



## **ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TO ACCELERATE GENDER EQUALITY**

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### **OVERVIEW**

**Gender-based Violence (GBV) is the most egregious manifestation of gender inequality and an alarming global public health, human rights and development challenge.** It is most often perpetrated against women and girls. One in three women worldwide —equivalent to 736 million women— have suffered intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence from a non-partner in their lifetime (WHO 2021). Socio-cultural factors, such as unequal gender norms and stereotypes, contribute to condoning violence and harmful practices against women and girls. GBV takes many forms, each yoked with physical and mental health consequences, as well as economic impacts, for survivors, their children, and society as a whole.

**Evidence-based solutions are available to inform how to effectively prevent and respond to GBV.** Drawing on the growing global evidence base, the note examines the effectiveness of various GBV prevention and response measures in low and middle-income countries. Promising approaches include community-based programs aiming to transform behaviors and attitudes, economic and social empowerment, parenting and couple's support, health worker outreach, and school-based programs. The World Bank supports governments and private sector partners in strengthening systems and service delivery for survivor care, creating safer public and workspaces, collecting and analyzing data, and addressing gaps in policy frameworks and implementation across a broad range of sectors.

This note reviews available data and evidence on GBV, outlines promising approaches, and presents strategic and operational recommendations. The following key messages serve as a call-to-action to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and organizations seeking to eradicate GBV:

- GBV prevention and response clear the path to reach development goals, including gender equality.
- Institutionalizing GBV prevention and response across sectors, supported by adequate financing, can help prevent violence. Investments in technical expertise are essential.
- Collaboration and coordination with international and national partners as well as the private sector are critical for inclusive, sustainable, and deeper engagements. Supporting national coordinating bodies can enhance an effective and coherent multi-sectoral approach.

- GBV has significant impact upon businesses. Working with the private sector is critical in mitigating risks, particularly of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH), shifting social norms, particularly those based on discrimination, and addressing GBV in the world of work.
- It is critical to invest in monitoring and evaluation to measure progress and ensure results, while continuing to build the evidence base to expand knowledge on effective approaches across sectors.
- All stakeholders must uphold the principles of safety and ethics in all instances when working to address GBV.



SEPTEMBER 2023



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. DEEPENING EVIDENCE BASE TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GBV	5
3. LESSONS FROM WORLD BANK OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE	10
4. LOOKING AHEAD: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS GBV	17
RESOURCES	19
REFERENCES	20
ANNEX 1. RESPECT FRAMEWORK AND ITS EVIDENCE-BASE	24
ANNEX 2. SELECTED EVIDENCE ON GBV-RELATED INTERVENTIONS BY THE WORLD BANK	27

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This thematic policy note is part of [a series](#) that provides an analytical foundation for the World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2024–2030). This series seeks to give a broad overview of the latest research and findings on gender equality outcomes and summarizes key thematic issues, evidence on promising solutions, operational good practices, and key areas for future engagement in promoting gender equality and empowerment. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work are entirely those of the author(s). They do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank or its Board of Directors.

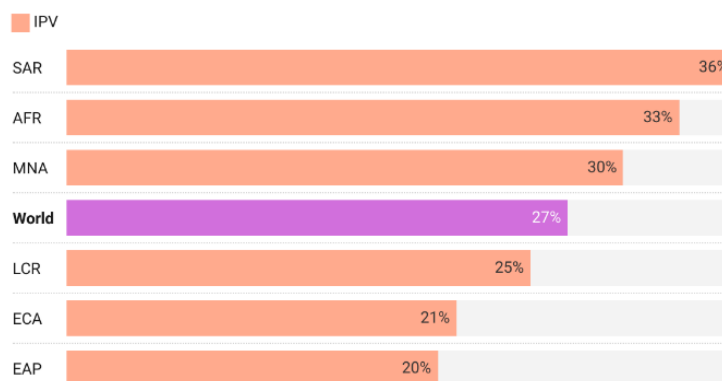
This thematic policy note was written by a World Bank task team led by Mirai Maruo and Diana Arango and including Ariana Maria Del Mar Grossi and Manuel Contreras-Urbina. The team thanks Benedicte Leroy De La Briere, Patricia Fernandes, and Niyati Shah for their helpful peer-review comments and Louise J. Cord, Anastasia Gekis, Maninder S. Gill, Iffath Sharif, Juan Pablo Uribe, Ana Luiza Almeida E Silva, Andrea Cullinan, Daniela Greco, Shabnam Hameed, Paolo Lombardo, Maria Beatriz Orlando and Laura Rawlings, for their valuable input.





**Gender based violence (GBV)<sup>1</sup> is a global epidemic.** Deeply rooted in unequal power relations, GBV remains the most oppressive manifestation of gender inequality. It is most often perpetrated against women and girls. GBV comes in many forms,<sup>2</sup> but intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence remain especially pervasive across economies, cultures, ethnicities, socio-economic groups, and age groups. Figure 1 shows that one in three women worldwide—equivalent to 736 million women—experience IPV or sexual violence from a non-partner in their lifetime (WHO 2021). Some regions and countries have higher lifetime prevalence IPV rates, such as Pacific small island states, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>3</sup> but no country is immune to GBV. Nearly 12 million girls are married each year before reaching the age 18 (UNICEF 2022), and at least 200 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation in 31 countries with representative data on prevalence (UNICEF 2023). Women and girls also represent more than 70 percent of detected trafficking victims, most being trafficked for sexual exploitation (UNODC 2018).

**FIGURE 1. LIFETIME IPV PREVALENCE ESTIMATES FOR WOMEN AGES 15–49 ACROSS WORLD BANK REGIONS (NATIONAL ESTIMATES 2000–2018 FROM 161 COUNTRIES)**



Source: Data from Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence Against Women (WHO)

<sup>1</sup> Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially-ascribed (i.e., gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private (2015 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender-based Violence Guidelines).

<sup>2</sup> GBV takes various forms. Intimate partner violence (IPV), which is physical, sexual, and/or emotional violence perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner, continues to be one of the most common forms of GBV globally. Other forms of GBV include harmful traditional practices, early and forced marriage, denial of resources, services and opportunities, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/FGC), forced prostitution, murder in the name of so-called honor, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. There are also emerging types of GBV, such as technology-facilitated violence (also known as online violence).

<sup>3</sup> Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia have the highest lifetime prevalence rate for IPV at 51 percent, 41 percent, and 39 percent, respectively. As a region, Southern Asia has the highest IPV prevalence rate at 35 percent, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (33 percent) and Northern Africa (30 percent). While the global average is at 27 percent, least developed countries have 10 percentage point higher prevalence at 37 percent (WHO, 2021).



**GBV is a major barrier to building human capital.** GBV has far-reaching negative implications for survivors, their families, and society as a whole. GBV is linked to negative health consequences for survivors, including injuries, mental health problems, a higher rate of substance abuse, and poorer sexual and reproductive health outcomes (Ellsberg et al. 2008; WHO 2021). Safety concerns about getting to and from school may affect girls' enrollment and choice for education in some cultural settings (Gennari et al. 2014; Borker 2022). A World Bank study finds that more women than men in Delhi would choose a lower quintile college to feel safer while traveling (Borker 2021). GBV can also lead to poor school performance and may ultimately lead girls to dropout (UNESCO and UNGEI 2015), heightening girls' vulnerability to future forms of GBV, including IPV, but also early child marriage and early childbearing, among others (Wodon et al. 2018). Some studies show a correlation between higher educational attainment and lesser IPV risks (Ibid 2018). Femicide, gender-motivated killings of women and girls, is the most striking example of human capital loss. The UN estimates that only in 2021 around 45,000 women and girls around the world have been killed by their intimate partners or other family members (UNODC 2022).

**GBV can impede women's access to paid work and employment, their productivity at work, and their retention in the labor market.** Fear of sexual harassment in public spaces impacts the mobility of women and girls.

It reduces their ability to participate in school, work, and public life and can directly influence women's choice for education and earning options (Borker 2022). In the workplace, GBV can affect safety and well-being, leading to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher cost on employee turnover (IFC 2019). More than one in five (22.8 per cent or 743 million) persons in employment are said to have experienced at least one form of violence and harassment at work during their working life, and women are particularly exposed to sexual violence and sexual harassment at work (ILO 2022). A study that monitored the impact of assaults on women by co-workers finds that such violence results in an overall decline of women employees in a company because fewer new women are hired, and current women employees leave (Adams-Praschl et al. 2022). Inaction against GBV translates into financial and investment risk for businesses (IFC 2020).

**GBV incurs high economic costs.** GBV is associated with lower levels of social cohesion and lost economic outputs for individuals and businesses (Raghavendra et al. 2017; Adams-Praschl et al. 2022). A study from Sub-Saharan Africa suggests that higher levels of violence against women and girls are associated with lower economic development: an increase in the share of women subject to violence by 1 percentage point can reduce economic activities by up to 8.7 percent (Ouedraogo and Stenzel 2021). Another study reveals that women who were in an abusive relationship saw their employment rates fall 12 percent and their



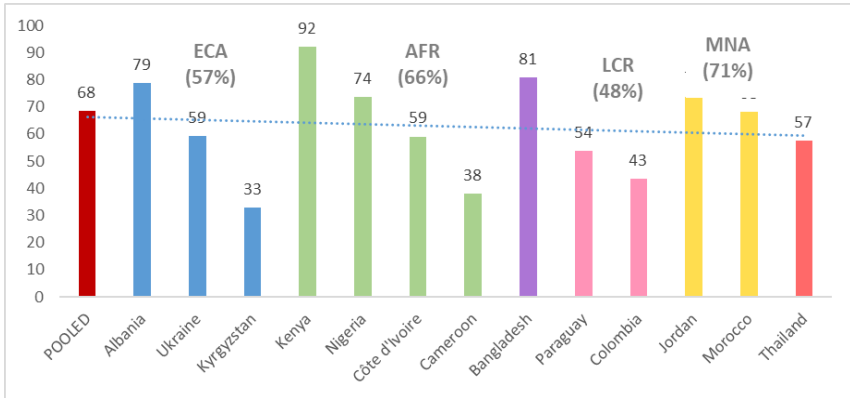
earnings decline by 26 percent, when matched against similar women with non-abusive partners (Nix 2023). A similar decline in earnings was reported by a study in India: women lose an average of at least five paid workdays for each IPV incident, reducing their salary in at least 25 percent each time an incident of violence occurs (UN Women 2016). A World Bank study estimated the costs of IPV across five countries to run from 1.2 percent to 3.7 percent of GDP, which is equivalent to what many governments spend on primary education (Klugman et al. 2014).

**There are many uncalculated costs of GBV in terms of inter-generational impacts and uncouned survivors due to under-reporting.** Reasons to not report instances of GBV include fear, stigma, shame, unfamiliarity with reporting mechanisms or limited awareness of rights, or a lack of quality services that do not provide survivors adequate safety, confidentiality, respect, or non-discrimination. Available data from 44 countries indicate that almost half of women who have experienced violence never sought help (World Bank 2022-a). An analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data from 24 countries reveals that only 7 percent of women experiencing GBV reported to a formal service (Palermo 2013). In India, for example, less than one-fourth of women who had experienced some form of GBV sought help, and only 1 percent sought help from a formal institution (Krishnakumar 2021). Even when legal frameworks and justice services are available, survivors

may refrain from using the formal channels to report (GWI, IDLO 2022), choosing to rather approach community or family members to stop the violence.

**Conflicts and human-made or natural crisis situations pose additional GBV risks to women and girls.** For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to increased GBV across regions (see Figure 2). Many countries reported surges in GBV helpline calls during the pandemic, ranging from a 40 percent increase in Malaysia to 400 percent in Tunisia (UN Women 2021). In Indonesia, 83 percent of phone survey respondents reported an increase in IPV in their communities due to the pandemic and related restrictions on mobility (Halim et al. 2020). An online survey in India demonstrated a rise in domestic violence during the early stages of the COVID-19 lockdown, pointing to increased stress and intra-household tensions (Abel et al. 2020). In Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Indonesia, survivors faced challenges in accessing shelters, helplines, and psycho-social services due to operational disruptions, resource shortages, and fear of COVID-19 health risks (UN Women 2021). A systematic review of GBV prevalence studies in contexts of violence and fragility finds that IPV, physical violence, and rape were measured most frequently and that IPV remains the most common form of violence in emergencies (Stark et al. 2011). In Colombia and Liberia, women faced 40 and 55 percent greater odds, respectively, of experiencing past-year IPV compared to non-displaced women (Arango et al. 2021).

**FIGURE 2. WOMEN WHO REPORTED THAT PHYSICAL OR VERBAL ABUSE BY A SPOUSE/PARTNER INCREASED IN THEIR COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (%), BY REGION**



Source: Data from Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence Against Women (WHO)

**Reports from climate and natural disaster experiences across the globe also illustrate compounded vulnerability of women and girls during and after such events** (Anastario et al. 2009; Fisher 2010; GBV AoR 2022; Gennari et al. 2015; Harville et al. 2011; Horton 2012; Schumacher et al. 2010; Weitzman et al. 2016). Natural resource scarcity and associated economic stresses can also trigger coerced use of transactional sex or child marriage as coping strategies (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020).

**This thematic policy note presents a suite of data points and evidence to show that eliminating GBV is not only possible, but it is an ethical and development imperative, and smart economics.** As GBV reflects power inequalities between men and women, preventing, reducing and responding to such violence has direct impact to building and protecting human capital, promoting economic empowerment, and enhancing women's leadership, voice, and agency. Social and economic disadvantages and other forms of discrimination (e.g. disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, etc.) also exacerbate the risk of being exposed to GBV.

**To produce this note, a review of systematic reviews of global evidence on interventions to respond and prevent GBV was conducted.** Despite limitations and constraints to comparing data using different methodologies, these reviews uncovered areas of interventions that are effective in reducing and preventing violence, as well as those that are less so. They also revealed evidence gaps that need to be addressed to provide further insights. This note examines these findings as well as lessons learned from select World Bank programs and projects. Since 2013, the World Bank's portfolio of GBV-focused operations has grown from 38 to 390 projects and programs. Taken together, this growing body of knowledge and operational experience sheds light on promising measures that governments, development partners, and private sector entities can adopt to address GBV across a broad range of sectors.

## 2. DEEPENING EVIDENCE BASE TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO GBV



### **Quality data is essential for designing effective policies.**

Donors and development organizations have invested in collecting reliable data to shed light on the forms, risks, and consequences of violence and help inform effective policies and solutions. Representative population-based data for 55 low and middle-income countries using a standardized module measuring violence against women and girls are available and have been incorporated as an optional module within the international Demographic and Health Survey Program (World Bank 2021).<sup>4</sup> At present, the WHO Global Database on GBV includes data of 161 countries and areas confirming that violence against women is a common, persistent and important social problem (WHO 2021). In 2014, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division released [Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women—Statistical Surveys](#), with the aim of supporting countries to invest in methodological sound, safe and ethical mechanisms for collecting scope, prevalence, and incidence data on violence against women (United Nations 2014).

**Data collected by GBV service providers on reported cases can help understand the type and nature of violence** (World Bank 2021). These administrative data are important input for improving both prevention and response investment allocation decisions. Administrative data can also be an important source of information for monitoring the quality of police, judicial, health and social services and assessing unmet needs. They can help inform the next generation of policies and procedures to respond to GBV (UN Women 2022). [Improving the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on Violence Against Women](#) released by the UN Women and WHO provides guidance on improving the collection and use of administrative data related to violence against women.

**Over the past decades, GBV practitioners and researchers have built a solid evidence base of tested interventions and rigorous evaluations of potentially scalable solutions.** This includes What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls ([What Works](#)), [Spotlight Initiative](#) launched by the European Union and the UN in 2017 and the world's largest network on GBV prevention and response led by the Sexual Violence Research Initiatives (SVRI). In addition, in 2019

RESPECT, a framework for policymakers, was developed based on the UN framework for action to prevent violence against women and updated new evidence. The [RESPECT framework](#) presents seven strategies to prevent and respond violence against women.

**A review of global evidence reveals the following types of programs are successful when designed and executed well** (Kerr-Wilson et al. 2020; Ellsberg et al. 2015; WHO/UNWOMEN 2020): combined economic and social empowerment programs targeting women, parenting programs, couple's interventions to shift gender norms, and school-based interventions to prevent dating and peer violence. Core elements of well-designed and well-implemented interventions that have yielded positive results are, among others, rigorous planning with a robust theory of change; tackling multiple drivers of GBV, such as gender inequality and poverty, working with women and men, and when relevant, families; and optimizing training to ensure staff and volunteers have gender-equitable attitudes (Jewkes et al. 2021).

**There is also good evidence that some one-off, standalone programs are not effective at reducing violence**, such as brief bystander interventions, stand-alone awareness campaigns, brief counseling and safety planning for pregnant women, and social marketing campaigns (Kerr-Wilson et al. 2020). Overall, interventions focused on strategies that do not follow a gender approach or address the main roots of GBV have not shown effectiveness to reduce this type of violence.

**Despite the important progress in the last decades in knowledge development, there are still many research gaps.** The field of GBV and the larger field of violence prevention would benefit from closing research gaps around evidence on how to adapt proven models to prevent GBV in different contexts, such as conflict and humanitarian and indigenous communities. There are also gaps in how to implement GBV actions in various sectors that are not commonly involved in the GBV field, such as energy, water, and agriculture. Another important research gap is to understand better the situation of some under researched types of violence, such as trafficking, sexual harassment in institutional settings, violence against elders,

<sup>4</sup> <https://dhsprogram.com/>





among others. Finally, more research is needed to better understand how childhood exposure to violence, gender socialization, masculine identity issues, peer influence, and parenting impact on different types of GBV.

**The crucial role the private sector can play in mitigating GBV risks in the workplace and shifting community-based social norms cannot be overlooked.** Key global standards underpinning private sector efforts to address GBV, such as the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [ILO Convention No. 190](#) (Violence and Harassment Convention 2019), help elevate the private sector efforts. A review of case studies that feature 14 organizations from countries across Asia and the Pacific region finds the following elements are some of the most effective in responding to the impact of IPV in the workplace (UN Women 2019): demonstrated leadership commitment

to gender equality and intolerance of violence, the safety of employees at work, and access to support; awareness raising and support for community prevention efforts; and dedicated financial and human resources to address violence. A series of studies undertaken by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank, to understand workplace responses to violence in [Fiji](#), [Myanmar](#), [Papua New Guinea](#) and [Solomon Islands](#) also illustrates ways in which the private sector can meaningfully contribute to GBV prevention, mitigation and response.

Table 1 consolidates selected evidence relevant to World Bank-financed GBV operations and classifies the effectiveness of interventions into three categories derived from What Works and RESPECT methodologies:<sup>5</sup> Effective (interventions that systematic reviews of evidence conclude to be either effective or promising), Emerging (interventions

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<sup>5</sup> The classification of the effectiveness of intervention categories, typically based on randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies, differ by reviewers. What Works classifies projects into four categories: Effective (at least two high or moderate quality impact evaluations, using randomized control trials and/or quasi-experimental designs, have found statistically significant reductions in physical IPV, sexual IPV, or non-partner sexual violence), Promising (one high or moderate quality impact evaluations has found statistically significant reductions), Conflicting (evidence from different high-quality studies show conflicting results on one or more domains) and No effect (at least two high or moderate quality impact evaluations have found no significant reductions). RESPECT applies evidence ratings derived from systematic reviews of evaluations of interventions the majority of which use experimental designs including randomized, cluster randomized and quasi-experimental methods. RESPECT classifies projects into five categories: Promising (more than one evaluation shows significant reductions in violence outcomes), More evidence needed (more than one evaluation shows improvements in intermediate outcomes related to violence), Conflicting (evaluations show conflicting results on violence outcomes), No evidence (intervention not yet rigorously evaluated), and Ineffective (more than one evaluation show no reduction in violence outcomes).

that systematic reviews of evidence conclude to have either conflicting or no evidence) and Less Promising (interventions that systematic reviews of evidence conclude to have no effect or be ineffective). It is followed by a more detailed discussion of “effective” program areas with examples of projects and programs implemented by development partners around the world. Annex 1 provides a more comprehensive list of the evidence base for the RESPECT framework.

### Economic empowerment programs combined with social empowerment components

There are a variety of ways to combine economic and social empowerment. In Uganda, the [Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescent \(ELA\)](#) provided adolescent girls vocational training along with life skills training, which

covered the topics of sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy, family planning, child marriage, and violence against women. Results of randomized controlled trials demonstrate that these programs lead to a reduction in girls’ reported cases of forced sex (Bandiera 2020). In Tanzania, a cluster randomized controlled trial compared women who received microfinance to those who received microfinance and 10-sessions of gender-transformative training. Results show that the women who received both financing and training were less likely to report physical IPV and less likely to express attitudes accepting IPV (Kapiga et al. 2019). Several randomized controlled trials of economic empowerment programs delivered alongside social empowerment interventions demonstrate good evidence of violence reduction; however, there are knowledge gaps on how effective such interventions would be in conflict

**TABLE 1: WHAT WORKS (AND WHAT DOES NOT) IN RESPONDING TO AND PREVENTING GBV**

Effective	Emerging	Less Promising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic empowerment programs combined with social empowerment interventions for women</li> <li>Economic transfer programs, especially combined with social components</li> <li>Parenting programs (i.e., sessions on improving parenting skills, gender norms around children and pregnancy)</li> <li>Couples’ interventions to promote egalitarian attitudes and relationships</li> <li>Psychological support for children who experience violence and witness IPV</li> <li>School-based interventions (i.e., school curriculum, prevention training on dating/peer violence)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-stop centers</li> <li>Cognitive behavior therapy-based interventions with pregnant women</li> <li>Infrastructure and transport upgrading</li> <li>Whole school interventions<sup>6</sup></li> <li>Legislative and justice sector responses (i.e., better legislation, training of judges and police, provision of coordinated emergency services)</li> <li>Self-defense interventions for women to prevent sexual violence at college</li> <li>Economic and social empowerment programs targeting men</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standalone<sup>7</sup> awareness raising campaigns or single component communications campaigns</li> <li>Standalone brief counselling and safety planning for pregnant women</li> <li>Microfinance, savings, and livelihood programs without any additional components addressing root-causes of GBV</li> <li>Standalone brief bystander intervention</li> <li>Interventions for perpetrators (also known as batterer intervention programs)</li> </ul>

**Sources:** The Lancet Journal on [Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say?](#) (Ellsberg et al. 2015), [A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls](#) (Kerr-Wilson et al. 2020), [RESPECT framework strategy summary](#) (WHO/UNWOMEN 2020), and [Gender Equality & Development – Interventions to prevent or reduce violence against women and girls: a systematic review of reviews](#) (Arango et al. 2014).

<sup>6</sup> ‘Whole school’ interventions are usually referred to as those that go beyond the teacher/facilitator–student learning interactions to engage the wider school and/or others – such as parents or school governing bodies (Kerr-Wilson et al. 2020).

<sup>7</sup> ‘Standalone’ means these interventions are not as part of multi-component approaches.





settings (Kerr-Wilson 2020).

### Economic transfer and social protection programs

Economic transfer programs are designed to address economic insecurity and poverty-related stress factors. They have the potential to decrease violence by improving psychological well-being, addressing key stressors, and increasing women's bargaining power in relationships (Ibid 2020). Evaluations of food, cash and vouchers programs in Ecuador and Bangladesh show that even if reducing IPV was not the primary objective, women who received transfers with nutrition trainings experienced less IPV (Hidrobo 2016; Roy 2019; UN Women and Social Development Direct 2020). A randomized controlled trial of a conditional cash transfer in South Africa shows that participants who received the cash transfer were significantly less likely to report experiencing partner physical violence in the past 12 months (Pettifor et al. 2016). In contrast, two studies on the effects of conditional cash transfers on GBV in the Philippines and Brazil find no significant impacts on the rates of IPV and femicide, respectively (Dervisevic 2022; Litwin 2019). A mixed-method review of cash transfer programs in low and middle-income countries suggests that, in general, economic transfers do not increase rates of IPV. Program framing and complementary activities, such as interventions aimed at shifting intra-household power relations, are likely to be important design features for understanding how to maximize and leverage the impact

of cash transfers for reducing IPV and mitigating potential adverse impacts (Buller 2018).

### Parenting programs

Parenting programs typically aim to improve interactions between parents and children, promote better parenting skills, and enhance relationships between parents and children (The Prevention Collaborative 2019). The Responsible, Engaged, and Loving ([REAL Fathers program in Uganda](#)) provided mentoring to young fathers raising children ages 1–3 years to promote non-violent parenting and intimate partner relationships. A program evaluation indicates significant reductions in men's reported IPV at the end of the program and over the longer term, as well as significant reductions in physical child punishment at long-term follow up (Ashburn 2017). In Rwanda, the [Bandeberaho program](#) involved group sessions for expecting fathers and their partners to reflect on inequitable gender norms and behaviors. An evaluation of the program shows lower reported physical and sexual IPV cases and higher level of men's participation in childcare and household tasks (Doyle 2018). Combined IPV prevention and parenting initiatives hold potential for improving the overall well-being of families.

### Promoting egalitarian attitudes and relationships

Inequitable gender norms and beliefs are underlying drivers

of GBV. Promoting positive attitudes and relationships around men and women is critical. In Rwanda, the [Indashyikirwa program](#) sought to reduce levels of IPV and improve the response to survivors (Stern and Carlson 2019). An evaluation of the program's gender transformative curriculum for couples reveals it reduced both women's reported experiences and men's reported perpetration of violence. It also reduced the acceptability of wife beating, conflict between partners, depression, and corporal punishment against children, among other aspects of GBV (Dunkle et al. 2020).

## School-based interventions

Educational institutions provide space to engage students, teachers and parents on gender relations. Curriculum, policies, and peer interactions can help transform views and interactions. [The Good School Toolkit](#) aims to reduce violence perpetrated by school staff against children by building a positive school environment and positive relationships among students and authority figures. A randomized controlled trial of the program in Uganda shows that it reduced children's risk of experiencing physical violence by school staff by 42 percent over 18 months of implementation as well as it reduced emotional and physical peer violence (Devries et al. 2015; Devries et al. 2018). Using sport and play, [Right to Play](#) is another school-based program designed to reduce peer violence and corporal punishment, improve mental health, and change social norms in support of gender equality and non-violence (Kerr-Wilson 2018). A cluster-randomized controlled trial of the program implemented in Pakistan shows significant reductions in several types of violence, among other positive results (Karmaliani et al. 2020).

### 3. LESSONS FROM WORLD BANK OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE



The World Bank's 2012 World Development Report (WDR 2012), [Gender Equality and Development](#), established gender equality as a core development objective. It cited domestic violence as a clear manifestation of lack of agency for women and girls. It also stressed the need to put laws in place, shift norms and behaviors around IPV, and provide timely and quality assistance to survivors (World Bank 2012). In the same year, the World Bank's private sector arm, International Finance Corporation (IFC), updated its [Sustainability Framework](#) (first launched in April 2006) that strengthened its mechanisms to mitigate gender-related risks and unintended impacts from business activities across all stakeholders, with the goal of sustainable development impact. It also further developed the original (2006) GBV-related performance standards focusing on non-discrimination, equal opportunities, community health, safety, and security issues (IFC 2012). This work helped pave a way forward for an increasing focus on GBV in the private sector. The IFC Performance Standards have been widely adopted by over 140 Equator Principles financial institutions in 39 countries, providing a broad global platform for addressing GBV as core business.

Since the WDR 2012, the World Bank has embarked on a journey to bring GBV prevention and response to the forefront of the institution's agenda (see Figure 3). Each replenishment cycle of the International Development Association (IDA) has continued to increase ambition since IDA17, when addressing GBV was discussed in the context of fragile, conflict and violent (FCV) settings. IDA18 prompted more operations in FCV countries and areas to engage GBV prevention and response through access to essential services and livelihood support activities. IDA19 promoted system-wide approaches in health and education sectors. IDA20 looks to strengthen national policy frameworks to address GBV, while continuing to enhance health response services and implementing GBV prevention and response protocols as part of safe and inclusive educational institutions. These policy commitments have helped spur activities to prevent and respond to violence as part of IDA lending operations and in line with the World Bank's [Gender Strategy](#), which was first launched in 2015.



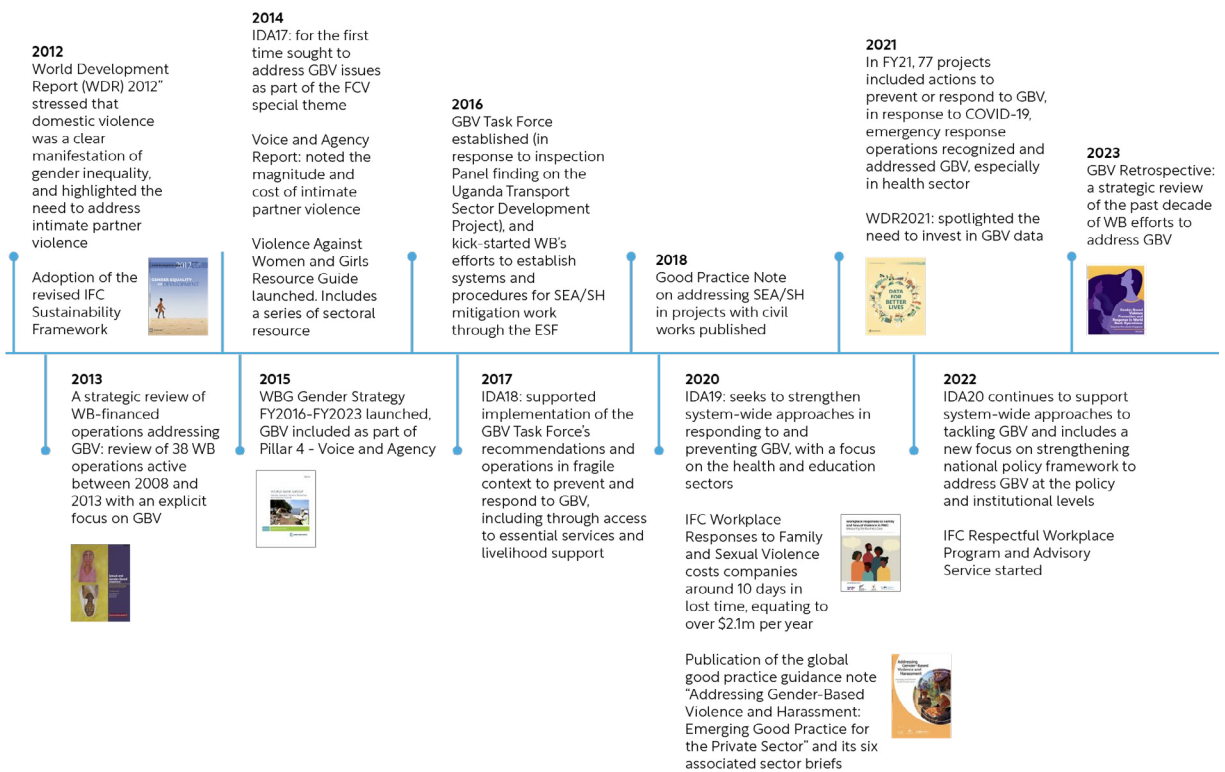


In parallel, as part of the [Environmental and Social Framework](#) and its Vision for Sustainable Development, the World Bank has systematized practices and procedures for mitigating sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) risks, prompted by the Inspection Panel cases in [Uganda](#) and the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#). All investment project financing operations with major civil works and/or human development projects conduct SEA/SH risk screenings and put in place appropriate risk-mitigation measures proportional to the assessed level of risk (World Bank 2020-a; World Bank 2022-b) while IFC applies systematic GBV risk assessment and appropriate measures to all investments since 2019.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the World Bank has established a [disqualification mechanism for contractors](#) who do not comply with SEA/SH contractual provisions to circumvent project-induced SEA/SH risks (World Bank 2020-b). These practices present windows to engage clients on conversations relating to GBV prevention and response.

The World Bank has also made investments in its own technical expertise. It added dedicated GBV Specialists in relevant units of the organization, developed capacity building for staff, and published the [Violence Against Women and Girls Resource Guide Series](#). This guidance helps World Bank staff identify entry points to address GBV at policy, institutional, and community levels across sectors and operations.

**This focus on GBV prevention and response as a central development issue has resulted in a tenfold increase in World Bank operations that address GBV, extending to every sector and region.** In 2013, a strategic review of World Bank lending operations identified 38 active operations with an explicit focus on GBV prevention or response (Willman 2013). Since then, the portfolio has expanded significantly to reach 390 operations in the past ten years. They all contribute to GBV prevention and response efforts by attacking the problem from multiple angles (see Table 2).<sup>9</sup>

**FIGURE 3. EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD BANK'S GBV AGENDA**



**Source:** Updated table taken from the Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in World Bank Operations: Taking Stock After a Decade of Engagement (2012-2022) report (World Bank 2023-a)

<sup>8</sup> Higher risk projects potentially trigger a deeper GBV risk assessment and GBV action plan.



### Supporting systems strengthening and creating safe spaces

Operations help provide quality services to those who have experienced violence. For instance, health operations support skills training of health service providers so they can better identify, treat, and refer GBV survivors to quality services and ensure necessary equipment, drugs, supplies and facilities are available. Governance operations support activities to promote survivors' access to legal, psycho-social and hotline services. Infrastructure improvement programs, such as transport, urban, water, agriculture, and education projects, make conscious effort to create safe public spaces for women and girls. Infrastructure projects are also designed to support policy and protocol settings, such as defining sexual harassment in the workplace and schools and adopting policies to hold perpetrators accountable (World Bank, 2023-a).

### Challenging social norms that condone violence and harmful behavior

These types of activities are often added on to a primary engagement. For instance, social protection programs combine cash transfers and income generating activities with gender-transformative interventions aimed at addressing negative social norms. Some education operations build safer schools while promoting gender-sensitive behaviors for teachers, students, and, in some cases, parents and guardians to address gender stereotypes. Project can also introduce behavior change communication interventions and comprehensive sexual education to students (Ibid, 2023-a).

### Promoting women's economic empowerment

Social protection and jobs operations that foster women's economic empowerment address GBV as a project risk and a barrier to maximizing women's full potential. Such operations typically support women's participation in public works and livelihood programs that are accompanied by skills training (Ibid, 2023-a).

### Strengthening legal and policy frameworks for addressing GBV

Development policy operations (DPOs) support comprehensive reforms of national systems and policies by engaging finance or equivalent ministries. For instance, to promote the abolishment of child marriage, a series of DPOs in Niger established Child Protection Committees within municipalities. In Uzbekistan, policy engagements helped the country to establish referral pathways for GBV survivors, and in Egypt, the Ministry of Transport adopted a national code of conduct to promote safe transport in the railway sector. A series of DPOs in Bangladesh supported the Ministry of Labor and Employment in setting up a mechanism to report sexual harassment in the workplace. While many countries worldwide have laws combatting GBV (see Figure 5), notable gaps remain between the existence and implementation of legislation. Further evidence is needed to fully understand effective modalities for implementing legislative and policy reforms.

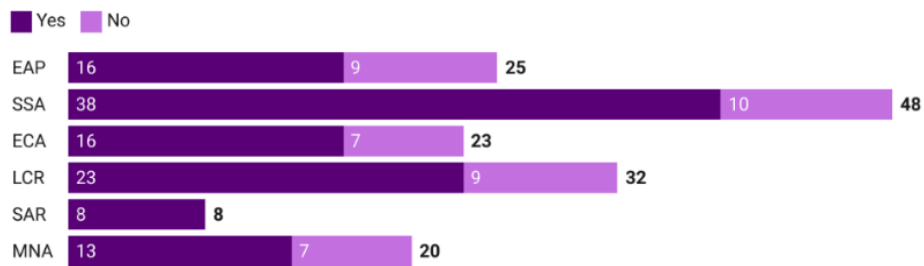
<sup>9</sup> These 390 operations apply various World Bank financing instruments, including investment project financing (IPF), development policy operation (DPO) financing, and program-for-results (P for R) financing. Borrowers choose the instrument that best meets their needs to address their challenge. The majority of operations addressing GBV use IPF, but DPO financing, which supports policy and institutional reforms of countries to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable growth, is increasingly employed for work to address GBV.



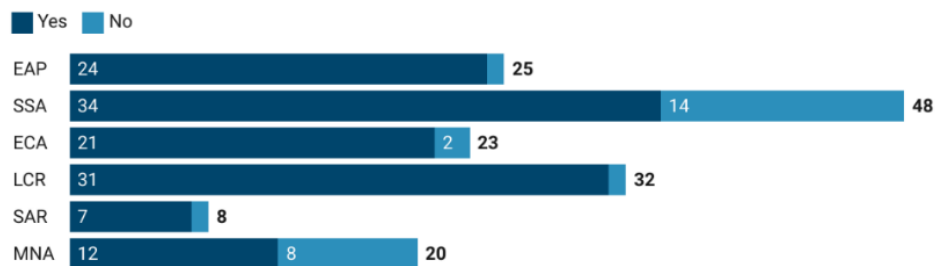


**FIGURE 5. COUNTRIES WITH LEGISLATIONS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN 2023 (BY REGION)**

**Legislation on sexual harassment**



**Legislation addressing domestic violence**



Source: Data from the [Women, Business and the Law](#) (World Bank, 2023)

**TABLE 2: EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT GBV IN WORLD BANK OPERATIONS**

Intervention type	World Bank contributing sectors	Country example
<b>Systems strengthening</b>	Health, Nutrition and Population	In <b>Bangladesh</b> , the <a href="#">Health and Gender Support Project for Cox's Bazar district</a> supports the establishment and operationalization of a safe space (a friendly space for women and adolescent girls) and provides some immediate GBV response services. It also adapted the program <a href="#">SASA!</a> , an initiative to shift community attitudes, norms, and behaviors around gender and violence, to promote community centered GBV prevention and engage men and boys.
<b>Safe public spaces</b>	Transport Urban Resilience and Land Agriculture Education	The <a href="#">Chennai City Partnership: Sustainable Urban Services Program</a> in <b>India</b> supported the government to enhance women's safety in public spaces and commissioned a safety audit using the Safetipin mobile application to map and assess perception of safety.
<b>Economic empowerment</b>	Social Protection and Jobs Social Sustainability and Inclusion	In <b>Nigeria</b> , the <a href="#">Nigeria For Women Project</a> supports livelihoods and economic empowerment activities (e.g., financial literacy, leadership and negotiation skills, coping strategies, healthy relationship strategies) through women's groups.
<b>Legal and policy reform</b>	Macroeconomics, Trade and Investment	The <a href="#">Supporting a Transparent and Inclusive Market Transition DPO</a> in <b>Uzbekistan</b> supported the approval of legislation protecting GBV survivors as part of reforms to create more inclusive labor markets and incentivize female labor force participation.

*Source:* Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in World Bank Operations: Taking Stock After a Decade of Engagement (2012–2022) report (World Bank 2023-a)

**Private sector businesses and investors increasingly see GBV prevention and response as a critical strategy for sustainability.** IFC engages industry partners to build the business case to tackle GBV and harassment connected to work (see Table 3). For instance, integrating service providers and organizations working on GBV in company-level responses has been identified as an effective approach to address GBV and harassment in Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka (IFC 2021; IFC 2022). In Papua New Guinea, both employees and employers recognized workplace support for staff affected by GBV as crucial for building resilient workplaces. Moreover, private sector-led programs and initiatives to promote women's safety and empowerment can lead to positive outcomes beyond the workplace (IFC 2019-a; IFC 2019-b). Through its social safeguarding work including the Respectful Workplaces Program, IFC also supports businesses in emerging markets to develop safeguarding policies and proceedings to address GBV and harassment in the workplace (i.e., the implementation of grievance mechanisms, investigations, and resolution procedures).



**TABLE 3: EXAMPLES OF IFC'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

Private sector strategy	Country	Business case
Promoting women's safety in and on the way to and from the workplace	<a href="#">Egypt</a>	Companies have implemented concrete measures to prevent GBV in commuting to and from remote work locations by providing company transportation with specific bus supervisors that must observe and report any safety issues, accompanied by the code of conduct and grievance mechanism.
Workplace support for staff affected by GBV	<a href="#">Mexico</a>	Companies have implemented measures to ensure the safety of staff by including codes of ethics and grievance mechanisms, and complemented them with on-site GBV support services, social workers, GBV training and awareness raising activities.
Engagement with service providers	<a href="#">Sri Lanka</a>	Companies have enhanced GBV responses by partnering with service providers and networks to establish a comprehensive referral pathway to professional services for employees that experience any form of GBV.
Workplace support for staff affected by GBV	<a href="#">Papua New Guinea</a>	IFC identified mainstream support services, such as counselling, and innovative arrangements, such as flexible work arrangements and paid time-off for employees who experience some form of GBV, crucial to build resilient workplaces.
Building impact beyond the workplace	<a href="#">Myanmar</a>	Safe transport initiatives have been identified as a key entry point for companies to address GBV in public spaces that may affect employees when traveling to work. Coordination measures with public transportation bodies and public space safety civil society organizations were considered crucial steps to provide comprehensive responses to GBV.
Promoting women's agency	<a href="#">Fiji</a>	Companies' initiatives to build women's financial literacy, such as training and awareness-raising campaigns, have had positive impacts in preventing financial abuse and improving women agency.



**Along with operational support, the World Bank is contributing to the evidence base through impact evaluations of programs and inferential studies.** The World Bank's Gender Innovation Lab (GIL) Federation, the Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) Group, and the Development Economics Research Group (DEC) are working to fill knowledge gaps on the effectiveness of Bank-supported interventions and generating more nuanced evidence relevant to countries and areas where the World Bank operate. For example, a GIL Federation evidence series on [Policy Lessons on Reducing Gender-Based Violence](#) highlights key findings based on GILs' impact evaluations (Halim et al. 2023). Annex 2 provides a summary of the World Bank's efforts to build the evidence base on GBV prevention and response. Further efforts to monitor Bank-supported activities to prevent and respond to GBV are needed. Monitoring implementation and progress toward indicators related to GBV should be done throughout the lifecycle of a project. In addition, other evaluation tools should be considered for M&E such as, through rapid assessments, process evaluations or other qualitative tools to inform implementation, would be critical (World Bank 2023).

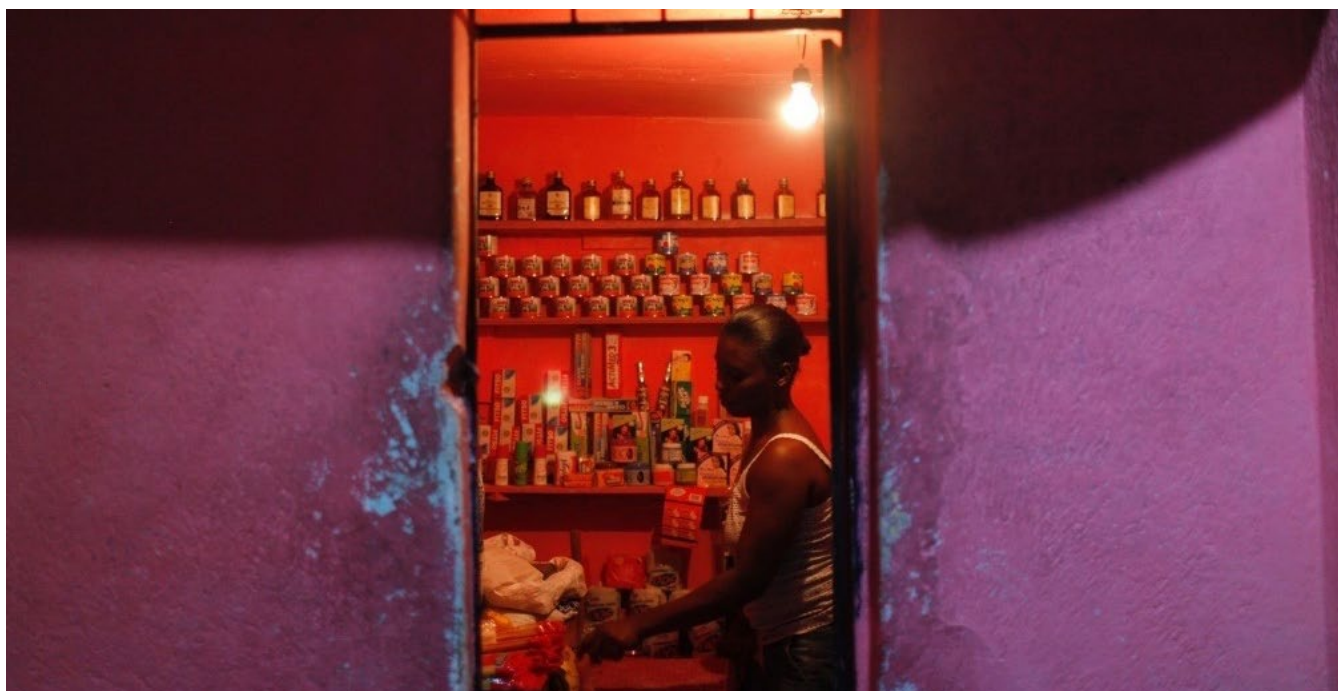
## 4. LOOKING AHEAD: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS GBV



This note presents a suite of data points and evidence to stress that eliminating GBV is an ethical and development imperative and smart economics. As GBV reflects power inequalities between men and women, preventing, reducing and responding to such violence has direct impact to building and protecting human capital, promoting economic empowerment and enhancing women's leadership, voice and agency. Social and economic disadvantages may also exacerbate the risk of being exposed to GBV. This note attempts to show prevention and response measures that can be adopted by countries and the private sector companies. The following takeaways emerge for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to eliminate GBV:

### STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Foster a shared understanding of GBV prevention and response as an essential path for reaching development goals.** Addressing GBV is a key aspect of advancing gender equality, and an ethical and development imperative in and of itself. Every project can play a role in preventing and responding to GBV through its investments aligned with sectoral entry points, and in some cases, can be a central and core component of project activities. In some cases, framing discussions around female labor force participation, safe public spaces, and enhanced service delivery can help navigate dialogue on GBV with governments and other stakeholders such as private sector industry groups and market regulators.
- **Continue investing in staffing and capacity strengthening training.** A pool of internal GBV specialists (including at the country level) is critical for translating global evidence into client dialogue, determining strategic entry points, and leading technically sound operational design. Additionally, GBV experts can ensure that engagements to prevent and respond to GBV uphold the principles of safety, ethics, and do no harm.
- **Ramp up prevention efforts linked to the sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH) mitigation work.** Both the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework and IFC's Sustainability Framework recommend operations address project-induced SEA/SH risks by putting in place mitigation measures. This corporate mandate helps put GBV prevention and response on the table when structuring and designing a project.
- **Support capacity strengthening of coordinating bodies to ensure effective GBV response across multiple sectors.** As the ministry mandated to coordinate line ministries for GBV response, supporting a country's Gender Ministry or Women's Ministry to enhance their coordination mechanisms can contribute to the overall GBV prevention and response effort.
- **When supporting governments in fragile, conflict, and violent contexts, different modalities may be more effective.** For example, efforts to strengthen coordination and national systems may be complemented with parallel services delivered through UN agencies and non-government partners to ensure the availability of survivor-centered care.



- **Support and work with local women's rights organizations.** It is equally important to work with local women's rights organizations, as they are often on the front lines of providing care for survivors of violence and have been working on addressing violence for decades.
- **Continue to collaborate with development partners and industry groups at the global and country level for inclusive and deeper engagements.** Alignment with the [Shared Research Agenda](#) on violence against women at the global level for building and translating evidence helps ensure investments contribute to closing evidence gaps. Involving national GBV coordination mechanisms is a good way to prioritize strategic national engagements for GBV prevention and response and helps avoid duplication of efforts and wasting of limited resources. Connecting and working with civil society partners and UN agencies that often possess deeper expertise and local presence are a critical element for success, especially in fragile, conflict and violent settings. In emerging markets, private sector industry groups and market regulators are potential partners.
- **Continue to engage the private sector as vital partner in preventing GBV and shifting community-based social norms related to gender equality.** The private sector plays an important role to combat GBV, including sexual harassment in labor, sexual exploitation and abuse. For example, the private sector can take action to create safe workplace cultures where harassment is not tolerated, survivors can disclose violence and survivor-centered remedial actions are taken. It is critical to follow global standards, such as the ILO Convention No. 190 (2019) that sets out the fundamental principles and recognizes the complementary roles of key stakeholders (e.g. governments, employers, workers, and their representative organizations) to address GBV in the world of work.
- **Invest in monitoring and evaluation to measure progress, improve tracking of GBV prevention and response including the mitigation of SEA/SH activities, and ensure results, while continuing to build the evidence base to address knowledge gaps.** Setting aside resources for qualitative monitoring through rapid assessment and process evaluations are particularly relevant for ensuring the overall quality of the project implementation. Investing to close the remaining evidence gaps on how to scale and replicate successful interventions is equally critical. The GBV sector will benefit from further studies on the impacts of economic interventions on GBV; of GBV on economic empowerment dimensions, such as female labor force participation and income gaps, and of interventions with specific sub-groups, such as refugees or the LGBTQI community. More evidence is needed to assess the effectiveness of SEA/SH mitigation activities in the survivors and their impact on longer-term GBV prevention outcomes. Greater understanding is also needed on the intersection of violence against women and violence against children, and the effectiveness of GBV prevention and response activities within sectoral operations.
- **Carefully consider interventions intended to transform social norms.** Transforming attitudes, beliefs, and norms around harmful practices requires investments of time and resources, along with technical rigor. Community mobilization approaches, such as [SASA!](#) and [Indashyikirwa](#), need GBV experts to support the design/adaptation and implementation for success. The World Bank will benefit from further research to understand the most effective engagement model when working on social norms.
- **Consolidate SEA/SH risk mitigation agenda to enhance its sustainability.** Developing mechanisms and standardizing processes that facilitate a more effective and sustainable implementation of SEA/SH risk mitigation measures. This includes strengthening national level system solutions rather than project-by-project approaches. For example, exploring national-level service mapping, sector-level code of conduct and behavior standards, and standardization of tools can ensure consistency and effectiveness of the mitigation measures, and support the development of national accountability frameworks to respond to SEA/SH issues.

## OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Promote evidence-based interventions based on replicable sector entry points that fit the nature of a project.** Operations can amplify impacts by first addressing gaps aligned to the sectoral priority. This includes strengthening systems for health and education, making the public space safe for infrastructure sectors, and promoting economic and social empowerment for several sectors.



### Guidance for designing and implementing interventions to address GBV:

- [Development Marketplace](#): Innovations to address gender-based violence
- RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women – [Implementation package](#)
- [Violence against women and girls resource guide and sectoral briefs](#)
- [A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls](#), What Works to prevent violence against women and girls global programme, Pretoria, South Africa
- Interventions to Prevent or Reduce Violence Against Women and Girls: [A Systematic Review of Reviews](#)
- Community based approaches to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): [A Review of Evidence and Essential Steps to Adaptation](#)
- [Compendia of International and National Legal Frameworks](#)
- [INSPIRE – Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children](#)
- [Collective Action to Reduce Gender-Based Violence \(CARE-GBV\) Resources](#)
- [Safety First: How to Leverage Social Safety Nets to Prevent Gender Based Violence](#)
- E-learning course: [How to leverage safety nets to prevent gender-based violence](#)
- [Violence Against Women and Girls: A Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators](#)
- [Analysis of Gender-Based Violence Prevention Opportunities by Sector](#)
- [Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector](#)

- Tip Sheet Series How to: [Develop a Community-Based Grievance Mechanism for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#), [Establish and Manage a Worker Grievance Mechanism for Sexual Harassment](#), [Write and Implement a Workplace Policy for Prevention of Sexual Harassment](#), [Guidance for Boards of Directors on Overseeing Gender-based Violence and Harassment](#)
- [Counting the Cost: The Price Society Pays for Violence Against Women](#)
- [The Costs of Violence – Understanding the Costs of Violence Against Women and Girls and its Response: Selected Findings and Lessons Learned from Asia and the Pacific](#)

### Ethical guidance for GBV research:

- WHO (2016) [Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women](#)
- WHO (2007) [Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies](#)
- WHO (2005) [Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists](#)

### Guidance for GBV-related data collection:

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division's [Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women – Statistical Surveys](#)
- [Improving the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on Violence Against Women](#)

### Guidance note related to SEA/SH mitigation:

- [World Bank Good Practice Note on Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment \(SEA/SH\) in Investment Project Financing involving Major Civil Works](#)
- [World Bank Good Practice Note on Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment \(SEA/SH\) in Human Development Operations](#)
- [Gender-Based Violence Quality Assurance Tool: Facilitation Guide](#)



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## ANNEX 1. RESPECT FRAMEWORK AND ITS EVIDENCE-BASE



[RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women](#) developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women, in collaboration with ten other UN, bilateral, and multilateral agencies, outlines seven inter-related intervention strategies to prevent violence against women:

- Relationships skills strengthened
- Empowerment of women
- Services ensured
- Poverty reduced
- Environments made safe
- Child and adolescent abuse prevented
- Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms

The following table assesses each approach in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) and high-income countries (HIC) using the following categories: 1. Promising (one or more evaluations show significant reductions in violence outcomes), 2. More evidence needed (more than one evaluation shows improvements in intermediate outcomes related to violence), 3. Conflicting (evaluations show conflicting results on violence outcomes, being some positive and some negative), 4. No evidence (intervention not yet rigorously evaluated) and 5. Ineffective (more than one evaluation show no reductions in violence outcomes).

RESPECT category	Interventions recommended	LMIC	HIC	Example
<a href="#">Relationship skills strengthened</a>	Group-based workshops with women and men to promote egalitarian attitudes and relationships	Promising	More evidence needed	In the two-year period following the implementation of Stepping Stones in South Africa with female and male participants ages 15–26 years, men were less likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence, rape and transactional sex in the intervention group compared to the baseline.
	Couples counselling and therapy	More evidence needed	Promising	
<a href="#">Empowerment of women</a>	Empowerment training for women and girls including life skills, safe spaces, mentoring	Promising	More evidence needed	The IMAGE project (Intervention with Microfinance for Aids and Gender Equity) in South Africa empowers women through microfinance together with training on gender and power and community mobilization activities. Studies show it reduced domestic violence by 50% in the intervention group over a period of two years. At \$244 per incident case of partner violence averted during a 2-year scale up phase, the intervention is highly cost-effective
	Inheritance and asset ownership policies and interventions	Promising	No evidence	
	Micro-finance or savings and loans plus gender and empowerment training components	Promising	No evidence	

<b>Services ensured</b>	Empowerment counselling interventions or psychological support to support access to services (i.e., advocacy)	More evidence needed	Promising	The Community Advocacy Project in Michigan and Illinois, United States, is an evidence-based program designed to help women survivors of intimate partner abuse re-gain control of their lives. Trained advocates provide advocacy and individually tailored assistance to survivors so that they can access community resources and social support. The intervention was found to lower recurrence of violence and depression and improve quality of life and social support. Two years after the intervention ended, the positive change continued.
	Alcohol misuse prevention interventions	More evidence needed	More evidence needed	
	Shelters	More evidence needed	More evidence needed	
	Hotlines	More evidence needed	More evidence needed	
	One-stop crisis centers	More evidence needed	No evidence	
	Perpetrator interventions	More evidence needed	Conflicting	
	Women's police stations/units	More evidence needed	No evidence	
	Screening in health services	No evidence	Ineffective	
	Sensitization and training of institutional personnel without changing the institutional environment	Ineffective	Ineffective	
<b>Poverty reduced</b>	Economic transfers, including conditional/unconditional cash transfers plus vouchers, and in-kind transfers	Promising	More evidence needed	In Northern Ecuador, a cash, vouchers, and food transfer program implemented by the World Food Program (WFP) was targeted to women in poor urban areas, intending to reduce poverty. Participating households received monthly transfers equivalent to \$40 per month for a period of 6 months. The transfer was conditional on attendance of monthly nutrition training. The evaluation showed reductions in women's experience of controlling behaviors, physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partners by 19 to 30%. A plausible mechanism for this was reduced conflict within couples related to poverty related stresses
	Labor force interventions, including employment policies, livelihood and employment training	More evidence needed	Promising	
	Microfinance or savings interventions without any additional components	Ineffective	No evidence	



<a href="#">Environments made safe</a>	Infrastructure and transport	More evidence needed	More evidence needed	In Hyderabad (Sindh Province), Pakistan, a right to play intervention reached children in 40 public schools. Boys and girls were engaged in play-based learning providing them opportunity to develop life skills such as confidence, communication, empathy, coping with negative emotions, resilience, cooperation, leadership, critical thinking and conflict resolution that help combat conflict, intolerance, gender discrimination and peer violence. An evaluation showed decreases in peer victimization by 33% among boys and 59% among girls at 24 months post intervention; in corporal punishment by 45% in boys and 66% in girls; and in witnessing of domestic violence by 65% among boys and by 70% in girls.
	Bystander interventions	No evidence	Conflicting	
	Whole School interventions	More evidence needed	No evidence	
<a href="#">Child and adolescent abuse prevented</a>	Home visitation and health worker outreach	Promising	More evidence needed	
	Parenting interventions	Promising	More evidence needed	
	Psychological support interventions for children who experience violence and who witness intimate partner violence	Promising	More evidence needed	
	Life skills / school-based curriculum, rape and dating violence prevention training	Promising	Conflicting	
<a href="#">Transformed attitudes, beliefs, and norms</a>	Community mobilization	No evidence	Promising	SASA! is a community intervention in Uganda that prevents violence against women by shifting the power balance between men and women in relationships. Studies show that in SASA! communities 76% of women and men believe physical violence against a partner is not acceptable while only 26% of women and men in control communities believe the same. At the cost of US\$ 460 per incident case of partner violence averted in trial phase, intervention is cost-effective and further economies of scale can be achieved during scale-up
	Group-based workshops with women and men to promote changes in attitudes and norms	Promising	More evidence needed	
	Social marketing or edutainment and group education	More evidence needed	More evidence needed	
	Group education with men and boys to change attitudes and norms	ineffective	More evidence needed	
	Stand-alone awareness campaigns/single component communications campaigns	Ineffective	Ineffective	

Source: Taken from the Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response in World Bank Operations: Taking Stock After a Decade of Engagement (2012–2022) report and consolidated based on the [RESPECT women: Preventing violence against women](#) (WHO 2019).

## ANNEX 2. SELECTED EVIDENCE ON GBV-RELATED INTERVENTIONS BY THE WORLD BANK



Impact Evaluation or Research Project	Region	Country	Description
<b>Changes in attitudes, behavior, and/or social norms</b>			
<a href="#">Using Social Media to Change Gender Norms: An Experimental Evaluation Within Facebook Messenger in Urban India</a>	SAR	India	A paper studying the effectiveness of two short edutainment campaigns delivered through Facebook Messenger, aiming to reshape gender norms and reduce social acceptability of violence against women. It found that edutainment delivered through social media can be an effective tool for reshaping gender norms and attitudes on violence against women.
<a href="#">Girl Empower – A gender transformative mentoring and cash transfer intervention to promote adolescent wellbeing: Impact findings from a cluster-randomized controlled trial in Liberia</a>	AFR	Liberia	A study examining the impact of Girl Empower program found that the program did not decline the incidence of sexual violence experienced by program beneficiaries, but did have some positive effects on gender attitudes, life skills, and sexual and reproductive health outcomes.
<a href="#">Tanzanian Couples' Perspectives on Gender Equity, Relationship Power, and Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the RESPECT Study</a>	AFR	Tanzania	An evaluation of the data from the RESPECT study (a randomized controlled trial that evaluated an intervention to prevent sexually transmitted infections amongst young Tanzanian men and women) to understand couples' attitudes about IPV, relationship power, etc. suggested that inequitable attitudes and couple discordance were associated with higher risk of IPV.
<a href="#">Rwanda: Preventing and Addressing SGBV (P153911)</a>	AFE	Rwanda	This evaluation of a couples discussion program contributes to the evidence on male engagement approaches. The findings show reduced physical and sexual IPV in women that participated in the discussions, and greater attendance and male accompaniment at antenatal care, among other results (Subcomponent of the Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Women's Health Project (P147489)).
<a href="#">DRC: Prevention and Mitigation of SGBV in North and South Kivu Project (P150651)</a>	AFE	DRC	This study shows the program significantly improved the quality of the couples' relationships and led to changes in men's behaviors that are often associated with IPV, like reduced alcohol consumption. Further, the study found positive effects in men's gender equitable attitudes. But, women reported no change in the levels of IPV that they experienced.
<a href="#">Entertainment, Education, and Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence</a>	AFR	Nigeria	This study finds that the TV series MTV Shuga induced an improvement in men's attitudes toward women eight months later. It also finds that attitudes toward GBV significantly improve for men and women who report occasionally thinking about the characters and who remember specific facts about them.

<a href="#">Hard Skills or Soft Talk: Unintended consequences of a vocational training and an inspiration talk on childbearing and sexual behavior in vulnerable youth</a>	AFR	Malawi	This paper analyses to what extent a hard skill (vocational training) and a soft skill (inspirational talk) intervention affected childbearing decisions, HIV testing, and transactional sex in young people. It finds that receiving an offer to attend a vocational training program decreased the chances of becoming a mother and increased the chances of being HIV-tested for both women and men. The chances of being demanded for transactional sex decreased for those women receiving the offer to attend the vocational training.
<b>Livelihoods and poverty reduction</b>			
<a href="#">Public Works and Welfare: A Randomized Control Trial of the Comoros Social Safety Net Project – Endline Report</a>	AFR	Comoros	An impact evaluation measuring the effectiveness of the Comoros Social Safety Net Project (SSNP) found that the project had increased the probability of women having an income generating activity but no evidence on the program's impact on women's bargaining power and the perception and exposure to GBV.
<a href="#">Lao PDR IE of public workfare programs (P168884)</a>	EAP	Lao PDR	This evaluation of the impacts of a public workfare program (PWP) does not find evidence that women's participation in PWPs may increase their exposure to GBV, but PWPs does not lower IPV either. This study was supported by the Poverty Reduction Fund III Additional Financing (P168620) on women's experience of GBV.
<a href="#">The Philippines IE of a CCT (P168885)</a>	EAP	The Philippines	This evaluation does not find a significant change in IPV or violence outside of home, but it finds a measurable decline in non-partner domestic violence. Additionally, it finds evidence of the potential of CCTs programs to mitigate GBV through four channels (Philippines Social Welfare Development and Reform Project II (P153744); SWDRP II Project Additional Financing (P169637)).
<a href="#">GBV Phone Surveys</a>	EAP	Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines	The results of this phone survey in Indonesia show that: 83% of respondents report increase in IPV in their communities due to COVID-19. Household food insecurity is among the strongest predictors of exposure to GBV, and women's access to jobs protects them from increase in exposure to GBV due to COVID-19.
<a href="#">Uganda IE on empowering adolescent girls</a>	AFE	Uganda	The evaluation results for this BRAC program show that teen pregnancy, early entry into marriage/cohabitation, and the share of girls reporting sex against their will fall considerably.
<a href="#">Exploring if gender wage ratio influences IPV using evidence from administrative health data</a>	LCR	Brazil	The evaluation shows that reducing the gender wage gap leads to a reduction of women's homicides while the impact on less severe forms of violence depends on the context.
<a href="#">A conditional cash transfer and Women's empowerment: Does Bolsa Familia Influence intimate partner violence?</a>	LCR	Brazil	Study exploring how conditional cash transfer may influence IPV. The results of this CCT program show that the program impacts women's agency within the family, but not to the extent that it reduces the most extreme form of IPV.

<a href="#">How Well do Economic Empowerment Efforts Prevent Intimate Partner Violence in South Asia?</a>	SAR		The World Bank's South Asia Region Gender Innovation Lab has conducted an evidence review of findings from women's economic empowerment (WEE) interventions with direct measures of IPV. The aim of the review was to identify WEE programs that measure IPV and have been evaluated in the South Asia Region and to synthesize this evidence in relation to global evidence. A subsidiary aim is to focus on implementation to understand what strategies improve feasibility, sustainability, and minimize unintended harm from WEE interventions in SAR.
<b>Safe Spaces</b>			
<a href="#">Safety First: Perceived Risk of Street Harassment and Educational Choices of Women</a>	SAR	India	A study examining the consequences of unsafe public spaces of women found that women choose lower quality colleges relative to men due to the fear of harassment.
<a href="#">Demand for 'Safe Spaces': Avoiding Harassment and Stigma</a>	LCR	Brazil	A study investigating the economic cost of harassment in public transport found that harassment is widely common in public spaces. Riding in a reserved space reduces the incidents of physical harassment by 50% but the paper argues that such measures might implicitly pose the responsibility on women to ensure safety.
<a href="#">Understanding and Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Public Transport for Highly Vulnerable Groups in Dar es Salaam</a>	AFR	Tanzania	A new mobile application was developed to measure the incidents of violence and harassment during daily commute in the city. A forthcoming study will use the data collected through the app and female ridership data to assess the impact on GBV in public spaces on women's physical mobility. A survey of Dar es Salaam female commuters shows that 59% of women interviewed experienced some form of GBV while traveling at least once in the past 6 months.
<a href="#">Women's police stations and intimate partner violence: Evidence from Brazil</a>	LCR	Brazil	The study does not find strong effects of women's police stations on female homicides on average in Brazil, but stations appear to be highly effective among young women living in metropolitan areas (female homicide rates decrease significantly when a women's police station is established in a metropolitan municipality).
<a href="#">Underreporting of Gender-Based Violence in Kerala, India: An Application of the List Randomization Method</a>	SAR	India	Study analyzing the incidence and extent to which domestic violence and physical harassment on public/private buses is underreported in Kerala.
<b>Other categories</b>			
<a href="#">Terror as a Bargaining Instrument: A Case Study of Dowry Violence in Rural India</a>	SAR	India	A study examining how domestic violence may be used as a bargaining instrument to extract larger dowries from a spouse's family found that women whose families pay smaller dowries suffer from increased risk of marital violence.



<a href="#"><u>Nutrition, Religion, and Widowhood in Nigeria. Economic Development and Cultural Change</u></a>	AFR	Nigeria	A study reviewing Muslim and Christian women in Nigeria found that Muslim women have lower nutritional status than Christian women and more Christian widows were subjected to a higher incidence of cruelty and violence at the hands of in-laws and inferior inheritance outcomes than Muslim widows.
<a href="#"><u>For the sake of family and tradition: honor killings in India and Pakistan</u></a>	SAR	India, Pakistan	Study unraveling the understudied and under-reported form of violence against women and girls with a content analysis of media literature.
<a href="#"><u>Women's empowerment and safety perceptions: evidence from low-income neighborhoods of Dhaka, Bangladesh</u></a>	SAR	Bangladesh	Study investigating the relationship between safety perception and women's labor market outcome in Bangladesh.
<a href="#"><u>Learning How to Choose or Learning How to Lead? Experiments on Selecting and Training Female Managers in Bangladesh's Garment Industry</u></a>	SAR	Bangladesh	A study implementing field experiments designed to understand the importance of the selection of and training for new female supervisors in Bangladesh's garment factories found that formal diagnostic tests lead factories to select better candidates. Diagnostics measuring attitudes and soft skills are particularly relevant for factories and predictive of later outcomes. Supervisory training for the selected candidates leads to higher rates of promotions, but has only marginal effects on performance.