the ‘scale of the issue in the Asia Pacific cannot be underestimated’.<sup>5</sup>



In Australia alone, a woman is subjected to domestic or family violence every four minutes,<sup>6</sup> and a woman is killed as result of that violence every week.<sup>7</sup>



Of women over the age of the 15, 1 in 3 has experienced intimate partner violence, 1 in 5 has experienced sexual violence, and 1 in 4 has experienced emotional abuse.<sup>8</sup>

5x as likely

This violence is undeniably gender based: women are nearly 4 times as likely as men to experience violence at the hands of a partner and nearly 5 times as likely as men to experience sexual violence.<sup>9</sup>



In the Asia Pacific region, the numbers are staggering. Over 40 per cent of women in South East Asia and 60 per cent of women in the Western Pacific have experienced gender-based violence.<sup>10</sup>

“The abuse of women and girls is the most pervasive and unaddressed human rights violation on Earth.

– Jimmy Carter

## THE NUMBERS: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC



### Papua New Guinea

**58%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**55%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Timor Leste

**34%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**3%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Fiji

**66%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**34%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Bangladesh

**67%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**24%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Cambodia

**13%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**2%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Kiribati

**60%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**46%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Vanuatu

**68%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**44%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Tonga

**33%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**17%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Samoa

**41%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**20%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Solomon Islands

**46%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**55%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Philippines

**15%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**8%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Viet Nam

**32%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**10%** Prevalence of sexual violence



### Nepal

**23%** Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

**14%** Prevalence of sexual violence

Sources: Emma Fulu et al, 'Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific' (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV, 2013); UN Women, 'Violence against women prevalence data: Surveys by country' (Fact Sheet, December 2012); Vanuatu Women's Centre and Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 'Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships' (2011); United Nations Statistics Division, 'Violence Against Women', in The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics (6th ed, 2015).



Up to 80 per cent of men in the Asia Pacific admit to perpetrating physical and/or sexual violence against women and girls in their lifetime.<sup>11</sup> Of men who report ever having raped a woman or girl, over 50 per cent did so for the first time when they were teenagers, 14 per cent admitted to gang rape, over 72 per cent did not experience any legal consequences, and 80 per cent hold the belief that men have the right to have sex with a woman regardless of her consent.<sup>12</sup>

The violence experienced by so many women in the Asia-Pacific starts from an early age. For example, in Vanuatu, 30 per cent of women experience child sexual abuse under the age of 15 and 41 per cent report a forced first sexual experience.<sup>13</sup> In East Timor, over half of all women who experience violence are girls younger than fifteen, and in Fiji one third are girls younger than sixteen.<sup>14</sup>

These numbers show that violence against women and their children is a pandemic in Australia and the Asia Pacific – and the

worst part is that this data fails to tell the whole story. Domestic, family and sexual violence remains widely under-reported and so prevalence data is generally just the ‘tip of the iceberg’, with reported statistics far lower than the actual incidence of violence.<sup>15</sup>

In Fiji, for example, over 75 per cent of women who experience violence do not report that violence or seek medical treatment.<sup>16</sup> In Vanuatu, 57 per cent have never sought help, and although half of women experience violence have temporarily left home due to that violence, less than 1 per cent leave permanently.<sup>17</sup> In addition, reporting of violence often occurs only when that violence is extreme – 90 per cent of women reporting violence in Vanuatu rate the violence faced as ‘severe’.<sup>18</sup>

This widespread violation of human rights is simply not good enough. Something has to change.



# ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: WHAT DOES A SOCIETY FREE FROM GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE LOOK LIKE AND HOW DO WE GET THERE?

## A WORLD WHERE WOMEN CAN LIVE FREE FROM FEAR OF VIOLENCE IS A WORLD OF BETTER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES

A world where women are free of the threat of violence is one in which both individual women and the society of which they are a part is better off. Violence against women is not only a gross violation of women’s human rights, but causes both a range of financial and health issues for individual victims, and imposes significant economic and social costs on society.

Gender-based violence causes its victims trauma, pain, serious injury, disability and premature mortality. They are also more likely to suffer a range of physical, sexual and mental health issues including:<sup>19</sup>

- STI infection
- HIV infection
- Induced abortion
- Low birth weight
- Premature birth
- Growth restriction in utero
- Alcohol use
- Depression, self-harm, suicide and suicidal ideation
- Injuries
- Death from homicide
- Adolescent or unintended pregnancy
- Stillbirth or miscarriage
- Intrauterine haemorrhage
- Nutritional deficiency
- Abdominal pain and gastrointestinal disorders
- Neurological disorders
- Chronic pain
- Disability
- Anxiety and PTSD

Women experiencing violence also face homelessness, loss of income and poverty from unemployment or inability to work due to trauma and safety fears.<sup>20</sup>

And these issues are not just a problem for the individual women who have experienced violence – violence against women also costs society.

In 2009, it was estimated that the cost of violence against women in Australia was \$13.6 billion and without action was expected to rise to \$15.6 billion in the year 2021-2022.<sup>21</sup> In 2013, this figure was revised up, suggesting that family and domestic violence cost the economy some \$19.9 billion (or 1.1% of the Australian GDP, which is approximately equal to \$8800 for every man, woman and child living in Australia).<sup>22</sup> This figure is forecast to rise further.<sup>23</sup>

These costs include both direct costs through social services systems – realised largely through health costs associated with injury and mental illness, police and justice system costs, and welfare dependency – and indirect costs, such as lost productivity.<sup>24</sup>

---

**“Gender-based violence prevents women from exercising their rights, compromises their health, restricts them from becoming fully productive and realizing their full social and economic potential.”**

– Steven Groff, Asian Development Bank Vice-President

---

Less data is currently available on the economic burden of gender-based violence borne by our neighbours in the Asia Pacific. However, UN Women estimates that together, out-of-pocket expenses such as women’s loss of earnings, out of pocket expenses, medical costs, police support, legal aid, counselling services, judicial support and lost school fees in Vietnam costs the country 1.4 per cent of its GDP, and if indirect costs are also included, the cost of violence against women rises to almost 1.8 per cent.<sup>25</sup> These are considered conservative estimates, given that a high proportion of gender-based violence incidents go unreported and it was impossible to capture the long-term, generational costs of violence.

Violence against women is a ‘pervasive and expensive problem’.<sup>26</sup> What would our world look like if the costs of gender-based violence were costs we no longer had to pay?

A world without violence against women is a world where women are treated as equals, and are healthy, free and safe in their homes and in their communities.

A world without violence against women is a world where female contributions to the world’s work enhance global productivity and lead to the flourishing national and global economies, which are no longer required to bear the costs of violence.

A world without violence against women is a world where children are able to grow and be educated in an environment that is not characterised by abuse or neglect.

A world without violence is a world where no woman or girl is impeded by fear, by threat of harm, or by subordination, and so it is a world where every woman can contribute to solving the big problems we face.

It is a world where we are closer to ending poverty, to ensuring equality for all, to achieving global peace and security, and to protecting the environment.

---

**“No solutions to our world’s most pressing challenges – to end poverty, reduce inequality, bring sustainable peace and address climate change – can be achieved without the full and equal participation of women.”**

– Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women

---



UN Women/Ryan Brown

# BEST PRACTICE IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

The biggest lever we can pull in addressing the problem of violence against women is prevention – stopping it before it starts.

## RECOGNISING THE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Across the entire Asia Pacific region, the critical factors most commonly related to the incidence of gender-based violence are: gender inequality; violent masculine ideals; and men’s experience of abuse of neglect as a child.<sup>27</sup>

In particular, it is gender inequality and an entrenched acceptance of men’s power over women that foster an environment in which violence against women is commonplace, accepted and normalised.

For example, female subordination within the home creates an environment in which it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife for disobedience or for refusing sex. Female subordination outside the home creates a society in which men feel entitled to rape and sexually assault women with impunity.

*“Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women’s full advancement.”*

– UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women<sup>28</sup>

Beyond the common factor of gender inequality, secondary factors driving men’s use of violence against women in the Asia Pacific are many and varied. These include:<sup>29</sup>

- Frequent quarrelling with partner
- Transactional sex
- Large numbers of sexual partners
- Depression
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Involvement in fights and violent situations
- Physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse during childhood
- Experience of sexual victimisation
- Exposure to violence against mother
- Low gender-equitable attitudes
- No high school education
- Current food or work insecurity

These factors interact with each other to reinforce the problem: merely dealing with one is not enough to combat violence against women. Any measures implemented must be part of a targeted strategy to deal with a critical majority of these causal factors.

However, different countries and intra-country regions experience widely variable rates of violence perpetration, and in each site different factors are more or less significant in driving violence. The specific causes of violence differ based on the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts.

By way of example, although alcohol abuse is a serious trigger for violence in some settings, it has negligible impact in Muslim-majority countries where its consumption is prohibited; and Bangladesh is the only Asia-Pacific nation where the cultural practice of the payment of dowries and bride-prices is widespread and contributes to the entrenchment of gender inequality, which exacerbates the problem of violence against women.<sup>30</sup>

Any attempt to combat gender-based violence in the Asia Pacific region must therefore take a local, community-specific approach to addressing the underlying causes of violence against women that are relevant to each individual community, region or nation.

However, all strategies to address gender-based violence must also seek to address the gender inequities and dominant, violent masculinities that pervade the cultural narratives of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole.

## TAKING PREVENTIVE ACTION BASED ON OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Action to eliminate violence against women must therefore do battle on a variety of different fronts. Partners for Prevention (P4P), a programme for gender-based violence prevention in the Asia Pacific jointly administered by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and United Nations Volunteers recommends that approaches to eliminating men’s violence against women focus on seven key target areas for change:



Photo: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren

1

### Change social norms related to the acceptability of violence and the subordination of women

A large majority of both men and women in the Asia Pacific support the notion of gender equality in the abstract. However, in practice, these attitudes vary widely. In rural Bangladesh, for example, 62 per cent of men believe it is justified to beat a disobedient woman.<sup>31</sup> Female attitudes to practical examples of gender inequality are usually even more conservative than those of men.

Education that alters cultural narratives regarding the role of women relative to men in society therefore need to engage both men *and* women, and involve cultural influencers and leaders in conjunction with community-based movements.

2

### Promote non-violent masculinities oriented towards equality and respect

Men's violence against women is frequently driven by harmful notions of masculinity as dominant, controlling and violent.<sup>32</sup> Education aimed at altering perceptions of 'how to be a man' need to engage young men and boys through school-, community- or sports-based education or peer-to-peer programs and promotions involving local male leaders and role models that encourage healthy and caring expressions of masculinity.

3

### Address child abuse and promote healthy families

Child abuse is a common phenomenon in the Asia Pacific region. For example, 50 per cent of Sri Lankan men and 86 per cent of Papua New Guinean men report experiences of childhood abuse and neglect, including physical and sexual abuse. These experiences of abuse are one of the most common risk factors associated with violence perpetration later in life.<sup>33</sup>

A key factor in creating long-term, sustainable change in eliminating violence is therefore preventing child abuse. Support assisting parents to foster safe, nurturing homes, training for the development of skills in family conflict resolution and non-violent disciplinary action, and education programs to address social tolerance for violence against children should therefore be provided.

4

### Work with young boys to address early ages of sexual violence perpetration

Men who perpetrate violence against women develop these behavioural patterns early in life.<sup>34</sup> Educational programmes are essential to enabling young men to develop healthy sexual practices, understand and practise consent and build respectful relationships. Psychosocial support and counselling should also be provided to young boys who display early signs of sexually harmful behaviours.

5

### Promote healthy sexuality for men and address male sexual entitlement

Similarly, educational campaigns should be rolled out to provide men with information on sexual and reproductive health, informed by human rights, healthy sexuality and respectful relationships. This should particularly include information on consent in all contexts, including within marriage.

6

### End impunity for men who rape

In many jurisdictions in the Asia Pacific, sexual crimes are normalised and go unpunished. Between 72 and 97 per cent of men who perpetrate rape in Asia Pacific nations do not experience any legal consequences, and the most common motivation for rape is a sense of sexual entitlement. Particularly concerning is the fact that marital rape is the most common form of rape but is not criminalised in many Asia Pacific countries.<sup>35</sup>

In order to end impunity for sexual crimes, there must be a strong legislative response coupled with comprehensive communications campaigns to raise awareness of the laws on violence against women and encourage victims to seek help. Law enforcement services must also be provided with violence against women and gender sensitisation training, and monitoring systems should be implemented to ensure the effective administration of justice and appropriate sentencing and rehabilitation of offenders.

7

### Develop interventions that respond to the specific patterns of violence in each context

It is critical to remember that violence against women never occurs independently of the social and cultural context, and each nation and community will require individually tailored programmes and interventions in order to be most successful.

To this end, it is important to map the patterns of violence by strengthening research and data collection systems for use by the police, courts, health and social services, and supporting monitoring initiatives evaluating the successes and failures of existing policies and programmes dealing with violence against women. Where initiatives do find success, capacity-building organisations to collect and use evidence on these initiatives will help such successes to be scaled up and out to different regions and communities.



Photo: UN Women/Rob Maccoli

## WHAT IS ALREADY WORKING ELSEWHERE?

Some of these strategies have already been instituted in various forms in other countries. Although no country has achieved gender equality, and no country has been entirely successful in eliminating violence against women, there are many countries where progress is being made.

One example is found in Austria, where a national response to violence against women has been in place since 1997. Legislation to protect all people from violence empowers police to evict any perpetrator of violence from the home.<sup>36</sup>

Following a violence intervention event, police are then required to notify a Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre. These centres are run by women's groups, funded by the government, and form a network of support services across the country, including rural and regional areas. They take a proactive approach: rather than waiting to be contacted by the victim, the centre initiates contact via letter or phone. Meeting victims half-way in this manner ensures that victims who are scared to speak up or who are suffering from mental illness do not slip through the cracks.<sup>37</sup>

Centres provide helplines, counselling, immediate support and shelter, undertake safety planning, and coordinate inter-agency action to streamline the victims' experience of social services (including medical and legal assistance).<sup>38</sup> The Centres also ensure follow-up care for victims, maintaining contact in the months following the violent incident(s).<sup>39</sup>

In this way, the support provided by health, social, education, financial legal and law enforcement institutions can be put together like a jigsaw to provide a complete picture of what any individual victim needs in order to feel safe and begin to recover and rebuild.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to supporting victims of violence, the Austrian model refers perpetrators to an Anti-Violence Programme, which aims to train offenders in how to interact with others in non-violent ways and to control anger outbursts.<sup>41</sup>

As a result of both the strong powers given to police to intervene in violent situations, which reflects the understanding that violence against women is not a private issue, but a public one, and the well-integrated provision of support services for victims and perpetrators of violence, the Austrian approach to violence against women has been highly successful, receiving positive feedback from victims of violence and awarded a Future Policy Award 2014 as a best-practice policy for ending violence against women and girls.<sup>42</sup>

Closer to home, the Asian Development Bank has funded many projects tackling violence against women, using the key primary services in the healthcare and justice sectors as entry points to assist victims and survivors of violence.

By way of example, a project in Bangladesh created one-stop-shop centres through the primary health care system, which provided psychological, physical and legal assistance for survivors of violence.<sup>43</sup>

Success has also been found through the provision of specific training for actors in the justice system. In the Philippines, police training was provided to national police staff on handling cases of violence against women. Similar training was provided to a broader scale in Nepal in conjunction with a recruitment effort to increase the numbers of female law enforcement officers, enabling police, prosecutors and advocates in the legal system to better deal with issues of women's rights and violence against women.<sup>44</sup> In Pakistan, an Access to Justice Program was able to establish women's police cells, recruit women into the justice system (including as judges) and introduce the Sexual Harassment Bill to Parliament.<sup>45</sup>

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION?

## GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Governmental policy and plays a crucial role in ensuring that women are supported to escape violence. There are several key entry points for change that should be addressed by governing bodies and relevant institutional authorities in different public sectors:<sup>46</sup>

### *Education sector*

Schools must ensure that all students receive education on family life, healthy relationships, non-violent communication skills, conflict resolution and human rights. Schools must implement and enforce clear bullying and gender stereotyping/discrimination policies, and train teachers to identify and respond to signs of child abuse.

### *Health sector*

Health care and social services workers must be provided with training and resources to identify and respond to signs of child abuse and domestic or sexual violence. Health organisations must implement policies promoting men's health, reproductive health, mental health and alcohol and drug abuse.

### *Legal and justice sectors*

All forms of violence against women, including marital rape, must be criminalised and those laws enforced by police and justice institutions. Mechanisms within the justice sector must be reformed to ensure access to justice for women and at-risk parties, including judicial and police training, a gender audit of legislation, and the rollout of legal literacy programmes educating the public on the rights of women and children to be free from violence.

### *Family and youth sectors*

Integrated policies that ensure child protection from family violence, support new parents and promote men's responsibilities in the lives of their children, as well as policies targeting at-risk youth should be implemented to prevent children from exposure to gender-based violence and normalisation of violence against women by young men.

### *Media and culture sectors*

Media organisations should implement codes of conduct and engage in ethics trainings to address both the subordination and sexualisation of women and the celebration of violent models of masculinity, as well as developing policies for arts, culture and media content that aim to reduce social tolerance of gender-based violence.

### *Labour sector*

Policies should be implemented that promote women's economic empowerment and capacity to engage in the labour force. Industrial relations frameworks should support equality in participation in paid work, encouraging employers to institute policies including 'no-just-joking' policies on workplace sexism, paid domestic violence leave and safety plans for victims.<sup>47</sup>

Non-governmental, community-focused and grassroots organisations are also critical to combating violence against women in local communities and driving meaningful change from the bottom up.

For these organisations in the Pacific, UN Women's Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (the Pacific Fund), supported by the Australian Government, has produced Toolkit to provide practical, user-friendly resources, materials and guidance for developing and implementing successful projects at combat violence against women in the Pacific region.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to practical guidance and capacity-building, the Pacific Fund provides grants to community organisations of between \$10 000 and \$100 000 for programmes that aim to assist victims of violence against women and reduce its prevalence.

## INDIVIDUALS: EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR WOMEN

We all need to participate in the public discourse of how to address violence against women. Keeping silent and allowing domestic violence to go unremarked and unreported is a huge part of the problem.

An overwhelming proportion of cases of violence against women go unreported. Victims stay silent for fear of shame, isolation and retaliation. Those who may be aware of violence do not speak up because it has historically been a private issue, accepted as normal by society, and many in society continue to place blame on victims for provoking the violence.<sup>49</sup>

But this is not a private issue, and violence is never the fault of the victim. We must all be advocates for the eradication of violence against women – whether we are men or women.

*“I’m inviting you to step forward, to be seen, and to ask yourself ... If not me, who? If not now, when?”*

– Emma Watson, UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador

Participation in campaigns such as HeForShe plays an important role. A solidarity movement for gender equality, HeForShe invites men and women to pledge their support for equality and stand up for women’s rights. The more we talk about these issues and condemn violence against women, the more we create a world in which gender inequality and gender-based violence is unacceptable.

However, while advocacy is important, it is not enough. Part of the reason efforts to combat violence against women have not resulted in a world where women can live free of the fear of violence is because there is not enough investment in finding a solution.

What is needed in the fight against violence against women in the Asia Pacific is investment. In Australia we are lucky. We have resources that we can (and are beginning to) allocate to eliminate violence against women. Our neighbours are not as fortunate: the Asia Pacific is characterised by developing economies which simply do not have the resources to address the issue.

*“Women in the Pacific experience violence in staggeringly high rates - in countries that often don’t have the resources to support victims or invest in longer-term violence prevention activities. Our help can make a significant difference in the lives of women experiencing violence.”*

– Elizabeth Shaw, Australian National Committee for UN Women President

Across PNG and the Pacific, UN Women delivers essential services to survivors of violence, and implements best-practice violence prevention programs – keeping women and children safe from harm. This includes:

- Shelters
- Counselling
- Vocational training/education/support with career pathways to achieve financial independence and escape domestic violence
- Prevention and education programs to change attitudes and promote healthy, respectful relationships
- Activating influential leaders, from village chiefs to faith community leaders, to model zero tolerance to violence

What’s more, UN Women activates systems change, such as introducing Family Violence Laws criminalising domestic violence; supporting police and judicial officials to understand and support survivors of gender-based violence.

UN Women integrates a bottom-up and top-down approach to maximise transformative change to make communities safer, create long-lasting community-owned solutions and changes to attitudes and behaviours, for good.

Examples of UN Women projects and policy solutions made possible through the generous support of Australian donors include:

### 1 Medical and mental health care for survivors of sexual and family violence.

Lae, Papua New Guinea (PNG) is dubbed PNG’s most dangerous city due to its high crime rate, driven in part by it being situated on the main transit zone connecting the seven Highlands provinces to the Momase region. Rates of violence against women are sky-high. Through UN Women’s support, Lae-area survivors of rape receive medical care, counselling, Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP – to prevent HIV) and referrals to safe houses to access immediate shelter and safety; and referrals to police for legal intervention and prosecution of perpetrators so the cycle of violence may be broken. These essential services are critical to women getting immediate psychosocial/medical care and accessing justice.

### 2 Mobilising youth as agents of change.

In the Solomon Islands, more than half of the population is under the age of 24 and most live in rural areas. Community workshops and student-led drama performances have been introduced to raise awareness about violence against women and girls, promote healthy and respectful relationships and advance attitudinal change.

### 3 Hotline & access to justice.

In Samoa, a hotline and community alert system staffed by volunteers has significantly increased women and girl survivors’ access to shelter, counselling and justice. The newly introduced 24-hour hotline has immediately provided intervention and support preventing suicide and connecting increasing numbers of children survivors of violence to safe houses and protection orders, in many cases leading to justice, with perpetrators being prosecuted and put behind bars.

Projects like these save lives, and they are not possible without the generous support of Australian donors. Please help UN Women to make a real difference to women in our region by making your tax-deductible donation today to [www.unwomen.org.au](http://www.unwomen.org.au). Every dollar makes a difference.

“Just because domestic violence is a big, complicated problem it doesn’t mean we should overlook the small steps each of us can take to prevent it.

– Senator Marise Payne, Minister for Defence (then Minister for Human Services)

## REFERENCES

- 1 World Health Organization, ‘Violence against women: A “global health problem of epidemic proportions”’ (Media Release, 20 June 2013).
- 2 United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women and Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, ‘Combating Gender-Based Violence: A Key to Achieving the MDGs’ (March 2005).
- 3 World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and South African Medical Research Council, ‘Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence’ (World Health Organization, 2013) 35.
- 4 World Health Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and United Nations Development Programme, ‘Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014’ (World Health Organization, 2014) 10.
- 5 Asian Development Bank, ‘Ending violence against women in Asia and the Pacific’ (Article, 28 March 2014).
- 6 Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘Personal Safety, Australia’ (Cat No. 4906.0, 2012).
- 7 Tracy Cussen and Willow Bryant, ‘Domestic/Family homicide in Australia’ (Research in Practice Paper No. 38, Australian Institute of Criminology, May 2015).
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘Personal Safety, Australia’ (Cat No. 4906.0, 2012).
- 9 Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘Personal Safety, Australia’ (Cat No. 4906.0, 2012).
- 10 World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and South African Medical Research Council, ‘Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence’ (World Health Organization, 2013) 16, 20.
- 11 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers, 2013).
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Vanuatu Women’s Centre and Vanuatu National Statistics Office, ‘Vanuatu National Survey on Women’s Lives and Family Relationships’ (2011).
- 14 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers, 2013).
- 15 Enrique Grazia, ‘Unreported cases of domestic violence against women: Towards and epidemiology of social silence, tolerance and inhibition’ (2004) 58 *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 536, 536.
- 16 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers, 2013).
- 17 Vanuatu Women’s Centre and Vanuatu National Statistics Office, ‘Vanuatu National Survey on Women’s Lives and Family Relationships’ (2011).
- 18 Vanuatu Women’s Centre and Vanuatu National Statistics Office, ‘Vanuatu National Survey on Women’s Lives and Family Relationships’ (2011).
- 19 World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and South African Medical Research Council, ‘Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence’ (World Health Organization, 2013) 8, 21-30; Rochelle Braaf and Isobelle Barrett Meyering, ‘Domestic violence and mental health’ (Fast Facts Paper 10, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, May 2013).
- 20 Janet Phillips and Penny Vandebroek, ‘Domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia: An overview of the issues’ (Research Paper Series 2014-15, Parliamentary Library, 14 October 2014).
- 21 National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, KPMG ‘The Cost of Violence Against Women and their Children’ (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2009).
- 22 Liz Forsyth, ‘Cost of violence against women’ (Paper delivered at White Ribbon International Conference, Sydney, 13-15 May 2015).
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 See, eg, Tanis Day, Katherine McKenna and Audra Bowlus, ‘The economic costs of violence against women: An evaluation of the literature’ (Expert brief compiled for the United Nations, 2005).
- 25 Nata Duvvury, Patricia Carney and Nguyen Huu Minh, ‘Estimating the Costs of Domestic Violence Against Women in Viet Nam’ (UN Women Viet Nam, 2012).
- 26 Ludo McFerran and Inara Walden, ‘Keeping women safe at work: Why domestic violence is a workplace issue’ (2012) 21 *Human Rights Defender* 15.
- 27 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers, 2013).
- 28 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, GA Res 48/104, UN GAOR, 48th sess, 85th plen mtg, Agenda Item 111, Un Doc A/RES/48/104 (20 December 1993).
- 29 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and UN Volunteers, 2013).
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV, 2013).
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, ‘Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women’ (Report of the Expert Group Meeting, Vienna, 17 to 20 May 2005).
- 37 Rosa Logar, ‘The Austrian model of intervention in domestic violence cases’ (Expert paper prepared for the UN Division of Advancement of Women Expert Group Meeting on Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women, Vienna, 17 to 20 May 2005).
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 UN Women, World Future Council and Inter-Parliamentary Union, ‘Ending violence against women and girls: The world’s best laws and policies’ (Future Policy Award, 2014).
- 43 Asian Development Bank, ‘Legislating Gender Equality: Support for law and policy reforms’ (ADB Experiences Publication No. TIM146448, June 2014).
- 44 Asian Development Bank, ‘Empowering Women in Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines’ (Project Result Case Study, 27 March 2013).
- 45 Asian Development Bank, ‘Legislating Gender Equality: Support for law and policy reforms’ (ADB Experiences Publication No. TIM146448, June 2014).
- 46 Emma Fulu et al, ‘Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific’ (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV, 2013).
- 47 Australian Human Rights Commission, ‘Fact Sheet: Domestic violence and family violence – a workplace issue, a discrimination issue’ (Fact Sheet, 2014).
- 48 Australian Aid, UN Women, ‘How to design projects to end violence against women and girls: A step-by-step guide to taking action’ (UN Women Pacific, 2015), accessible at <[http://www.unwomen.org/~media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2015/01/pacificfund\\_brief\\_sept30.pdf?v=1&d=20150113T075820](http://www.unwomen.org/~media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2015/01/pacificfund_brief_sept30.pdf?v=1&d=20150113T075820)>.
- 49 Elizabeth Shrader and Monserrat Sagot, Domestic violence: women’s way out (Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization, 2000).



## STAY CONNECTED

[www.unwomen.org.au](http://www.unwomen.org.au)



Follow us @unwomenaust



Like UN Women Australia



Subscribe to the UN Women Australia Channel



Join our group



View our photostream



Follow us @unwomenaust



Follow the Australian National Committee for UN Women

GPO Box 2824, Canberra ACT 2601

Tel (02) 6173 3222

Email: [admin@unwomen.org.au](mailto:admin@unwomen.org.au)

ABN: 23 638 729 775