



## RESULTS SERIES

# HACKATHON IDEA BECOMES HELPLINE FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

*Ending violence against women is a complex challenge requiring a change in social norms and laws and policies that make women vulnerable, but an efficient and survivor-focused reporting mechanism can be a positive step forward.*

## THE CHALLENGE



Have experienced gender-based violence



Never tell

The absence of a well-integrated response system can exacerbate under-reporting and survivors not seeking help.

## THE RESULT



Nepal's National Women Commission launched a 24-hour helpline based in Kathmandu, allowing survivors of gender-based violence to connect to service providers including the police, a One-Stop Crisis Management Center, and organizations that provide shelter, healthcare, legal aid, and psycho-social counselling.



In its initial years immediate necessary support was provided for more than 1,500 cases.

Almost one-in-three married women in Nepal have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by a spouse, according to the [Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2016](#). Two-thirds of women never tell anyone or seek help.

Under-reporting of gender-based violence (GBV) can stem from social stigma and family pressure, and a lack of knowledge about existing GBV laws and services available to survivors. This is often exacerbated by the lack of an integrated response system. Victims who manage to seek help are forced to place multiple calls for medical attention, rescue vans, shelters, and other services.

This situation is starting to change, thanks to the development of a [24-hour toll free helpline](#) established by the Nepal's National Women Commission (NWC) with World Bank support. It all started as an idea at a 2013 Violence Against Women Hackathon (VAWHack), organized by the World Bank, the NWC, and the software company Young Innovations. The event brought together over 100 gender experts and young technologists to identify IT-based solutions to address GBV in Nepal.

Three promising applications emerged: an android application, a case management system, and a helpline prototype. These were integrated into a comprehensive online platform called [FightVAW](#), which let GBV survivors report their cases via phone, SMS or online. It was a way to use ICT to complement ongoing efforts of different CSOs, government agencies and other stakeholders. With financial support from



the [Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality](#), the World Bank and partners in Nepal piloted and improved FightVAW.

Four years later, the successful pilot was transformed into a helpline based in Kathmandu with the support of a new \$2m World Bank project, *the Integrated Platform for Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response Project*, co-implemented by NWC and CARE Nepal.

The NWC launched the helpline in December 2017, allowing survivors of GBV to connect to service providers including the police, a One-Stop Crisis Management Center, and organizations that provide shelter, healthcare, legal aid

and psycho-social counselling. By providing victims a one-stop channel, the helpline has eliminated the need to recount their traumatic experiences multiple times, reducing the risk of re-victimization.

Since its launch, the helpline has received thousands of calls from women seeking help, and registered more than 1,500 cases, which means that immediate necessary support was provided.

While ending violence against women will require a multi-pronged approach that involves changing local social norms and addressing laws and policies that make women vulnerable, having an efficient and survivor-focused reporting mechanism is a positive step forward.



The Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality is a World Bank Group multidonor trust fund investing in knowledge, diagnostics, impact evaluations and data to help policy makers and practitioners close gender gaps in countries and sectors. Learn more on [www.worldbank.org/gender/ufge](http://www.worldbank.org/gender/ufge)

