

PROMISING

APPROACHES

FOR THE PREVENTION

OF VIOLENCE AGAINST

WOMEN AND GIRLS



This report is dedicated to the Ni-Vanuatu women and organisations who tirelessly fight for women’s rights in Vanuatu. CARE Vanuatu is committed to following and supporting the leadership of the Vanuatu Women’s Centre – the lead civil society organisation working to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in Vanuatu.

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The context: violence against women and girls in Vanuatu

Women and girls in Vanuatu experience some of the highest rates of violence in the world. In 2009, Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC) in partnership with the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) conducted the first nation-wide study on violence against women and attitudes to women's human rights.¹ The *Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships* found that nearly two-thirds (60%) of all women who have ever been married, lived with a man or had an intimate sexual relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence inflicted by their partner. For women who experience physical and/or sexual partner violence, it is often of a severe nature and occurs frequently, however over half (57%) of the women who had experienced partner violence had never sought help from any agency. Physical violence is often followed by rape; this was the case for 42% of women who had experienced physical violence. Other forms of violence are also highly prevalent amongst ever-partnered women. Over two-thirds (68%) of women have experienced emotional violence, over two-thirds (69%) have experienced at least one form of coercive control, and nearly over one-quarter (28%) have been subjected to several forms of control by their husband or partner. While partner physical and/or sexual violence is somewhat higher in rural areas (63%) than urban (50%), it occurs at high rates across the country and affects all demographics. Children whose mothers have experienced physical partner violence are significantly affected; over half (57%) saw or heard their mother being assaulted, and 17% were also beaten during the violent incident. Ever-partnered women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence most commonly cited triggers for incidents that are directly related to unequal power relations between genders, stepping outside of traditional gender roles or expectations, or not fulfilling their male partner's expectations.

Rates of non-partner physical and sexual violence against ni-Vanuatu women and girls are also alarming. Nearly half (48%) of all women have experienced non-partner physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of fifteen. Male family members are responsible for most of the physical violence; male family members and boyfriends for most of the sexual violence. The National Survey also reveals distressing rates and patterns of violence against girls. Nearly one-third (30%) of respondents had experienced sexual abuse before the age of fifteen, perpetrated mostly by boyfriends or family members. Over one-quarter (28%) of women's first sexual experience was forced. Noting that the National Prevalence Survey only surveyed women, gender-inequitable and violence-condoning attitudes amongst women are also high. Nearly two-thirds (60%) of women agree with at least one justification for a male partner to beat his female partner. It is reasonable to assume that this would be similar for men. This is supported by the 2003 Citizen Access to Information in Vanuatu study which found that similar numbers of women and men believe there are times that a woman deserves to be beaten (81% of men and 79% of women).²

Vanuatu is the most disaster-prone country in the world, and this has ramifications for the prevalence and patterns of violence against women and girls, as well as strategies for its prevention. International studies have established that rates of non-partner sexual violence, sexual exploitation and intimate partner violence typically rise during emergencies of any nature. Furthermore, evidence shows that women's exposure to violence is exacerbated in the context of disasters, including intimate partner violence as well as non-intimate partner sexual violence and exploitation.³ Women's humanitarian organisations supporting emergency relief and recovery following Cyclone Pam noted the high rates of violence reported by women during this time. Even in non-emergency times, services and infrastructure to respond to violence against women and girls are limited.

While these statistics are disheartening, significant progress is being made in reducing violence against women and girls. Local and international civil society organisations have successfully influenced policy

and legislative change and are contributing to the prevention of violence against women and girls. For example, analysis of the National Survey data found that places where Vanuatu Women's Centre has been most active have significantly lower rates of physical and sexual violence by husbands/partners than places where Vanuatu Women's Centre has been less active. No other significant differences were identified between the locations, leading the researcher to conclude that the influence of Vanuatu Women's Centre's counselling and community education work over the past 19 years has contributed to reducing women's risk of violence.⁴ The evidence indicates that with good strategies, long-term effort, coordination and sufficient resourcing for both prevention and response, violence against women and girls in Vanuatu is preventable.

Purpose of the paper

This paper is written to support ongoing work in Vanuatu that strives to prevent violence against women and girls by synthesising the literature on effective and promising primary prevention strategies. The paper is the product of a rapid, desk-based review of this literature and is intended to be a starting point for more in-depth conversations and analysis about violence prevention. It identifies and summarises promising and effective primary prevention approaches and offers a wide variety of case studies to explore the practical application and results of these approaches. The selection of case studies was based on the volume of information available about the program, and as such there are likely some promising and effective programs that have not been included due to the absence of publicly available information. Rather than providing an exhaustive list of primary prevention programs, this paper aims to provide a snapshot of the breadth of primary prevention work taking place in Vanuatu and the Pacific. The paper concludes with evidence-based recommendations for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Vanuatu.

Shared characteristics of effective and ethical violence prevention programming

In recent years there have been several major reviews of the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies and programs.⁵ These reviews point to a number of principles and characteristics common to successful and promising violence prevention strategies, which are discussed below.

They are multi-sectoral and work across the social ecology

An ecological model is the primary conceptual framework for understanding violence against women and girls.⁶ This framework is derived from evidence that no single factor can explain violence, rather, it is caused by the interaction of a range of biological, economic, cultural, social and political factors.⁷ These multiple levels are inextricably linked, with each level reinforcing the other. Accordingly, to create substantial and sustainable change, actors must work across the social ecology: the individual, household, community and societal levels. Reviews of global best practice indicate that because the causes of violence against women and girls are so complex, interagency and multisectoral approaches are key to the prevention of violence against women and girls. This requires strong partnerships and coordination between government agencies, civil society organisations, and the private sector.⁸

In Vanuatu, the prevalence of violence against women and girls, the challenging context and limited resources available means that a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to preventing violence against

women and girls is not only good practice, but necessary. It is of critical importance that international organisations respect and facilitate ni-Vanuatu women's leadership, particularly that of the longstanding and highly respected Vanuatu Women's Centre, to ensure the effectiveness, legitimacy and sustainability of violence prevention strategies. Research shows that a strong civil society, particularly a women's movement, is the most important and consistent factor driving governments to take action to combat violence against women and girls.⁹ By combining forces, local, national and international organisations in Vanuatu will be more successful at achieving change.

They are critically aware of the risks of all violence prevention work and include robust risk analysis and mitigation strategies

The 'do no harm' principle in development work seeks to alleviate the risk that programs designed to help communities, groups or individuals may unwittingly cause harm or exacerbate the problem. Research shows that if programs working to transform gendered power dynamics and reduce violence against women are seen as a challenge to men's power, men may use violence as a tool to re-establish their power – this is known as the backlash effect.¹⁰ Development actors have an ethical responsibility to employ all available measures to reduce the risks these programs pose to women's safety and to support women to make an informed decision about their involvement in the program.

Working with men and boys has been shown to be an effective strategy for reducing the risk of backlash, however, there are also risks inherent to this approach. Programs that engage men as leaders in the prevention of violence against women and girls or encourage men to view themselves as women's protectors risk reinforcing men's domination of leadership roles and consequently reinforcing, rather than transforming, gender relations.¹¹ Further, if men selected as leaders in these programs use violence in their own lives, their participation in the program can contribute to the normalisation of violence. Care must be taken to ensure that work with men and boys takes place within certain parameters to reduce the risk of reinforcing patriarchal ideas about the role of men in society and therefore reinforcing some of the gendered behaviours that lead to violence. Research has established that employing a gender transformative approach in working with men and boys is the most effective strategy for mitigating these risks. Gender transformative approaches equip men to challenge the aspects of men's behaviour, constructions of masculinity and gender relations that harm women, while simultaneously promoting alternative, positive masculinities and equal gender relations.

They use a culturally-specific approach and are tailored to particular settings and audiences

Practice-based evidence demonstrates that in Melanesia, programs that work within existing cultural frameworks have a greater chance of success than approaches that are seen to oppose culture and tradition.¹² Anecdotal evidence¹³ from international and local NGOs working in ending VAWG in the Pacific indicates that because of the prioritisation of communalism over individual rights in Melanesian cultures, VAWG programming that is centered on gender and women's rights is less likely to resonate with women and men in these communities than approaches couched in terms of safe and harmonious families. Conversely, the global VAWG evidence-base unequivocally shows that violence against women cannot be sustainably reduced or prevented without addressing gender inequality as the root cause of violence.¹⁴ Moreover, it is not always ideal or possible for programs seeking to transform frameworks and associated practices to work within them to achieve social change. There is no agreement in the sector about how to resolve this tension between global evidence-based approaches and strategies and

the nuances of local contexts. Some argue that explicitly engaging in human rights and gender equality-based dialogue is essential to transform unequal gendered power relations and advance women's rights. Others argue that working within existing cultural and religious structures to gain entry into communities is an essential first step. This tension may be best resolved by working along a continuum of change that begins within existing cultural frameworks in order to engage communities, and strategically moves along the continuum towards a gender transformative approach at a pace appropriate to each specific context.

They work with women, men and people of diverse gender identities using a gender transformative approach

There is an extensive evidence base that establishes the link between gender inequality and violence against women and as such addressing gender inequality and advancing women's rights is key to prevention violence against women and girls.¹⁵ For example, a 2015 study in medical journal *The Lancet* found factors relating to gender inequality predict the prevalence of intimate partner violence across 44 countries,¹⁶ and a United Nations review found significantly and consistently higher rates of violence against women in countries where women's economic, social and political rights are poorly protected, and where power and resources are unequally distributed between men and women.¹⁷ Global evidence shows a gender transformative approach, that is, an approach that works to shift harmful gender norms and redress power disparities among women and men, is a fundamental component of effective violence prevention programming.¹⁸

They include targeted strategies for working with young people

As with the rest of the Pacific region, Vanuatu has a very young population. The most recent survey established that the median age of the Vanuatu population is 20.5 years, with over one-third (39%) of the population younger than 15 years of age.¹⁹ Population demographics alone suggest the importance of targeted strategies for working with young people to prevent violence against women and girls. The validity of this strategy is reinforced by the global evidence which shows that working with young people is one of the most effective strategies for preventing violence against women and girls.²⁰ As CARE International has noted, working across the life course, especially from early childhood through adolescence and young adulthood, is essential to disrupt the "intergenerational transmission" of gendered violence.²¹ Many girl, boy and gender non-binary children and young people in Vanuatu, as in all high-prevalence settings, directly experience physical, sexual, emotional or psychological violence, and/or are exposed to the abuse of their mothers.²² They need opportunities to heal the trauma, and re-learn healthy relationships and equitable, non-violent norms so as to avoid continuing a cycle of victimisation or perpetration.²³ Gender norms which, if rigid and inequitable, drive violence against women and girls, are established very early in childhood.²⁴ But childhood and adolescence represents a great 'upstream' opportunity to reset gender relations and identities in a way which is healthy, respectful, equitable and non-violent so that there is a lower incidence of violence against women and girls amongst the next generation of adults.²⁵

Young people are also at risk of particular kinds of gendered violence, which requires targeted strategies. During adolescence young people are exploring early romantic or intimate relationships and sexuality and are accessing rapidly changing social spaces and technologies including online spaces that are unique to them. The National Survey on violence against women in 2011 established that girls and young women experience sexual violence at high rates in these early relationships with boyfriends.²⁶ It is

crucial that models for addressing violence against women and girls move with the times and acknowledge not only established domestic and married relationships, but the relationships young people are having with one another in a way that does not shame young people for sexual exploration and promotes healthy, respectful, equal and consensual relationship models.

They empower women

Violence against women is intrinsically linked to women's political, social and economic position, and as such, violence prevention activities must be positioned within the broader aims of empowering women across these spheres and enhancing women's human rights. Increasing women's access to education and employment leads to changes in understandings of gender and gender roles, something that evidence strongly suggests is necessary to protect women's rights and increase their social power. Furthermore, the better educated a person (for instance, if they have attended or completed secondary education), the more likely they are to oppose cultural norms and practices that lead to or legitimise violence against women. Girls who are educated enjoy greater autonomy in decision making in their lives and often marry later, while increasing access to employment has far-reaching social implications in challenging existing perceptions of gender roles that limit women's independence and ability to contribute equally to household decision making. Therefore, empowering women and equipping them with the resources to claim their rights is an important component of any violence prevention program.

They work across the prevention – response continuum, ensuring that women experiencing violence have access to support services

It is critical that all aspects of addressing violence against women and girls, from primary prevention to response, are adequately strategised for and resourced and are working together effectively. Primary prevention should complement response mechanisms and services rather than being prioritised and resourced over them. All parts of prevention are essential, and it is important that they work together effectively as a system. Effective, quality and accessible response services should be a key component of any violence prevention strategy. It is well established that violence prevention programming leads to an increase in demand for support services. Programs that do not respond to this demand have the potential to do harm.²⁷ It is therefore an ethical responsibility of violence prevention programs to ensure that women and girls have access to counselling and other support services. This can be particularly challenging in the Pacific context, including Vanuatu, where there are few quality medical and psychosocial services for survivors of violence, especially in rural communities. Even where services exist, there are numerous practical and cultural barriers that prevent women from accessing them. Subsequently, women are more likely to turn to family, friends and community leaders for support rather than formal services.²⁸ This means that organisations working in violence prevention may need to create innovative solutions for ensuring women and girls have access to support. There are examples of organisations working in communities with little or no access to formal services who have addressed this gap by strengthening informal support networks, for instance, training members of the community to deliver basic counselling and legal aid and to facilitate referrals. This model is used by the Vanuatu Women's Centre Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW) program. A review found that CAVAWs play a vital role in increasing women's access to support services and access to justice for survivors of VAWG in Vanuatu, including provision of basic psychosocial and legal counselling.²⁹

They are intersectional and inclusive

While violence against women is primarily perpetrated against women by men, gender-based violence can also be perpetrated upon both women and men to enforce rigid, binary and heteronormative gender norms. Women and men who do not conform to heteronormative gender norms are vulnerable to violence, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer people. These groups often experience more violence, and more severe forms of violence, however, their experiences and voices are overlooked and rendered invisible.

Other factors, including age, marital status, ability, HIV status, access to resources, and belonging to ethnic minority groups can compound women's vulnerability to violence. Women's diverse experiences and vulnerabilities to violence must be taken into account in violence prevention programming if it is to be effective and equitable.

They are matched with adequate time and resource investment

A compelling amount of evidence is emphatic that short-term, one-off programs will not result in substantial and sustained change.³⁰ While some limited changes within a particular setting can be achieved within a number of years with a careful, evidence-based approach and adequate resources, it needs long-term and multi-sectoral investment to galvanise and sustain change in the entire population. The predominance of short-term funding agreements is a significant barrier to the prevention of violence against women and girls. It fosters a culture of short-term, one-off initiatives, it hinders innovation, which requires time to test and reiterate, and it limits opportunities for scaling up and replicating promising approaches. It is imperative that non-government, government, private sector and philanthropic actors work together to cultivate a funding environment that enables long-term investments.

They are evidence-based and iterative

Using evidence-based strategies to prevent violence against women and girls is a relatively new and innovative field. The global evidence for what works to prevent violence against women has only started to consolidate in the last decade. As the evidence has been consolidated, so too have the standards and measures for meaningful programmatic and whole-of-population evaluation. The global sector continues to learn at a rapid pace what makes for successful sectoral strategies and approaches, and of course, the contextual settings for the work are also diverse and particular. It is therefore essential to draw upon the shared body of knowledge produced by the global community working to prevent violence against women and girls, and to look carefully and critically at one's own particular interventions. Reflection practice and careful programmatic and policy iteration based on robust and regular monitoring, evaluation and learning is vital, as is upfront investment in strong design. Change in this area of work is complex and long-term, and, as discussed in the previous section, it may not be possible to see short- to medium-term change in relation to prevalence of violence against women and girls. Inter-agency plans and programmatic design should include a strong focus on research, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and MEL capacity building of local organisations, researchers and evaluators, with guidance from experts in this field. Designs should regularly transform based on lessons generated through MEL and research.

Successful and promising approaches for the prevention of violence against women and girls

Strengthening the enabling environment for the prevention of violence against women and girls

To achieve sustainable change, violence prevention interventions must be reinforced at the macro-level through policies, legislation and institutional mechanisms that both protect women's rights and respond to the abuse of those rights, including violence against women and girls. Because gender inequality is correlated with violence against women and girls,³¹ policies and laws that promote gender equality make an important contribution to the prevention of violence against women and girls. A coordinated and adequately resourced national machinery and service system must also be in place to implement policies and enforce laws, though, for example, prosecuting offenders and offering protection and support services to women experiencing violence. Response functions, including the prosecution of offenders, contribute to the prevention of violence against women and girls by communicating that violence is not an acceptable behaviour and such responses act as a deterrent to future offenders.³²

The Vanuatu Government recognises that gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution through Chapter 2, Part 1, which establishes the rights and freedoms of all individuals without discrimination.³³ The government's commitment to women's rights, including the right to live free from violence, has also been enshrined in numerous international mechanisms and agreements, including:

- The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol
- The Millennium Development Goals
- The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA);
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (The protection of children's rights is fundamental to the prevention of violence against women and girls as gender violence affects girls as well as women).³⁴

At a regional level, there are a number of commitments, frameworks and platforms focused on addressing and preventing violence against women and girls and promoting gender equality. These include the Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (2012), recommendations made at the triennial conferences of Pacific women (2010, 2013 and 2017), and the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016).³⁵ In 2009, the Pacific Islands Forum Reference Group on Sexual and Gender Based Violence was established to coordinate regional efforts and monitor political commitments.

Under international law and as a signatory to CEDAW, Vanuatu has an obligation to enact policies and laws to address violence against women.³⁶ Vanuatu has been consistently, although slowly, strengthening the enabling environment through policy and legislation reform since Independence. Most significantly, in 2008 Vanuatu became the first country in the Pacific region to pass comprehensive domestic violence legislation. The Family Protection Act, which creates a specific domestic violence offence, has significantly improved legal protections for women experiencing or at risk of violence.³⁷ The Act requires police to intervene if violence is suspected and prohibits the payment of bride price being used as a defence in domestic violence cases. The Act empowers courts, as well as a system of

Authorised Persons in rural areas, to provide enforceable Family Protection Orders when acts of domestic violence have been, or are likely to be, committed.³⁸

Another significant achievement in recent years, is the establishment of the first National Gender Equality Policy (2015 – 2019), which affirms the Government’s commitment to gender equality and the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls.³⁹ Gender equality is also included as a priority in the plans and strategies within an increasing number of ministries and departments and features in the country’s development agenda through the Priorities and Action Agenda 2006 – 2015, which recognises that “creating an environment through the development of legislation and positive economic and social policies for the full development of women is necessary for the achievement of equality, development and peace.”⁴⁰ In 2016, the Government launched a comprehensive National Child Protection Policy.⁴¹ The establishment of the Gender and Protection Cluster following Tropical Cyclone Pam in March 2015, also significantly strengthens the enabling environment as Vanuatu is the world’s most at-risk country for natural disasters⁴² and gender-violence is exacerbated by disasters.

Strengthening the enabling environment for the advancement of gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls

The evidence-base identifies the following characteristics of an enabling environment for the prevention of violence against women and girls:⁴³

1. Leadership to prevent violence against women is demonstrated at all levels of government, across political parties and by public and private sector institutions and civil society organisations.
2. A gender equality policy and a policy for the primary prevention of violence against women (either as a dedicated policy or as a specific area within a broader policy) are in place.
3. Gender equality and violence prevention policies articulate gender equality and prevention of violence against women as core human rights obligations of governments and they employ an intersectional approach.
4. Gender equality and violence prevention policies are accompanied by action plans, investment plans and implementation mechanisms.
5. Gender sensitive policymaking and budgeting procedures are embedded in all government departments and mechanisms.
6. Gender equality and violence prevention goals and targets are widely embedded in legislation, including anti-discrimination legislation and legislation that criminalises all forms of violence against women (physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence). Legislation clearly communicates that no custom, tradition or religious consideration may be invoked to justify violence against women.
7. Policies and legislation provide for the designation of specialised police units and specialised prosecutor units on violence against women and provide adequate funding for their work and specialised training of their staff.
8. Overarching coordination and advisory structures guide the design, development and evaluation of prevention policy and programming, with diverse representation from relevant departments, civil society, public and private sector agencies.

9. All partners implementing prevention activity (governments, civil society, public and private sector institutions and organisations) report on progress and evaluate their efforts against standardised measures and targets.
10. Government supports and funds public awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women that sensitise the population to violence against women and raise consciousness of laws enacted to address violence against women and the remedies they contain.

Vanuatu's achievements have been echoed throughout the Pacific region. Recent national studies into violence against women raised awareness of the severity of the issue, showing that several Pacific Countries have some of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. This has driven action and seen widespread expansion of legislative and policy measures across the Pacific Region. After the FPA passed in Vanuatu in 2009, a string of Pacific countries also passed legislation aimed at preventing violence, and better protecting women from violence, including Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Kosrae State.⁴⁴

These gains would not have been possible without the persistent lobbying and advocacy efforts of women's rights activists and civil society organisations. Research shows that a strong feminist movement is the most important and consistent factor driving governments to take action to combat violence against women and girls.⁴⁵ In Vanuatu, women's rights activists and organisations have strengthened the enabling environment by lobbying and advocating for policy and legislative change, holding government to account to implement their commitments, raising awareness of rights and services and increasing access to justice systems for women experiencing violence.⁴⁶

The most notable achievement is the passing of Vanuatu's Family Protection Act in 2008, which was the result of eleven years of lobbying and advocacy from women's organisations, in partnerships with the Department of Women's Affairs. The Vanuatu Women's Centre in particular played an instrumental role in this historic achievement. The Vanuatu Women's Centre, through their Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW), ensure that information about the FPA and women's rights reaches women and men in rural areas (where 80% of the population lives), and that women experiencing violence have access to the policing and judicial system.⁴⁷ For example, CAVAW members are instrumental in helping women to obtain Domestic Violence Protection Orders and access police and magistrate courts,⁴⁸ and police who have been trained by VWC are more diligent in following up cases.⁴⁹ Lobbying from the Vanuatu Women's Centre also contributed to the introduction of The Family Violence Policy and Standard Operating Procedures of the Vanuatu Police Force in 2015, which reinforce the criminal nature of family violence incidents and make certain that charges cannot be dropped.⁵⁰

Consistent advocacy efforts by Department of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Community Services, CARE in Vanuatu and Save the Children have garnered ongoing support for the Gender and Protection Cluster,¹ which will ensure women's and children's needs are mainstreamed in disaster response efforts. For example, during the response to the Ambae volcanic eruption and evacuation in 2017, the Gender and Protection Cluster lobbied to highlight the importance of gender balanced rapid

¹ The Gender Protection Cluster is led by Department of Women's Affairs and co-led by CARE in Vanuatu and Save the Children.

assessment teams; consultation with women, boys, girls and people living with disability; and gender mainstreaming across all sectoral clusters.

CARE has a strong record of supporting and strengthening the women's movement through measures such as establishing networks for gender equality and the elimination of violence against women and girls. For example, in November 2017, CARE facilitated the pre- and post-13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women workshops, co-founded by Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, which provided a space for a diverse range of civil society organisations and government representatives to come together to reflect on the history of the women's movement in Vanuatu and start to work towards concrete plans for the future. The break out group on EVAWG discussed opportunities for working together to take action going forward and included participants from Vanuatu Women's Centre, CARE, Live and Learn, Action Aid, Vanuatu Mama's English Class, and Oxfam. Sharing prevention approaches, learning from each other and working towards the implementation of the National Gender Equality Policy were identified as being of key importance for the future.

The role of civil society organisations in strengthening the enabling environment for the prevention of violence against women and girls

Civil society organisations, particularly women's organisations, have an important role to play in developing and monitoring the implementation of policies and legislations aimed at preventing violence against women and girls. The literature recommends the following strategies:⁵¹

1. Monitor and report on the compliance of national laws and policies with international and regional agreements on the elimination of violence against women and girls.
2. Raise awareness of laws and policies at the community-level and provide gender-sensitisation training to institutions responsible for implementing laws including police and judges.
3. Align prevention efforts to nationally-coordinated and regional frameworks and show support for a resource-constrained States by working with government on policy and legislative reform.
4. Undertake community consultations to inform policy-making and create a groundswell of citizen buy-in to the importance of policy and legislative reform and understanding of rights.
5. Support the collection of high-quality data on the prevalence and patterns of violence against women and girls. Data is an essential tool to advocate for and create policy, legislative and institutional change.
6. Advocate for the creation, and adequate resourcing of specialist government departments and units (often referred to as 'national women's machineries'), as well as bodies separate to the state but created through legislation (such as Australia's Our Watch), to coordinate the implementation of national violence prevention strategies.
7. Support the Government to reform systems, legislation and policy, and to create, implement and monitor a National Action Plan. This can be achieved by engaging the expertise and resources of development partners, regional organisations and networks (such as Pacific Women, UN Women, PIFS, SPC and FWCC).

While Vanuatu has made meaningful strides in recent years towards creating an enabling environment for the prevention of violence against women and girls, there is still a long way to go and there are many barriers that continue to impede progress. There are gaps in policies and legislation including sexual harassment legislation, and there is no National Action Plan for the prevention of violence against women and girls. National Action Plans play an important role in guiding policy, legislative and institutional reform and they provide a framework for multi-sectoral, multi-site, comprehensive and long-term violence prevention strategies. National Action Plans are also a key mechanism for meeting obligations under international legal and policy instruments such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.⁵² National Action Plans should include a specific focus on primary prevention providing an all-encompassing plan for transforming attitudes, norms and behaviours driving violence against women and girls, and building a skilled workforce and infrastructure dedicated to primary prevention work across the population.

Evidence-based recommendations for the development of a good-practice National Action Plan⁵³

UN Women's good practice guidelines recommend that National Action Plans on violence against women:

1. Are guided by a human rights approach, that is, they define violence against women according to international norms, acknowledge that violence against women is a violation of human rights, and respond explicitly to State obligations under relevant human rights treaties.
2. Acknowledge that violence against women is a form of discrimination and manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women.
3. Recognize and address the multiple and intersecting forms of violence against women.
4. Are informed by international research on the root causes, nature and impact of violence against women worldwide and contribute to the evidence-base through regular collection and communication of research on the nature, prevalence and impact of different forms of violence against women and support of independent research on emerging issues related to violence against women.
5. Recognize that women's experience of violence is shaped by factors such as their race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, marital status, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, migrant or refugee status, age, or disability and tailor strategies and actions with regards to the specific issues faced by different groups of women, aiming for equality of outcomes for all women.
6. Outline a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained programme of activity that builds evidence and practice over time, including cross-cutting actions to establish governance structures, ensure participation of civil society, strengthen law and policy, and establish an integrated service, police and judicial response to violence against women.
7. Provide for the review and revision of existing policy and legislation to align with international law and best practice, ensure the application of these laws, and the harmonization of laws, policies and procedures across jurisdictions.

8. Provide that all relevant professionals across sectors and jurisdictions that respond to violence against women receive standardized, accredited and comprehensive training on the issues surrounding violence against women and its causes and consequences.
9. Include measures to prevent violence against women by addressing social and cultural norms, including awareness-raising strategies in key educational, organizational and community settings, engaging specific groups such as men and boys, parents, children and young people.
10. Address associated factors which can contribute to or intensify violence against women.
11. Mandate education promoting human rights and gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, discrimination and violence against women, and building skills for equal and respectful relationships and for peaceful conflict resolution, at all levels of schooling.
12. Address associated factors which can exacerbate violence against women such as alcohol and drug abuse.
13. Contain measures to build, strengthen, fund and support an integrated, system-wide response to incidents of violence against women, including care, support and empowerment of victims/survivors and protection and justice and ensure universal coverage of the system across geographical locations.

As in many other Pacific countries, where policies and legislation do exist, implementation is stifled by pronounced financial and human resourcing deficits and the ongoing challenge of reaching rural populations. The implementation of the FPA, for example, is under resourced and as a result, progress has been slow and uneven. One significant shortfall of the FPA is that protections enshrined in the Act are only beginning to reach women in rural areas (where 80% of the population live), nine years after the law passed. This is because implementation of the Authorised Persons and Registered Counsellors provisions – the key mechanisms of the Act designed to extend the protections to rural areas – did not commence until 2018. Under the FPA, Authorised Persons and Registered Counsellors have the power to issue temporary protection orders for victims of domestic violence. Registered Counsellors are trained to provide counselling to victims and/or perpetrators of violence when ordered by an Authorised Person. These provisions empower community members to address domestic violence in areas where formal judicial systems are not easily accessible. In February 2018 the government launched a trial of the Authorised Persons and Registered Counsellors provisions in six communities through a partnership between the Ministry of Justice and Community Services and the Australian-funded Stretem Rod Blong Jastis (Vanuatu Australia Policing and Justice Program). The trial is designed to test the feasibility of implementing the provisions throughout Vanuatu. To date, 12 Authorised Persons and Seven Registered Counsellors have been appointed for a twelve-month term. This step has been applauded by civil society groups and organisations that have been lobbying and advocating for the full implementation of the FPA. The Authorised Persons have granted 14 Temporary Protection Orders for the protection of victims of domestic violence since the pilot began.

While improvements to the formal justice sector are ongoing, including the establishment of a dedicated policing unit which reaches into provincial centres called the Family Protection Unit, most cases of family violence are still addressed through the *kastom* system, which is problematic because this system does not always aim to foster equality and transformation of gender norms.⁵⁴ The mechanisms employed by the *Kastom* system often prioritise reconciliation, forgiveness and privacy over condemning violence, protecting women and preventing future incidence of violence, and further entrench the social norms

that foster violence against women and girls. Even when women do have access to formal justice systems, the police officers and judges share many of the attitudes embedded in the *kastom* system which are often incongruent with gender equality and human-rights based responses to family violence.⁵⁵ Research by Heidi Tyedmers on access to justice in Vanuatu found that “*kastom*, in many compelling ways [has] been institutionalized in the formal sector.”⁵⁶ In this context, women’s rights organisations, namely the Vanuatu Women’s Centre, play a critical role in monitoring the traditional and restorative justice system and holding them to account for protecting women and their right to justice.⁵⁷

Substantial gains have been made in strengthening the enabling environment for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Vanuatu. There are however, significant gaps in policies and legislation, and national machinery tasked with the implementation of policies and legislation are under-resourced and continue to harbor attitudes and practices incompatible with the advancement of gender equality and the prevention of violence. While government must play a leading role in the strengthening of the enabling environment, change is most likely to be achieved through the coordinated efforts of government, non-government organisations, private sector and civil society.

Specific sectoral prevention approaches

Prevention strategies will be most effective when messages are reinforced across all areas of society. This includes workplaces, schools, health services, police, courts, media, and sports. These sectors play an important role in norms-setting with regard to gender and other relevant social norms which drive and reinforce VAWG in the wider environment. Schools and curriculum can, for example, either perpetuate rigid and harmful gender roles and norms amongst children, or they can help to promote gender equality in the next generation.

Sectors, such as schools, workplaces, police, health and social services are embedded in communities and have unparalleled opportunities to engage with hard-to-reach individuals and groups in the community. Historically, these sectors have been engaged to identify people experiencing violence to connect them to provide referral pathways. However, more recently it has been recognised that these same institutions are well positioned to contribute to the prevention of violence against women and girls by breaking cycles of violence and reinforcing the message that violence against women is never acceptable.

Sector-focused strategies are also crucial for addressing harmful gender and social norms and practices within particular contexts. For example, international studies of the culture and practices of police, military and peacekeeping institutions have revealed disturbing trends in the treatment of women and in the abuse of women and other vulnerable people within their ranks and in the populations these institutions are designed to serve. Male-dominated sports institutions, for example, have historically carried a culture that reinforces the perception that masculinity is aggressive and violent by nature, and that is complicit in the degradation of women. In Australia, for example, studies of the leading national football codes (AFL and NRL) have revealed a disturbing pattern of male footballer violence against women and girls, including intimate partner domestic violence and sexual assault, including group rituals of rape, and the colluding of clubs to protect these young men, deny their action, blame victims for the violence perpetrated against them and condone violence against women and girls as a rite of passage. A recent study has also established that in parts of Australia where the NRL is widely followed, on State of Origin days, there is a marked spike in the incidence of domestic violence against women and children (40.7% increase in NSW) and non-domestic violence assaults (71.8% in NSW).⁵⁸ Therefore, the

specific VAWG-condoning cultures of these high-risk sectors need to be understood and transformed through tailored approaches.

The following section summarises the available evidence and provides case studies of successful or promising approaches within schools, sports and health services. It should be noted that sectoral prevention approaches are an emergent field so there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of these practises.⁵⁹

School-based strategies

Evidence indicates that school-based interventions hold promise as a sectoral approach to the prevention of violence against women and girls.⁶⁰ Schools and other educational settings, from early childhood to adulthood, formal and informal, are both community hubs and important settings where actions can be taken to reshape the attitudes and norms of the next generations. Schools provide the opportunity to engage children and young people during the time in which they are forming their attitudes about relationships. Violence prevention strategies targeting young people have been shown to be highly effective at shaping attitudes and behaviour and creating a foundation for the development of respectful, equal relationships.⁶¹

Global and regional platforms have called for a focus on the transformation of gender norms amongst young people through educational settings. It is considered good practice to have a dedicated educational setting stream in National Action Plans.⁶² Pacific regional platforms, too, have called upon Pacific states to focus on young people through education in the prevention of violence against women and girls; for example the outcomes of the 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women called for States to support “the engagement of adolescents and youths as strategic groups for ending the implementation of educational programmes, based on gender equality and human rights.”⁶³

School-based strategies are most effective when they employ a whole-of-school approach, involving teachers, students and parents, and focusing on teacher training, school leadership engagement, gender-aware protocols, policies and reporting mechanisms to create a safe, equal and inclusive school culture for staff and students. This strategy can create a culture when stereotypes are challenged, gender-based discrimination is not tolerated and gender equality is promoted and modelled.⁶⁴

National education policies and guidelines should include the requirement for schools to integrate curricula that promote gender equality, human rights, equal and respectful relationships and non-violence.⁶⁵ These guidelines ought to ensure that the development of such approaches is supported by specialist expertise in gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls. Teachers should also be provided with training to teach materials and to be first responders to violence where it is disclosed by children and other individuals.⁶⁶

Respectful Relationships Education in Schools pilot – Our Watch – Australia⁶⁷

Australia's leading VAW prevention agency, Our Watch, has developed the Respectful Relationships Education in Schools pilot. The Respectful Relationships program worked with 19 schools to embed a whole-of-school approach to respectful relationships education, including embedding a relationship education program *Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out against Gender-based Violence* into the curriculum of years 8 and 9. Respectful Relationships does not just provide curriculum and resources to use in-class, it is a whole-of-school approach to gender equality and prevention of VAWG that addresses school culture, policies and procedures. An evaluation of the program found that the program resulted in clear, consistent and positive impacts on student's attitudes, knowledge and skills and initiated the beginnings of change in school policies, culture and ethos.

Choices Curriculum - Save the Children - Global⁶⁸

Globally, Save the Children have a strong record of transforming gender attitudes and behaviours of school-aged children. The Choices curriculum, which was first piloted in Nepal and then expanded to diverse countries around the world, has proven effective at transforming some of the beliefs about gender and behaviours of the young boys and girls. The Choices curriculum uses participatory age- and developmentally-appropriate activities to explore themes of gender inequity and power, promote dialogue around respect, communication and fairness and identify small actions that can promote gender equity and empower girls. It focuses on youths aged 10-14 in order to intervene early in young people's perceptions of gender roles and norms. Evaluations of the pilot found statistically significant results indicating that participants' attitudes had changed, with fewer believing it is okay for a man to hit his wife and more believing it was important for girls to have the same educational and employment options as boys. Save the Children extended the program to parents through the VOICES program and PROMISES, a community-wide education campaign. VOICES and PROMISES aim to reinforce messages of the CHOICES program and equip parents and communities to challenge the rigid, gendered expectations for their children.

Healthcare settings

Women are more likely to interact with the health care system than any other institution, and women experiencing violence visit health services more frequently than other women.⁶⁹ While many women do not disclose their experiences of violence when accessing health services, well trained health care workers can play a crucial role in detecting, and caring for women experiencing violence and referring them to appropriate services. In recognition of this, one-stop-shops are being established in hospitals and medical centres to connect women experiencing violence to a range of services including counselling, safe houses, police, legal services and social workers. For example, the Family and Sexual Violence Case Management Centre was established in Papua New Guinea (PNG) by Femili PNG, Oxfam PNG and Australian National University to provide wrap-around support services to women experiencing violence including counselling services, legal support to navigate court systems, and support to access safe houses or return to home villages away from perpetrators.

More recently, health services have started to engage in primary prevention activities. The health sector has extensive experience with health promotion activities that use education and awareness raising

strategies to reduce the prevalence of preventable diseases such as HIV. These activities can easily be expanded to include violence prevention messaging. Further, health services are often trusted institutions making them particularly well positioned to influence attitudes and behaviours about violence. Health centres can contribute to prevention efforts by displaying posters and information resources that challenge social norms that foster violence against women and promote alternative, desirable behaviours. It is recommended that resources that target women experiencing violence are made available in the women's bathrooms to ensure they can access these resources confidentially. Health care professionals can play a key role in challenging the normalisation of violence by creating safe spaces for women to talk about their experiences of violence. There are also examples of health services engaging in community-level awareness raising activities.

In the Pacific context, interventions that seek to engage the health sector should ensure they work with traditional healers, including traditional birth attendants, to equip them with knowledge and resources to disseminate violence prevention messages.

Justo Rufino Barrios Clinic – Guatemala⁷⁰

In the Justo Rufino Barrios Clinic in Guatemala City, health promoters perform short theatrical skits in the waiting rooms to challenge the stigma associated with talking about violence against women and to encourage patients to talk to their providers if they need help.⁷¹

Sports

As with any major cultural sector, sports is an environment in which violence against women can take place, and in which gender norms and attitudes to gender-based violence can be reinforced. However, this environment is one that can be transformed to develop greater equality in gender relations and the reshaping of norms that underlie violence.

Research indicates that violence prevention through sports should address the gendered drivers of violence through a whole-of-sport approach: changing leadership approaches and organisational culture practices to promote meaningful involvement of women and girls in sport, both on the field and in organisations. Appreciation for diversity within the sporting community should be developed. Sporting environments need to invest in appropriate responses to incidents of disrespect and violence against women, and re-articulate the values of the sport, club or organization to promote equality, respect and non-violence.⁷²

Equal Playing Field for Schools Program – Equal Playing Field – Papua New Guinea⁷³

Equal Playing Field has, since 2015, implemented an 'Equal Playing Field for Schools' program in ten primary schools in Port Moresby, PNG, reaching over 80 teachers, and 90 volunteers and 3000 students at year 7 level. The program consists of training of teachers and community volunteers, volunteer-run implementation of an eight-week respectful relationships sports-based curriculum in participating schools, and the continuation of activities to support gender equality through children's School Action Groups, 'Dolphins for Change.' A 2017 program evaluation found that the program has been effective in positively influencing gender norms amongst children, the community volunteers and teachers.⁷⁴

Violence Prevention Campaigns

Globally, there has been a wide array of communications and advocacy campaigns focused on preventing violence against women and girls. Historically, campaigns have largely focused on raising awareness of violence against women and promoting gender equality and non-violence. However, 'social norms marketing' campaigns are becoming increasingly common. This type of campaigning seeks to prevent violence before it occurs by transforming the social norms that foster violence against women.⁷⁵

There is emerging evidence that social norms marketing campaigns are more effective than awareness raising campaigns at galvanizing lasting change. Focusing on social norms means shifting social expectations amongst a large reference group, that is, drawing attention to what is (or should be, in a new, imagined state) typical or desirable.⁷⁶ 'Social norms marketing' campaigning promotes positive stories of change or positive deviance examples and promotes messages that support the imagining of a different, more positive reality. This is in contrast to awareness-raising campaigns that work solely to raise awareness about the problem.⁷⁷

In shifting social norms, it is necessary to identify the reference group (the audience and those who are holding in place certain norms driving violence against women and girls), and the particular negative norm or norms that need to change. The aim is to change perceptions of what is desirable. Successful campaigning will weaken an existing norm, or replace an old, negative norm with a new, positive one.⁷⁸ Campaigning gives people a chance to imagine a new reality and experience that as socially desirable. This ability to see gender transformation at work is powerful given how entrenched gender socialisation can be.

Mass media marketing campaigns around social norms may employ one or more platforms, from television and radio (both announcements and programming), print media (including newspapers, billboards, posters and flyers), popular music, cellular text messaging, and increasingly, social media. This kind of campaigning allows for cost-effective scale-up and value-adding to violence prevention programming and policy models, making possible a large outreach and diffusing messages amongst a much greater group of beneficiaries. This diffusion is essential for norm change, transforming social expectations amongst a critical mass within a reference group.⁷⁹ Campaigns can also reach certain groups in ways that are tailored to them, for example, social media strategies reaching a youth audience in the online spaces they occupy or on the platforms they use.⁸⁰ This strategy to VAWG prevention is being heralded as providing an opportunity for the generation of innovative partnerships with private sector and popular culture outlets and figures.

When done well, social norms marketing campaigns are promising, however, in order to be done well, they must be based on a deep understanding of the way social norms operate to condone, justify and excuse violence against women and girls and they require a long-term investment in multiple-prong strategies.⁸¹ Norms are deeply entrenched, and changing norms is unlikely to occur without multiple, reinforcing strategies. Therefore, campaigns are best used as a complementary strategy to other, more direct engagement programming and policy change strategies. Successful campaigning strategies are often phased, with peak moments and calls to action, occurring in a cycle of 'expose-engage-action'.⁸² They also tend to involve a range of platforms so that there is a higher chance of repeated, reinforced exposure to key messages. As with all VAWG prevention strategies, campaigns have the potential to do harm if they are not supported by a robust risk analysis and mitigation strategy. In the case of campaigns, the biggest risk is that messaging is misinterpreted and reinforces attitudes and norms that foster violence. For this reason, campaigns should be tested to ensure they do not contradict core violence prevention messaging, including the message that violence against women and girls is an abuse

of power that is wrong, unacceptable and never excusable and the message that everyone has a responsibility to work together to end violence against women and girls.⁸³

STANAP STRONG AKENSEM VAELENS – 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women – Vanuatu⁸⁴

The Stanap Strong Akensem Vaelens (Stanap Strong) campaign, which aimed to change people's beliefs and attitudes, causing them to recognise that violence against women and girls is not acceptable and to take joint responsibility for standing up to stop it, was launched as part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Girls, which runs from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day every year. The highly successful event was achieved by an interagency partnership between a range of civil society organisations, government and private sector agencies, including the Department of Women's Affairs, CARE International, Van2017, Human Capacity Development International, UN Women, Vanuatu Women's Centre, World Vision and numerous other organisations who assisted with campaign activities.

The Stanap Strong campaign reflected good-practice by challenging the normalisation of violence, raising the profile of community leaders who are committed to standing up against violence against women and raising awareness of practical things individuals can do to stand up against violence against women. Through the use of an interagency, multi-channelled approach, that delivered messages in a fresh, relevant and engaging way, the campaign successfully reached thousands of people and engaged a broad cross-section of society. Key to the extensive reach was the way the Campaign capitalised on the Van2017 Pacific Mini Games, a regional sports event which attracted more than 40,000 spectators. There is anecdotal evidence that the campaign resulted in people reflecting on their attitudes and behaviour and seeking more information.

Some key elements of the event contributed to its success:

- The launch event included a public pledge from community leaders, including high-profile members of Vanuatu youth culture, who explained how and why they were committed to standing up against violence against women, and painted their handprint and a personal message on a pledge banner. An estimated 500 people attended the event and 306 people at the event took the pledge. The opening event also included a live performance of the theme song for the campaign by the Ni-Vanuatu hip hop band Confliction.
- A stall was held at the Stadium during the Pacific Games with an estimated 1500 people engaging with the stall and 1250 people taking the pledge.
- The campaign was promoted through branded banners, posters and merchandise. 1000 posters, 19,000 stickers, 13,500 wristbands, 300 caps, and 400 shirts and singlets were distributed throughout the campaign. Around 9000 Stanap Strong branded postcards were distributed with information on practical things individuals can do to stand up against violence against women and girls. Campaign T-shirts were worn by the Pacific Games Mascot, members of band Confliction during their performance at Fest Nap'uan and the manager of the Pacific Games Opening Ceremony during the internationally televised event, to provide campaign visibility. They were also distributed to key Vanuatu athletes competing at the Pacific Games, including the men's football team, the men's archery team, the women's football team and the

women's netball team. They were worn during training and warm ups and were visible in media coverage of the Games.

- An athlete's event was held to engage female athletes, raise awareness of the campaign and distribute merchandise.
- A music video to accompany the theme song was created and published on the Facebook page, which was viewed by more than 59,000 people, "liked" by 4,500 people and shared 548 times.
- A Facebook page was created to reach a national, online audience, particularly young men and women. The page features engaging video, image and written content that challenge the belief that violence against women is "normal," explores the impacts of negative relationships and violence, provides alternative ways of thinking and behaving, and galvanises commitment to changing societal norms by standing up against violence. The page also provided an effective mechanism for promoting other campaign activities. Almost 2,000 people now follow the Facebook page.
- A radio campaign, including an hour-long feature program, a competition, advertisements and a series of messages from on-air personalities were used to engage people in the campaign, challenge the normalisation of violence and confront myths surrounding the issue. It is estimated the radio campaign reached 100,000 people each day.
- An SMS campaign was used to drive traffic to the Facebook page.
- A print campaign coordinated by the Daily Post included daily features on community members speaking out against violence against women in the Daily Post throughout the 16 Days of Activism. This campaign reached between 3000 – 3500 people each day.
- Billboard advertising in Port Vila disseminated messages challenging excuses used to justify violence against women.

REDEFINING NORMS TO EMPOWER WOMEN (RENEW) – CARE SRI LANKA – SRI LANKA⁸⁵

ReNEW, a pilot project initiated by CARE in Sri Lanka, sought to explore how social norms that underpin intimate partner violence could be addressed using an approach based on social norms theory. In the year-long phase one, CARE undertook rigorous research to identify the social norms that foster intimate partner violence. The research found that the social norms that normalise male aggression and violence in conflicts between husbands and wives are key to maintaining women's subordination. Phase two, also a year long, was designed to challenge and weaken these social norms. The project narrowed in on these social norms to increase the chance of achieving measurable change within the short pilot.

The project sought to change people's perceptions of what is considered normal and acceptable by challenging the negative social norms by promoting positive alternatives. This approach is founded on social norm theory which posits that as positive alternatives become more visible, more people will feel comfortable rejecting harmful social norms until a critical mass is reached and positive norms take root. The project used several mediums to promote examples of positive alternatives to aggression among men:

1. Reference Groups: Influential community members were selected to form a reference group. Reference Group allies were encouraged to find ways to take action or speak out against male aggression and violence

in intimate relationships in their communities and in the course of their work. Importantly, there was a robust selection process to ensure reference group members' attitudes and behavior reinforced the aims of the program.

2. Community talk shows: Community talk shows were held in communities which explored what it means to be a man; what the community can do when there is an argument between husbands and wives; the health implications of aggression and violence and what role religion and schools can play in challenging aggression.
3. Media campaign: The media campaign included posters promoting expectations of non-violence in the home, a series of radio discussions about how aggression and domestic violence affects the whole community and a song targeting men challenging their use of aggression and promoting the benefits of a more peaceful relationship with their wives.
4. Educational programming: The project introduced educational sessions in schools to teach children anger management strategies.

The campaigns were developed in partnership with a specialist media company and an expert on the application of social norms theory. In developing the media campaign messaging, the team went through a regular process of checking back against the core ideas of a social norms approach, including asking questions like:

- Does the messaging challenge both normative (what people think others expect of them) and empirical (what they think other do) expectations?
- Does it reflect and challenge the main ideas in relation to how male aggression was expressed and social sanctions around the same?
- Does it provide/depict positive alternatives?

The project was thoroughly evaluated at the end of phase two, revealing that the project had some, although limited, success at weakening the social norms that normalise men's use of aggression and violence in conflicts with their wives. The evaluation found evidence of the posters challenging norms. For example, one man asked "when others are living decent lives, why should I continue to behave badly?" and another commented that the posters show "how the community will see and support families that are doing well and that are happy."

This project demonstrated good-practice in many ways: it was founded on the latest evidence about social norm change and it had a clear theory of change based on a comprehensive understanding of how social norms foster violence in the communities where the project was implemented. The project was monitored closely so the process of change could be understood, and backlash would be identified early. The project had every chance of significantly influencing social norms, however, because the project only ran for one year, its impact was extremely limited.

INAF NAO! – OXFAM INTERNATIONAL – GLOBAL

In 2016, Oxfam International launched a multi-country campaign focused on challenging the condoning of violence against women and girls, called Enough! Oxfam in Vanuatu launched their Inaf Nao! campaign during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in November 2017. The campaign builds on Oxfam's gender-transformative community mobilization model and design process, SEED (Social and Economic Empowerment Design). Its launch saw community members, activists and organizational representatives who have been galvanized through SEED

and the Gender and Livelihoods program pictured with their own anti-violence, pro-gender justice and diversity messages. The campaign is intersectional and diverse. It highlights how other factors such as discrimination against gender diversity, sexual orientation and disability can intersect with gender inequality to drive and particularise gendered violence, giving a platform to diverse, typically marginalised voices. These powerful messages were disseminated through social media channels, including Oxfam in Vanuatu's Facebook page. Oxfam in Vanuatu is continuing this campaign in other ways and at other key moments over the next two years.

Oxfam in Solomon Islands launched their unbranded country version of Oxfam International's Enough! Campaign, called Side by Side: A Movement for Equality, in 2017. The Side by Side Movement campaign is based on a careful design strategy and targets young people to promote gender-equitable norms through arts (popular music, street arts) and social media messages (Facebook, Instagram as the key platforms), including the profiling of girls and women creating change and challenging gender norms. The campaign aims to build a movement of young people creating positive change, and has engaged popular young music and visual artists, held family-friendly popular music events, and engaged young people in the creation of street art. The key campaign message is "the time has come for men, women, boys and girls in Solomon Islands to stand together as equals, side by side."

While mass media campaigns are the most common and visible type of social norm marketing campaign, campaigning strategies utilise a range of mediums. There are some strong examples in the Pacific of face-to-face models such as peer-to-peer campaigning and theatre edutainment models. These approaches may be particularly relevant in Vanuatu where the majority of the population live in rural areas and therefore may not have easy access to mass media.

WAN SMOLBAG THEATRE GROUP – VANUATU⁸⁶

The Vanuatu theatre group Wan Smolbag (also Wan Smol Bag or WSB) uses drama and creative materials to raise awareness and generate community discussion about a range of issues including domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, sexual health and citizen's rights and responsibilities. Wan Smolbag has a strong reputation in Vanuatu and the region for delivering high-quality, locally produced film, radio and theatre productions and was recognised as an "outstanding example of the powerful impact of edutainment programs at their best" in the Australian Government review of global and regional promising approach in 2008.⁸⁷ Theatre provides a medium through which social behavior and social relations can be mirrored and examined. It also creates a safe space for reflection, questioning and learning and as such it can be a highly successful strategy for influencing social norms and practices. Part of what makes Wan Smolbag so successful is that messages are reinforced through a combination of strategies, including a peer-to-peer education model, outreach through clinics, and workshops with chiefs, community leaders, CAVAWs and provincial councils.

Wan Smolbag have extended the reach of their programs through the teledrama Love Patrol. Highly popular in Vanuatu and the wider region since 2006, audiences have followed the program's characters as they navigate key social issues including gender inequality and gendered violence. Love Patrol is highly effective because it encourages long term audience engagement through sophisticated and diverse human storylines. CARE has also supported Wan Smolbag to produce a film about sexual and reproductive health for young women, Yu No Save Ronwei Lo Lav. This film received over 5400 views on Facebook.

Community-based Programs

Changes at the macro level, such as through advances in legislation, sectoral approaches and campaigns must be reinforced at the individual, family and community-levels. When cultural institutions and practices at the community-level promote and reinforce gender inequality and violence against women and girls, they can block the influence of changes at other levels.⁸⁸ For example, even where advances have been made in legislation reform and policing practices, if women accept that intimate partner violence is justified in certain circumstances, as do many women in Melanesia, perpetrators will continue to commit crimes with impunity. Evidence shows that the traditions, beliefs, norms and practices that operate at the community level are key to the prevention of violence. Community-level programming is particularly important in countries such as Vanuatu where the majority of the population lives in rural areas.

Organisations working at the community level to prevent violence against women and girls employ a range of different strategies. The most effective programs integrate several strategies within the same program to reinforce the outcomes of each strategy. The approaches with the strongest evidence-base are outlined below, followed by a review of successful or promising community-level prevention programs, with a particular focus on programs in Vanuatu and the Pacific.

Shifting attitudes and norms

In recent years, evidence has affirmed that strategies assuming increased awareness of violence will lead to behavioural change are simplistic. Strategies based on this theory of change, which commonly focus on awareness raising activities, are unlikely to achieve substantial and sustainable change. Recent studies suggest social norms have a greater influence on behaviour than individual attitudes do.⁸⁹ Social norms are the shared expectations of groups or communities regarding how people should behave. Social norms are so powerful because individuals who deviate from group expectations are subject to shaming, sanctions, disapproval and social exclusion by others in their networks. As such there is a clear need to transform social norms that are rooted in gender inequality and that perpetuate VAWG in order to prevent VAWG.⁹⁰ There is an array of social and gender norms that are common throughout Melanesia⁹¹ (and elsewhere in the world), which create an environment that breeds violence and limits women's ability to combat violence and access justice and support.⁹² Examples of prominent norms include that violence is a private matter and should not be spoken about, that women should submit to men, that marriage, particularly when bride price is paid, gives men license to treat their wives as they choose, and the acceptability of violence against women (and men, and people of non-binary genders) when they do not adhere to gender norms. These norms justify and excuse violence against women to the extent that in some contexts it has become a normal and acceptable behaviour under specific circumstances.

Because this area of work is relatively new, and the relationship between attitudes, social norms and behaviour change is not yet well understood, it is necessary for organisations working in this space to build on the experiences of others and to continue trialling and testing new strategies.

SAFE FAMILIES – OXFAM – SOLOMON ISLANDS⁹³

The 'Let's make our Families Safe' (Safe Families) project "takes a multi-layered approach to violence prevention that aims to influence the social and cultural norms, values, attitudes and beliefs that support family and sexual violence, as well as enabling and resourcing collective action to enhance collaboration."⁹⁴ Led by Oxfam in Solomon

Islands, the program is implemented in collaboration with a consortium of partners, including International Women's Development Agency, National Council of Women, the Pacific Leadership Program, and Vois Blong Mere Solomon (VBMS), a grassroots women's radio organisation. Safe Families employs the following strategies to prevent violence against women and girls:

1. **Community Mobilisation:** Oxfam trained a network of Community Engagement Facilitators (CEFs) who facilitate community conversations about family and sexual violence in their communities. In these discussions, community members learn about family and sexual violence using a gender- and power-sensitive approach. Communities are then supported to develop Community Action Plans for preventing and responding to family and sexual violence within their communities.
2. **Safe Families Provincial Alliances:** One of the most unique and innovative aspects of the Safe Families model is the development of Safe Families Provincial Alliances – multi-stakeholder coalitions that meet regularly to share information and plan collective actions to prevent violence and strengthen service delivery at a Provincial level.
3. **Funding National Women's Institutions:** The Safe Families project provides core funding to several national women's institutions to ensure that the voice of rural women is included in the development of national laws and policies aimed at addressing family violence.

Safe Families is often referenced as a good-practice model for preventing violence in the Pacific. The program design builds on extensive research and consultations into lessons learned from violence prevention programming in Solomon Islands and the Pacific.⁹⁵ The program is implemented by a consortium of partners that work across the social ecology to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence by building on existing referral and support systems and simultaneously fostering collaboration to enable collective action among stakeholders to improve access to prevention and support services. Safe Families also works to strengthen women's movements and support partners to influence national laws and policies to end violence against women. It is a long-term program, using an iterative learning approach to ensure its strengths are leveraged and challenges are addressed throughout the program cycle.

Safe Families has not yet been evaluated so the effectiveness of this program cannot be assessed. However, ongoing monitoring of the program has delivered some key learnings that can be utilised by new violence prevention programs, including:

1. Violence prevention programs seeking to change attitudes and norms are most effective when they utilise cultural and religious values that promote the rights of women to reinforce program messaging. For the Safe Families program this has been critical to engaging traditional and faith leaders.
2. Personal transformation takes time. This is true for both Oxfam staff and Community Engagement Facilitators. Truly embracing gender equality on a personal level requires deep reflection of gender and power dynamics in personal relationships, and for men, it requires them to reject the power and entitlement they enjoy as men in a patriarchal society. If men and women are not adequately supported through this personal journey, there is the risk that they will reinforce gender inequality when interacting with communities.

Process and impact evaluations are being planned for Safe Families which will provide more insight into the effectiveness of this strategy and key learnings that can inform future violence prevention programming.

Gender-transformative programming

As discussed above, there is conclusive evidence that a gender transformative approach is a fundamental component of effective violence prevention programming.⁹⁶ Community-level gender transformative approaches create opportunities for critical reflection among men and women about gender roles and norms, promote the position of women, challenge the unequal distribution of resources and allocation of duties between women and men and seek to redress power imbalances.⁹⁷ Gender transformative programs see greater success when they work with men as well as women to explore rigid and harmful ideas of masculinity and the effect this has on men, women and communities. There is evidence to suggest that programs will be most effective if they 'start where the community is' and transition towards a gender transformative approach at a pace that is appropriate for the community.

Working with men and boys

The research is clear that violence prevention programs must work with men and boys if they are to address gender inequality and prevent violence against women and girls. Working with men and boys is also a key strategy for reducing the risk of backlash. Despite this evidence, working with men and boys remains a relatively controversial area of work due to the concern that it funnels funding away from programs targeting women or the worry that such programs have the potential to reinforce men's power. For example, a common mistake that is made is for programs to appeal to men as protectors, which risks reinforcing men's assumed right of power over women. The evidence indicates that interventions aimed at men are more likely to be effective if they explicitly address masculinity – the practices, norms and relations associated with manhood.⁹⁸ These discussions are most compelling when they do not use a dichotomous view of gender and a homogenous view of masculinity and masculine power. Furthermore, evidence suggests that outreach/engagement strategies should be tailored to men's own concerns, which necessarily means soliciting the perspectives of men, even those men who have perpetrated violence. The evidence is clear that to engage men in violence prevention, programs must also address men's experiences of injustice and violence. While men as a group have more power than women, not all men are equal and as individuals they may simultaneously experience power and powerlessness. For example, a man may have more power than his wife, but he may also experience powerlessness and violence in other relationships.⁹⁹ Addressing the way patriarchal norms negatively impact men as well as women is an important component of engaging men in efforts to transform gender norms and relations and prevent violence.

Working with male leaders and advocates is commonly incorporated into community-level violence prevention programming. There is evidence that this strategy can be highly effective when done well, as male role models can play a critical role in catalysing norm change processes.¹⁰⁰ However, there are risks inherent in engaging men that are themselves deeply embedded in the patriarchal context that fosters gender inequality and violence against women and girls. For example, engaging men and boys, particularly in a leadership role, may reproduce patterns of men's power and privilege as it reinforces men's status and creates more space for men's voices and leadership.¹⁰¹ When working with male leaders and advocates in contexts where men's violence against women and girls is widespread, there is a significant risk that some of these men will either be using violence or exploiting and reinforcing gender inequality in their own lives. When this is the case, these 'role models' can further embed the social norms that perpetuate men's violence against women and gender inequality.¹⁰² As discussed early in this paper, the use of a gender transformative approach is the most effective strategy for reducing the risks

associated with working with men and boys. The research reveals that programs working with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence and promote gender transformation should:¹⁰³

1. Be framed within a human and women's rights agenda and be guided by the primary goal of advancing gender equality.
2. Simultaneously work with women and create a dialogue between men and women's rights movements and organisations to ensure the work is accountable to women and remains tied to women's rights.
3. Work with men and boys to address their needs and enhance their lives, including by affirming positive constructions of masculinity and reducing the impact of violence in men's lives.
4. Recognise the way factors such as class and cast, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, literacy and age shape expressions of manhood and produce differing experiences of power and marginalisation.
5. Address the social and structural determinants of gender inequalities, violence, and health inequities.

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre advocates that work with male advocates should only happen under the supervision of the women's rights movement ¹⁰⁴ and the Vanuatu Women's Centre ensures Male Advocates are accountable to women and work collectively with women to prevent men's violence against women and girls, such as through the Committees Against Violence Against Women discussed in the case study below.

Male Advocates Program– Vanuatu Women's Centre – Vanuatu ¹⁰⁵

The Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC), established in 1992, is Vanuatu's foremost organisation delivering primary prevention programs and response services for women experiencing violence. The VWC works to prevent violence against women and girls through their flagship Male Advocates Program and the Committees Against Violence Against Women (CAVAW). Adapted from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre program of the same name, Vanuatu Women's Centre's Male Advocates Program engages men in leadership positions such as police officers and village chiefs and other influential men as allies in the prevention of violence against women. Male Advocates are provided with training and support, equipping them to examine gender roles, norms and power relations, analyse their own behaviour and take responsibility for the prevention of violence against women and girls. Men who agree to abide by standards of personal conduct become part of the male advocacy network. Male Advocates are encouraged and supported to become role models promoting desirable behaviour and they use their spheres of influence to transform gender relations, challenge violence against women and girls and support the work of women advocates.

In contexts where patriarchal kastom determines social structure, this is a powerful tool to transform gender relations, and it has the advantage of reaching rural areas where the majority of the population of Vanuatu live. A review undertaken by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) for AusAID in 2013¹⁰⁶ found that the Male Advocacy Program has been effective in prompting significant individual and intra-personal changes.

As discussed above, there is an inherent risk with male advocate programs that they unintentionally reinforce men's status and strengthen the influence of men who use violence. The Male Advocates Program has successfully mitigated these risks with the following strategies:

- Male advocates are carefully selected and are provided with training, support and ongoing monitoring to ensure their behaviour reflects the principles of the program.
- The program is centred on a human rights framework and as such it raises men's awareness of gender equality as a fundamental human right and challenges traditional cultural and religious beliefs, gender relations and practices of violence against women.
- The program demands men's accountability to the priorities of the women's movement. Male Advocates learn how to influence other men without taking space from women and they work collaboratively with women through the Committees Against Violence Against Women.
- Male advocates are accountable to the women's rights movement through their close association with the Vanuatu Women's Centre and the CAVAWs.

The linkages and synergies between the male advocates and CAVAWs is an important strength of this program. The Committees Against Violence Against Women are volunteer- and island-based committees that undertake community awareness raising activities and assist women and children living with violence. The Vanuatu Women's Centre recruits, trains and supports a network of volunteers to extend awareness raising activities into many communities that have had no previous access to information. CVAWs educate their communities about human rights and women's and children's legal rights and encourage community dialogue and action to prevent violence. CAVAWs are also trained to provide basic counselling and to support women experiencing violence to access support services, police and courts. A review of the Vanuatu Women's Centre in 2010¹⁰⁷ found that when taken together, Male Advocates and CVAWs have contributed to reducing tolerance for violence and transforming gender relations.

Empowering Men to Engage and Redefine Gender Equality (EMERGE) – CARE International in Sri Lanka – Sri Lanka¹⁰⁸

CARE's Empowering Men to Engage and Redefine Gender Equality (EMERGE) project in Sri Lanka draws, in its methodology, from the strong evidence base that indicates that men need to be engaged if goals of increasing gender equality and preventing GBV are to be achieved. As such, EMERGE encourages men and boys in the communities in which it works to critique their assumed right to power over women and other men, while at the same time empowering men with a sense of self-confidence and agency that is not reliant on harmful gender norms. EMERGE promotes a program called Happy Families, which trains married couples in communication, practical skills like money management, awareness of gender equity issues in the domestic and family spheres, sexual and gender-based violence and matters of sexual and reproductive health. A focus on the critical interrogation of masculinities is maintained through training on positive parenting and fatherhood, work with existing Male Change Agents and new recruits, and working with children of married couples who have received training to attempt to transform norms of masculinity. Male Change Agents are able to influence leaders within existing systems in order to bring about transformations of assumptions about masculinity.

PROJECT H – Promundo – Brazil¹⁰⁹

Program H is an intervention approach developed in Brazil focused on community education that uses male peer groups to challenge traditional views of gender and transform behaviour in men. Its aims

are to promote healthy relationships, prevent the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and, more broadly, to support young men to act in ways that foster gender equality. Program H has two elements, a marketing campaign that attempts to transform norms in masculine behaviour and attitudes, and weekly, two-hour long educational sessions that are carried out over six months. The education programs are facilitated by trained mentors working with small groups including video (a no-words cartoon entitled “Once Upon a Boy”), role-playing and discussions. Evaluations of Project H demonstrate that it is effective in working towards its goals since men who have been through the program report in follow-up evaluations more equitable attitudes to domestic work (seeing such work as also including male responsibilities), healthier relationships with their partners and friends, higher rates of condom use, and reduced rates of self-reported sexual harassment and violence towards women. When evaluations were carried out in both Brazil and India measuring the effectiveness of the program against control groups who did not experience the education it offers, participants of the program were, at six months after the intervention, less likely to support traditional gender norms than were members of the control group. Additionally, in India, the proportion of men in intervention locations both urban and rural who reported sexual or physical violence against a partner in the last three months decreased significantly: in the urban sites from 50% to less than 20% and in the rural site, from 50% to 37%. Program H has reached beyond Brazil, and is now implemented in India, Tanzania, Croatia, Vietnam, and Central America. The program has been expanded to include an approach that focuses on women, and in some places, both programs have been used in tandem.

Community Mobilisation

Community mobilisation is an approach to preventing violence that recognizes the importance of engaging with communities in a contextually-appropriate manner to change the norms that underlie violence against women and girls. This approach relies on building up networks of people and leaders within communities who will work together to create an environment in which violence is no longer seen as socially acceptable.

SASA! – Raising Voices – Global¹¹⁰

SASA! is a community mobilisation intervention that aims to transform gender norms, relations and behaviours in order to prevent violence, inhibit the spread of HIV and foster gender equality. Developed by Raising Voices in Uganda¹¹¹ SASA! has been adapted to diverse contexts around the world. In 2016, Pacific Women, the UN Women Multi Country Office, and Raising Voices organised SASA! training for practitioners in the Pacific. People attended from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. As a result of the training the Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs in Kiribati and Population Services International in Papua New Guinea are working to adapt the SASA! model to the local context.

SASA! takes cues from the Ecological Model for understanding violence, seeing intimate partner violence (IPV) as the result of individual, relationship, community and societal level-factors. SASA!’s goals are informed by evidence that changes in beliefs about gender and gender norms can work to prevent IPV because they help to create an environment in which violence is not seen as acceptable, and in which there are sanctions to face when violence is perpetrated. The SASA! Activist Kit promotes

increased awareness of how power dynamics between genders influence violence and the spread of HIV, recommends strategies for how communities can support those affected by these issues, and outlines how communities can take action to use power productively to face social problems.

An evaluation of SASA! in Uganda found it is effective in altering attitudes and behaviours to do with gender, sex and IPV at the relationship and community levels. Compared to control communities, women in intervention communities reported fewer encounters with violence (a reduction of 52%) and those who had experienced violence were more likely to say they had received community support, while both men and women were not as likely to accept violence in relationships and more likely to accept the notion that women should be able to refuse sex from partners under some circumstances. SASA! was able to increase relationship harmony through encouragement of communication and greater equality in decision making and family and domestic roles. The findings of the SASA! evaluation demonstrate that men's attitudes towards violence, relationships and gender are the most significant factors influencing IPV, and so focusing on transforming these is essential in intervention strategies. Men who were suspicious that a woman was unfaithful to him were overwhelmingly more likely to use violence, suggesting that increasing relationship communication is key to preventing triggers for violence.

Healthy Relationships Training

Healthy relationships training aims to intervene to prevent violence in relationships, which is where the majority of violence against women takes place. Intimate partner violence is the most common type of VAWG globally and disharmony within relationships increases the risk of violence, and so training aims to improve communication and conflict resolution skills. It endeavours to transform attitudes, since intimate partner violence is more likely when one or both partners hold beliefs that perpetuate VAWG and gender inequality, and challenge learnt behaviour that is ingrained in childhood, because those who have witnessed partner violence as children are more likely to perpetrate or experience violence as adults.¹¹²

Good Relationships Free from Violence (Leftemap Sista II) – CARE Vanuatu¹¹³

Good Relationships Free From Violence is training run as part of CARE International's *Leftemap Sista* (lifting up our women and girls) project. *Leftemap Sista* aims to empower women and girls socially and economically and create an environment in which they are free from fear of violence, are able to make decisions about their lives and participate in home and community-level decision making. An evaluation found that the first phase of the program had been successful at strengthening communication skills between women and men as part of its Life Skills training, and that the program had potential for promoting respect within relationships and reducing violence against women and girls. In response to this recommendation, CARE worked with the Vanuatu Women's Centre, Vanuatu Family Health Association and the Family Protection Unit to create *Good Relationships Free From Violence*, as part of the second iteration of *Leftemap Sista*. *Good Relationships Free From Violence* engages men and boys and women and girls between the ages of 15 and 25 to build practical skills essential for good relationships such as non-violent communication, negotiation and conflict resolution, and family planning. The training contains modules that address the broader drivers of violence against women, aiming to transform understandings of gender norms and roles and encourage equality in power relations and distribution of resources between genders. The training

also reinforces links between response service providers and community actors such as Vanuatu Women's Centre and the CAVAW network, the Family Protection Unit, Vanuatu Family Health Association and Ministry of Health staff through co-delivery of modules.

There is qualitative evidence that the program is achieving its goals in transforming relationships for participants, with reports from participants indicating that it has strengthened their abilities to communicate within relationships both romantic and non-romantic and their communities. Participants also indicate that their behaviours were changed for the better as a result of their training.

A train-the-trainer package has been developed and will be rolled out in the second half of 2018, aiming to extend the reach of the *Good Relationships Free From Violence training*.

Stepping Stones - Global¹¹⁴

Stepping Stones is a well-known community mobilisation program that began in South Africa in the 1990's and has since been implemented throughout Africa, Asia and more recently in the Pacific. The program aims to improve gender relations and address and prevent risk-taking behaviour by engaging communities in discussions around sexual and reproductive health (including HIV, STIs and unplanned pregnancy), domestic violence and drugs and alcohol. The program is implemented through activities that promote self-reflection on beliefs and behaviours, role-play, drama and training sessions. It combines single-sex sessions with mixed-sex and peer group and community meetings. This approach is proven more effective at bringing about change than same-sex or mixed-sex discussions used alone. Topics addressed in sessions include gender inequality, patterns of violence, relationship issues, sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse, and self-esteem. Stepping Stones sees IPV and gender inequality as part of what makes HIV infection more likely, and therefore seeks to challenge gender norms and underlying causes of violence.

Evaluations of the programme in South Africa found that male participants were less likely to have perpetrated sexual or physical IPV than the control group in follow up investigations, though no differences were found in women's reports of incidences of IPV in the same regions and time frame in which the evaluation was performed. Evaluation of outcomes of the programme for couples in Gambia found that participating couples communicated more effectively and fought less often than those in the control group, with rates of IPV lower in those couples.

Stepping Stones was first implemented in the Pacific in 2006 in Fiji and Solomon Islands. Feedback from these pilots indicated that Stepping Stones was not immediately transferable to the Pacific context so the then SPC Behaviour Change Communication Team took the lead in designing a new Pacific Stepping Stones manual. New sessions on teenage pregnancy, STIs, sexuality were added and the content on gender violence was expanded and strengthened. An evaluation of the Fiji pilot found improvements in gender-equitable attitudes among men, more equal participation of women in decision making, improved relationships between partners, positive HIV-related behaviour change and less community fighting.

In 2007, Stepping Stones was expanded to Vanuatu and Kiribati. Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project and Secretariat of the Pacific Community worked with Wan Smolbag to identify and train community facilitators from three communities in Vanuatu. Unfortunately, the program experienced many challenges in Vanuatu and was not completed. A process evaluation¹¹⁵ found that many of the

challenges related to specific circumstances of the three communities selected for the trial; these included the prevalence of community fighting, the proximity to Port Vila which leads to high rates of community mobility, and the saturation of programs in these communities which contributed to a lack of motivation by many community members. The Vanuatu Coordinator suggested that Stepping Stones could work very well in Vanuatu if the right communities were selected.

Women's social and economic empowerment

Gender inequality and women's subordination are strongly correlated with violence against women and girls.¹¹⁶ Therefore, interventions that increase women's social and economic power can be a decisive factor in transforming understandings of gender and gender relations.¹¹⁷ Women's empowerment correlates with a decline in violence when ideas about gender have shifted. Women's empowerment programs can also strengthen the women's movement by empowering women and girls to stand up for their rights and become women's rights activists.

Young Women's Leadership Program – CARE Vanuatu – Vanuatu¹¹⁸

CARE in Vanuatu's Young Woman's Leadership Program (YWLP) aims to develop leadership skills in women aged 18-30 in the Port Vila and Tafea regions. This program has promoted women's involvement with activism, increasing the proportion of participants who felt confident to engage in activities to promote equality and EAW from 55% to 85% and increasing the proportion of those who felt motivated to engage in activism from 51% to 82%. Experienced women leaders have also been trained to become mentors, with qualitative data suggesting that involvement in the program has further developed their leadership skills and increased their abilities to act as mentors for emerging women leaders.

My Body! My Rights! – Talitha Project Inc – Tonga¹¹⁹

Talitha Project Inc (known as Talitha) has a range of initiatives whose purpose is to empower young women and girls in the service of achieving equality and ending violence against women. For instance, Talitha runs a drop-in centre in Tonga for young women and girls that is a secure and safe space offering practical skills training for leadership and income generation as well as support services like counselling. Talitha is given funding through the UN Women Pacific Regional Ending Violence Against Women Facility Fund, and it operates in conjunction with a number of partners, faith-based, government and non-governmental in nature.

The organisation has rolled out the *My Body! My Rights!* program in Tonga to inform girls and young women of their rights, empower them to make decisions that support the enjoyment of these rights and allow them to live free of violence. It aims to counter social and gender norms around the acceptance of violence by instilling in participants a sense of bodily autonomy and the knowledge that they have the right to live without violence. Despite some roadblocks to success based on complaints that the program violates social taboos on discussing the body, the program has reached a thousand women and girls from the main islands of Tongatapu, Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua.

Qualitative evidence indicates that the program has enabled some participants to feel more confident in speaking about their rights, promoting equality for women and challenging violence against women and girls. This has resulted in a weekly, hour-long talk-back radio show being developed featuring Talitha-trained young women who use it as a platform to discuss gender equality and issues

related to discrimination and violence against women. The show's largest audience is men, demonstrating effectiveness in reaching men and boys, and it has improved community engagement with ideas around gender equality.

Reflect Centres – CARE International in Nepal – Nepal¹²⁰

The 'Reflect Centers' in Nepal provide spaces for socially marginalised women in Churia district to meet, receive education about their rights and legal protections, and challenge discrimination based on caste. Its aim is to empower women to be involved in decision making in relationships and communities. After feedback from participants that men should be included in attempts to bring about change in gender relations, Men were engaged in monthly discussions at the centres about the importance of non-violence in the family. A 30% reduction in household-level violence against women has been observed as an outcome of the program.

In some instances, women's economic empowerment programs have resulted in reduced prevalence of intimate partner violence.¹²¹ However, women's economic empowerment is a contentious strategy because there is also evidence that these programs can create tension and conflict over control of new assets and earnings and women's deviation from traditional gender norms, both of which correlate with intimate partner violence.¹²²

Research by the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program at the Australian National University¹²³ found that in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea much of the violence reported is related in one way or another to women's income generation. The study found that conflict occurs when men demand or seize money from their wives, when men perceive that their wives are not earning enough or when they perceive that wives' income generation is interfering with their domestic responsibilities. Conflict is also related to the decision process about how money is spent. This conflict commonly results in intimate partner violence.

The study found that when women make more income through their own efforts, they do not experience benefits unless it coincides with greater influence in decision making so that income can be transformed into advantages for themselves and their families. The research reinforced findings from previous studies that show increasing women's participation in economic activities frequently adds to their workload, rather than transforming gender roles, and can result in their husbands reducing their own contribution to household expenses.

The research concluded that it is essential that economic empowerment programs work with men to transform gender relations before commencing economic empowerment interventions. Additionally, to be effective, economic empowerment programs must work at the community-level to remove those factors that constrain women's empowerment. Such findings are consistent with the international evidence-base, which shows that economic empowerment programs which are combined with social interventions that address gender inequality and violence against women and girls have consistently stronger and more positive outcomes than interventions that focus on economic factors alone.¹²⁴

Because of the risk inherent in economic empowerment programs, this review constricted its scope to programs that have a robust evaluation that investigates the impact of the program on the prevalence of violence against women and girls. The IMAGE program discussed in the case study below has the strongest evidence-base.

Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) – South Africa¹²⁵

South Africa's Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) is a highly effective microfinance and violence prevention program that works with women belonging to poor households in rural communities. Microfinance programs aim to change gender norms by empowering women economically and socially through education and skills-building, and the provision of small loans to fund projects supporting livelihood. IMAGE aims to support the creation of greater equality among the genders by increasing women's education and opportunities for employment, improving their power within relationships and in the home, and preventing HIV transmission. IMAGE not only provides financial support and loans, it runs skills-building sessions and training on gender norms, intimate partner violence, relationships and communication and sexual health and HIV prevention. While it works principally with women, IMAGE reaches further into communities, encouraging participation of men and boys.

An evaluation of the program found that, among participants, the risks of intimate partner violence, both physical and sexual, declined by 55% in the two years after they went through the program, as compared to a control group. The evaluation also indicated a drop in controlling partner behaviour, lower tolerance for IPV, smoother household communication and changing attitudes towards gender roles. However, the program was not found to significantly reduce HIV infection or increase use of protection in sexual intercourse. Even so, IMAGE's success demonstrates that women's economic and social empowerment can lead to a decline in violence.

Trauma-informed programs

Research shows that exposure to family violence in childhood is strongly linked to poorer mental and physical health outcomes, anti-social behaviours and an increased risk of experiencing and perpetrating violence as adults.¹²⁶ There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, primary care givers are important role models in children's lives. Children look to their parents or other care givers for guidance on how to behave. When young people are exposed to intimate partner violence during their formative years they are more likely to view violence as an acceptable and even useful tool for resolving conflict and establishing control in their relationships.¹²⁷ Traditional parenting practices whereby punishment of children for disobeying or disrespectful behaviour is accepted also contribute to the normalisation of physical violence. Secondly, living in environments marred by violence, abuse and neglect has serious implications for children's brain development.¹²⁸ Exposure to chronically unsafe, unstable, or neglectful environments during a child's formative years is likely to result in a multitude of cognitive, physiological and emotion regulation difficulties, known as developmental trauma.¹²⁹ Unless intervention occurs early, children who experience developmental trauma become adults whose ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour is severely underdeveloped, increasing the likelihood that they will become perpetrators of violence, and thus creating a transgenerational cycle of trauma.¹³⁰ This evidence should not be used to justify or excuse violence, but instead, it should be used to inform violence prevention strategies. For example, in a context where it is common for children to experience developmental trauma, creating opportunities for women and men to heal from past trauma and enhance their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour may be key to the prevention of this cycle of violence.¹³¹

Working with communities to create safe, nurturing environments for children, including through positive parenting programs is another fundamental element of preventing such cycles.

Community Healing and Rebuilding Program – Oxfam – Papua New Guinea¹³²

Oxfam in Papua New Guinea is trialling a new violence prevention strategy that integrates a trauma-informed approach into a gender-transformative, community mobilisation program. The pilot program builds on formative research undertaken by Oxfam that found that community and family violence in the research communities in PNG is being fuelled by unresolved trauma – creating an intergenerational cycle of violence. This pilot will commence in late 2018 and will be evaluated after the first year to document and share learnings about the effectiveness of this strategy.

The program aims to facilitate healing by providing participants with a safe space where they can explore unresolved trauma and have their experiences of violence and trauma acknowledged and validated. This approach builds on the evidence that when people feel marginalised, victimised, or suffer from unresolved trauma, they find it more difficult to have empathy for others and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Only when people have had a chance to heal from the past can they engage in a process of rebuilding their futures and changing their behaviour. The program utilises the following strategies:

Facilitating healing

The program is delivered through peer support circles, grouped by age and gender, which provide an opportunity for Circle Members to build a peer support network and a sense of solidarity with their peers. This is particularly important for women, who may have less access to peer support due to restrictions on their movements. Sessions draw on a range of therapeutic activities, including the use of “story” and art to support Circle Members in exploring and expressing their experiences and feelings. These activities will be used to facilitate critical reflection, meaning-making, and healing. Each session includes a calming exercise that will help participants to stay centred and focussed. These exercises reduce stress hormones, calm the heart rate, slow down breathing, and trigger the release of feel-good hormones. These simple exercises can be used by Circle Members in their everyday lives as a way of calming themselves down so they can make good decisions.

Providing Circle Members with the knowledge and skills required to examine the impact of their behaviour on their relationships and community

Behavioural change requires an individual to have the necessary knowledge and skills to examine and change their actions. This might sound simple, but too often, foundational knowledge and skills are assumed and not taught. Circle Members will examine the connection between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, and will learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Circle Members will be given the tools to examine their behaviour when they interact with others. This means looking closely at their relationships with their peers, families, and the community. Circle Members will learn to examine the influence of power disparities and gender inequality on relationships and community cohesion. The program will work with men to explore rigid and harmful ideas of masculinity and the effect they have on men, women, and communities while simultaneously working with women to

examine the sources of power that oppress them, and identify strategies to encourage women's empowerment.

Equipping parents and care-givers with the knowledge and skills required to create safe, nurturing environments for children

The program will work to create safe communities for children as a means of preventing violence against children and the continuation of the trauma cycle. Circle Members will learn about their roles in providing safe, nurturing environments for children. They will also participate in Family Circles, during which Facilitators will coach parents and other caregivers to interact with their children in positive ways.

Encouraging understanding and empathy between community members

At the end of each module, Facilitators will bring the four Peer Support Circles together in a Community Forum. Each Circle will prepare a presentation for the other Circles, in order to share what they have learned during the module and their reflections of the process. Circles will be encouraged to use creative and interactive methods of storytelling (storyboards, art, dance, song etc.) as a medium to share their collective stories with other members of the community. Community Forums have been designed to deepen understanding and empathy among different groups in the community. This is key to strengthening community cohesion, which is an important protective factor against violence.

Empowering communities to identify and address the issues that foster violence in their communities

Circles will be supported to work through a toolkit of participatory tools to identify factors in the community that contribute to violence and community dysfunction, and to develop strategies for addressing these issues. Circles will be empowered to implement their locally-developed solutions.

Parenting programs

Systematic reviews of evidence have found that parenting programs can be effective at reducing child maltreatment, thereby reducing emotional and behavioural problems in children and circumventing the intergenerational transfer of anti-social and violent behaviour.¹³³ Traditional parenting practices whereby violent or harsh punishment of children for disobedience or disrespectful behaviour is accepted contributes to the normalisation of physical violence as a tool to resolve conflicts among children and later when they become adults. Therefore, programs that teach parents to build nurturing relationships with their children and use appropriate non-violent discipline are key to the prevention of violence against women and girls. There is a growing evidence-base demonstrating that play-based parenting programs that teach parents to connect with their children through play, are as effective, if not more effective, than programs that directly address behavioural issues in children.¹³⁴

How to Care for Children Well – Catholic Church in the Archdioceses of Madang – Papua New Guinea¹³⁵

How to care for children well, or, in Tok Pisin, Pasin bilong lukautim pikinini gut, is a parenting program commissioned by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) whose goal is the prevention of violence and mistreatment of children in rural provinces of Papua New Guinea. Developed by the Centre for Child Development and Education (CCDE, part of the Menzies School of Health Research) and run by the Catholic Church in the Archdioceses of Madang, Western Highlands and Chimbu, the program responds to a study performed in 2016 that identified both the need for and desire on the part of community participants to take part in a program that provided education about parenting and child development.¹³⁶ The study found that a widening gap in values between parents and children and between generations of parents was contributing to family and community discord and a lack of surety about parenting. Furthermore, corporal punishment and other harsh parenting practices were widespread and contributed to this gap between parents and children, in particular, teenage children. The program was piloted in 2017, and run in 10 rural communities across PNG, delivered by trained volunteers to mixed-gender groups. It is based in broader, evidence-based theory about what works in intervention, such as social learning theory and reflective parenting programs, but tailored for community contexts through the CCDE’s extensive research in communities and meetings with key stakeholders and partner organisations and the volunteers themselves.

The program’s initial promise is signalled by the findings of an evaluation that will be used to inform the expansion in 2018. The evaluation found that participants reported a change in attitudes to parenting and to traditional and cultural roles related to family life, a recognition of children’s needs, higher family cohesion, lower discord and changes in parenting practices, most importantly, around discipline. There were statistically significant declines in use of corporal punishment, verbal abuse, neglect, and psychological abuse. After completing the pilot program, parents indicated that it had educated them about child development, needs, and parenting strategies. Evidence suggests that the program, as a result of this educational approach, enabled participants to feel more confident about parenting skills, with just under one third saying, in a baseline study prior to the program’s implementation, that they thought their children were not looked after well some or all of the time, and evaluations after the program suggesting statistically significant rises in family wellbeing and parent confidence. The program, interestingly, also resulted in reductions in spousal violence, which implies that family harmony is a factor in reducing IPV. Some of the parents in the initial pilot program have volunteered to become facilitators and will receive training to participate in the expanded program.

Faith-based approaches

Churches have a great deal of authority in Melanesia and as such they have an important role to play in promoting gender equality and non-violence. Churches are uniquely placed to disseminate information and mobilise communities as they are a trusted source of knowledge, they wield significant influence in people’s lives and they have an existing and engaged community.¹³⁷ Churches shape attitudes and norms, and therefore can either facilitate or hinder violence prevention. When churches are not gender-aware, they can significantly hinder the success of violence prevention initiatives, particularly when they advocate for women to return to abusive relationships with men for the sake of preserving marriage. On

the other hand, when churches utilize scripture to promote gender-equitable and non-violent messages, they can be highly effective at achieving attitude and norm change. Global evidence indicates that effectively engaging with faith-based organisations is essential for effective violence prevention programming in countries such as Vanuatu where churches are pivotal in social processes shaping community attitudes and norms.¹³⁸

In Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC), an umbrella body of the churches in Vanuatu, has been working to increase awareness about gender and violence against women among church leaders for a number of years. They have also actively been exploring opportunities to collaborate with development actors to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls.¹³⁹ VCC reports that church leaders are becoming more aware of the importance of women's participation and that women are now more involved in church decision making bodies and are being elected to leadership positions that have previously been held by men. VCC has a Gender Policy and has also developed manuals and brochures on human rights, faith and gender; sexual harassment; and domestic violence which they use for trainings and advocacy work on violence prevention.

At the regional level, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) has been working to integrate gender-equitable and non-violent messages into regional Christian culture. The PCC recently conducted a region-wide survey of women's position in church leadership, with a crosscutting investigation of violence against women in all locations. As a way of addressing the findings of this study, including the discovery that certain clergy members misuse Bible verses in a way that promotes inequitable or even violent relationships, PCC have convened training workshops to educate clergy from across the region and promote attitude change.¹⁴⁰

Community Vision for Change Pilot Project – World Vision – Solomon Islands¹⁴¹

The Community Vision for Change (CV4C) Pilot Project promotes changes in norms leading to gender-based violence and inequality. The CV4C Pilot Project introduced the Channels of Hope for Gender (CoHG) method of exploring gender norms and identities from a faith-based perspective to national church leaders, and ran workshops and training about gender-based violence for community and local church leaders. 'Community Hope Action Teams' were established to run events aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of reducing violence and increasing gender equality. With support from the Ministry of Health and the Royal Solomon Islands Police, teams were further trained in combatting substance abuse and in positive conflict resolution. Some volunteers were appointed as 'Focal Points' and trained to support survivors of violence by assisting in accessing services. The project saw growth with a greater number of national church leaders receiving training in the CoHG method and higher levels of community men and women attending workshops and training on gender equality and non-violence.

An evaluation of the project found that it was successful in changing certain attitudes towards gender norms and gender-based violence with higher percentages of men believing that a woman can accuse her husband of rape (an increase from 70% to 83%), fewer believing a woman should not be able to make decisions in the household (a reduction from 34% to 4%) and fewer believing that the Bible says that 'man is boss' (a reduction from 83% to 66%). Moreover, both men and women became open to discussing gender roles and gender-based violence. Women, since 2012, were more likely to challenge roadblocks to support for ending GBV from police, churches and NGOs. The program responds to this by securing increased support from Church leaders in preventing GBV. That said, the evaluation suggested that churches can provide mixed messages regarding protection for people who

have experienced violence, with some still pushing for reconciliation of couples separated or in conflict due to IPV, rather than providing pathways to support services. However, the evaluation found that additional work is needed to allow the project to become more sensitive to local contexts, and to engage community chiefs in CoHG training since they already act as a major pathway to support services for survivors of violence, rather than employing 'Focal Points' to do this work.

Recommendations for the prevention of violence against women in Vanuatu

- 1. A long-term, phased, inter-agency national plan will provide a strong foundation for the prevention of violence against women and girls in Vanuatu.** Coordinated, long-term, phased, inter-agency planning at a national level is an exciting opportunity for Vanuatu. A national plan allows a range of agencies to ask how they can complement each other's work, ensuring across-the-board population coverage with a range of strategies – policy, campaigning and programmatic. It also allows for sharing and learning between agencies. A national plan would allow careful thought about how each area of priority work will be resourced, who will implement each area, and who should be responsible for overall coordination and monitoring. Additionally, as momentum in this area grows, a national plan will ensure that new actors in this space align their efforts to agreed national strategy. A national plan allows for a thorough bird's eye view of whole-of-population efforts and is an exciting galvanising tool. Good practice lessons and expertise from regional and global National Action Plans should be drawn upon in the formulation of a plan specific to Vanuatu.

The process of the formation of a national plan is critical to its success. Consultation should occur at three levels. First, a draft national plan should be formulated between agencies with already-established buy-in to prioritisation of prevention of VAWG in Vanuatu, drawing on regional and global expertise and good practice. Second, a draft national plan should be shared with other agencies to promote integration of VAWG prevention efforts into their own work and alignment with the strategy. VAWG prevention can and should be mainstreamed across a range of organisational sectors and workforces. Third, community consultation on VAWG prevention in Vanuatu will cultivate citizen knowledge and buy-in, citizen accountability of duty-bearers in Vanuatu, and contextual appropriateness of the national plan.

- 2. Development actors should follow and bolster the leadership of Ni-Vanuatu women and organisations.** Local actors, particularly the longstanding Vanuatu Women's Centre, have a long history of fighting to promote women's rights and prevent violence against women and girls, and as such, they have a rightful place at the forefront of coordinated prevention efforts. Further, prevention strategies that build on the leadership of local women's organisations are more likely to achieve sustainable change.
- 3. Prevention strategies are most effective when they are informed by the evidence-base.** This paper represents a snapshot of the wealth of national and global evidence and learning available that should inform the establishment of prevention strategies in Vanuatu. The global evidence base is clear that some strategies for prevention are far more effective than others. Effort alone is not enough; strategic effort is what is necessary. Prevention strategies should also draw upon what we know about the prevalence and patterns of violence against women and girls in Vanuatu as established in the National Survey. Prevention strategies need to include a research and monitoring and evaluation component to ensure that up-to-date data on prevalence, patterns, attitudes and norms is available to measure progress against and inform new approaches. A significant focus on building process and impact monitoring and evaluation, and strong, inter-agency learning, is highly recommended.

4. **Prevention strategies are most effective when they address the gendered drivers of VAWG and associated protective and risk factors.** To be effective, violence prevention strategies must address the gendered drivers of violence against women and girls by transforming gender inequalities, fostering positive gender norms and challenging the condoning of violence against women and girls. They should aim to address risk factors (such as trauma and previous experience of violence, poverty, low education, intersectional discrimination on the basis of other social factors such as disability or sexual and gender diversity) and bolster protective factors (such as education and economic empowerment).
5. **Prevention strategies are most effective when they target key sectors and settings, including the emergency setting.** Prevention strategies ought to consider key priority sectors and settings for prevention work (as discussed in this paper through the Campaigning, Policy and Legislation, and Community sections) and seek to build partnerships to increase coverage across the range of priority settings and sectors. A focus on the emergency setting is critical for the Vanuatu context.
6. **Prevention strategies are most effective when they identify key groups to target and make sure that all experiences of VAWG are seen and addressed.** Prevention strategies should identify key priority groups and design specific strategies for targeting each group. This must include analysis of the needs and experiences of people who experience additional intersecting layers of marginalisation and risk, such as women and girls living with disabilities, women of diverse sexual and gender identities, and gender non-binary people.
7. **Prevention should be complementary to and integrated with response to violence against women and girls.** Both prevention and response efforts require greater resourcing in the Vanuatu context. A growing focus on prevention should not come at the expense of response, including because prevention efforts will result in an increased demand upon services and the justice system. Prevention and response need to work in tandem, and a national prevention plan should build the case for across-the-board resourcing growth.

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