Defining gender-based violence in the context of international and regional conventions and agreements

Presentation for the Webinar series on measuring gender-based violence in Asia and the Pacific

April 2023

Definitions of violence

What is **violence against women (VAW)**?

Violence against women is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the UNGA, 20 December 1993

What is **Gender-based violence (GBV)**?

Gender-based violence in an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females.

The IASC Guidelines

Types of violence - examples

- **Physical violence** – Physical violence is an act attempting to or resulting in pain and/or physical injury. It includes beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming, the use of objects or weapons, or tearing out hair. At its most extreme, physical violence may lead to femicide. Some classifications also include trafficking.

- **Sexual violence** - Sexual violence includes rape or some form of penetration of the victim's body, marital rape and attempted rape. Other types of forced sexual activities include forced sex, sexual harassment, and abuse related to reproduction.

- **Psychological violence** – Psychological violence can include threatening behaviors that do not necessarily involve physical violence or even verbal abuse. It can include actions that refer to former acts of violence, or purposeful ignorance and neglect of the other. It may also be perpetrated through isolation or confinement, withholding information, disinformation, etc.

Types of violence - examples

- **Economic violence** - Economic includes taking away the victim's earnings, not allowing her to have a separate income, or making her unfit for work through targeted physical abuse.

- **Technology-facilitated violence** – The Expert Group convened in November 2022 by UN Women adopted the following operational definition: "Technology-facilitated violence against women (TFVAW) is any act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms".

The UN Statistics Division Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women (pages 14-17) includes violence definitions and recommended topics for inclusion in surveys.

Global Context – Violence against women

31% (UI 27–36%)[a] of women aged **15–49 years**

and

30% (UI 26–34%) of women aged **15 years and older**

[a] UI: uncertainty interval (95%).

...have been subjected to:

- **physical and/or sexual violence from any** current or former **husband or male intimate partner**, or to
- **sexual violence from a non-partner**, e.g. strangers, acquaintances, friends, peers, teachers, neighbours, family members, or to
- **both of these forms of violence combined**

at least once in their lifetime (i.e. since the age of 15).

On average, **736 million and up to 852 million women** who were aged 15 years or older in 2018 (nearly **1 in 3** women) have experienced one or both of these forms of violence at least once in their lifetime.

These estimates confirm that physical and sexual intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence remain pervasive in the lives of women and adolescent girls across the globe.

WHO (2018) Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates (published in 2021)

! The most extreme forms of VAW, including femicide, are not captured in prevalence studies; surveys do not include women who have been murdered, or are institutionalized or disabled.

International conventions and agreements - CEDAW

"States parties should ensure the collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data on all forms of gender-based violence against women, including its prevalance, causes, consequences, the risk and protective factors, and the effectiveness of measures taken to prevent, prosecute and punish such violence, and to provide redress and rehabilitation to victims and survivors, and to inform policies and programmes"

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation no. 35

States parties should "establish effective data collection and analysis systems that enable the collection of disaggregated data on violence against women"

General Recommendation no. 19

Specific recommendations highlight the importance of data collection on gender-based violence in education, disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, and the rights of rural women and indigenous women and girls. (CEDAW GR no. 34, 36-39)

International conventions and agreements

Beijing Declaration

Promote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence relating to the prevalence of different forms of violence against women, and encourage research into the causes, nature, seriousness and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and re- dress violence against women (129(a))

Istanbul Convention

Article 10 requires States Parties to **establish or designate a national focal point to collect, analyze, and regularly disseminate data** on all forms of violence covered by the Convention.

Article 11 requires States Parties to **collect and analyze relevant statistical data on all forms of violence** covered by the Convention, including domestic violence and violence against women, and to regularly publish information on the measures taken and the progress achieved in preventing and combating these forms of violence.

ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of VAW in the ASEAN Region

Article 1 of the Declaration states that States shall endeavor to **collect, compile, and analyze data on violence against women** in the ASEAN region, disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location and other relevant factors. The Declaration also calls for the greater of a regional cooperation to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Declaration, which include monitoring of data collection efforts by member states.

National level: National action plans and strategies are often the guidance and motivation for collecting data and investing in data. There are countries in the region that are creating national frameworks that ask for data collection on VAW.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDG Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age.

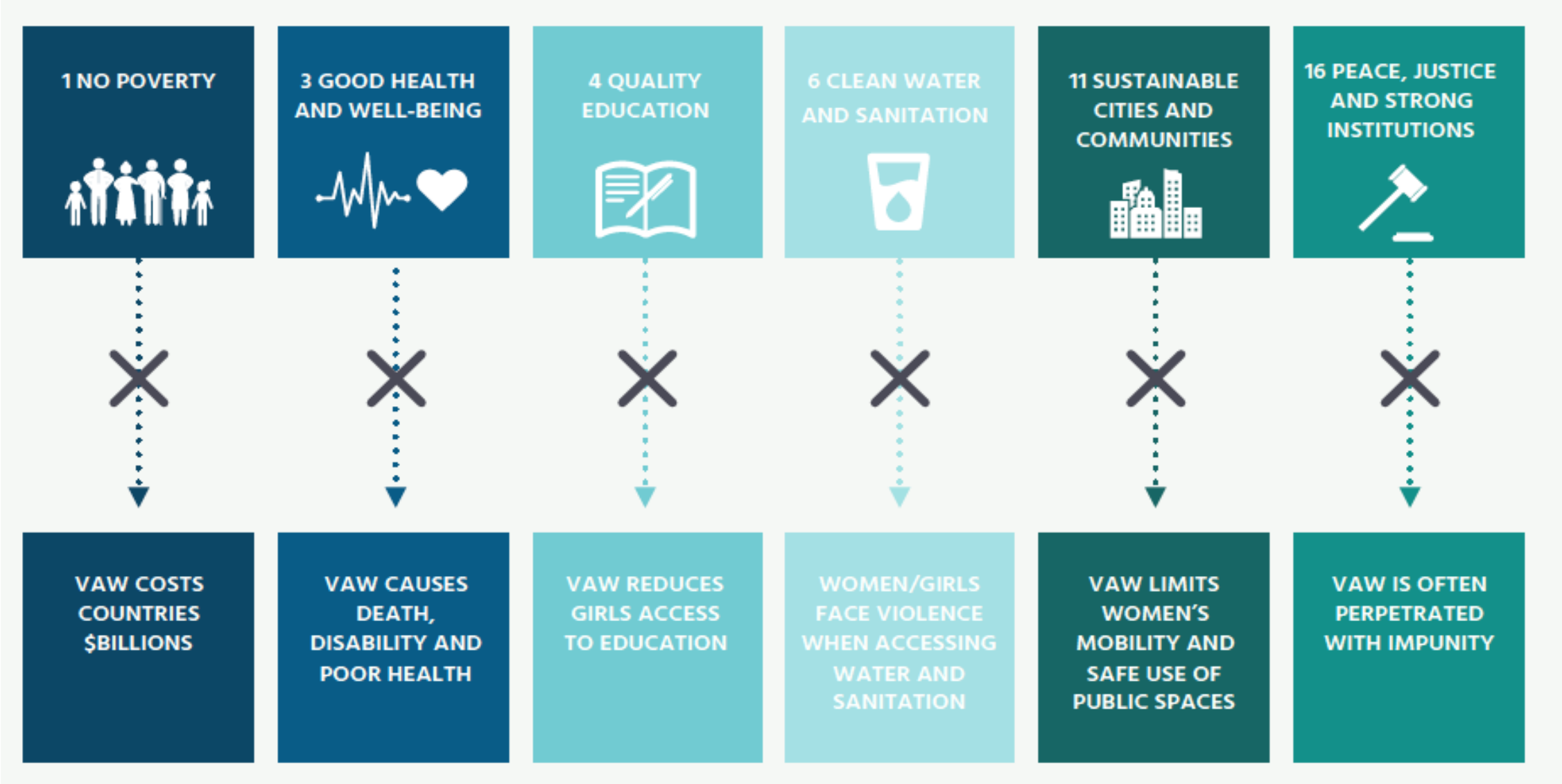
Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Indicator 5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

Indicator 5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age

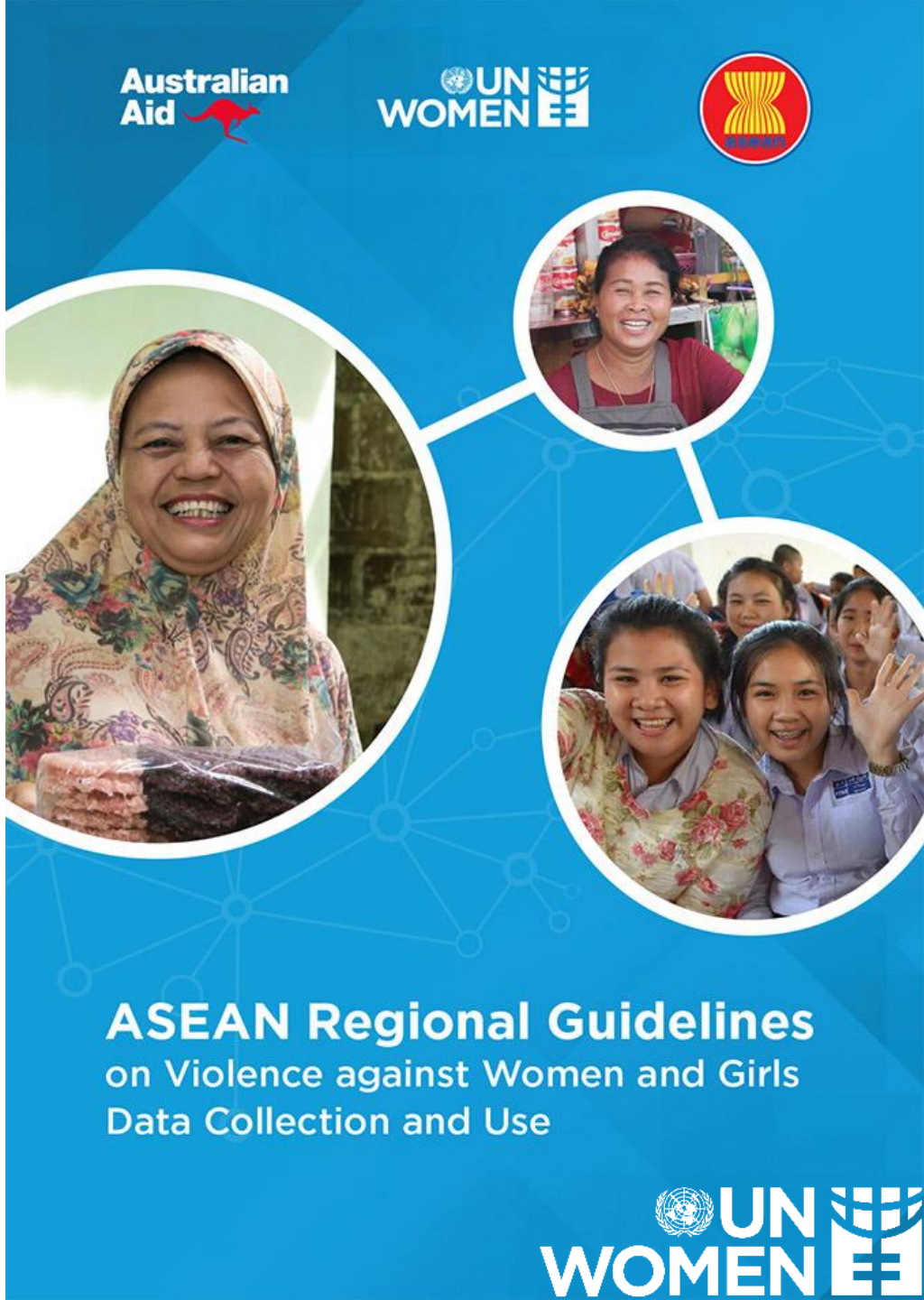
Violence against women and SDGs



**Source: "SDG Targets and VAW" presentation, Equality Institute (2016)*

Clarifying types of data collection

- Confusion between **administrative data** and **prevalence data**
- **ASEAN Regional VAW Data Guidelines** - clarifies administrative & VAW data collection and use
- **Translated to several languages** from the region: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/04/asean-regional-guidelines-on-violence-against-women-and-girls

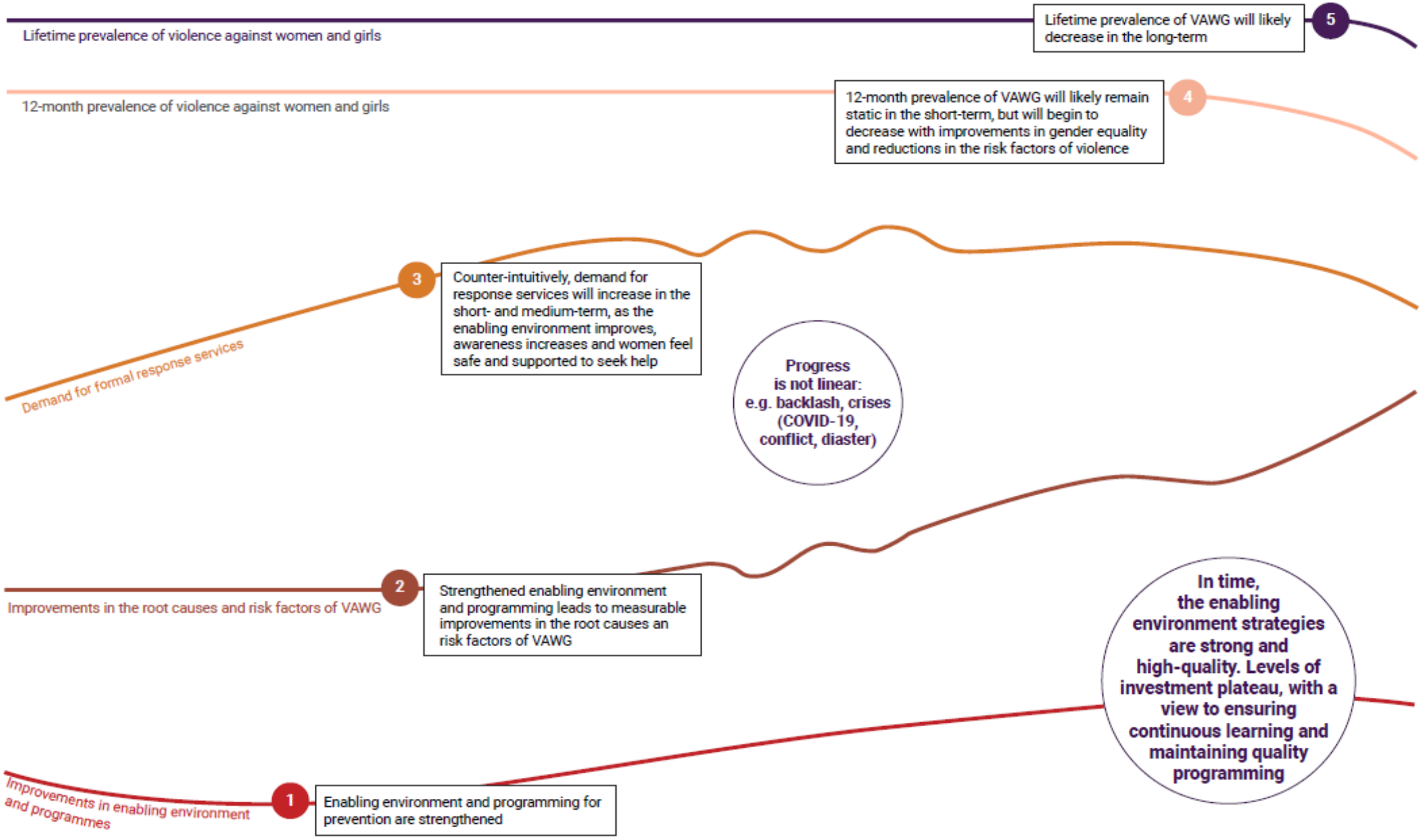


A Monitoring Framework for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in the Asia-Pacific Region

- **VAWG is preventable**. Prevention of VAWG is about stopping violence before it starts by addressing the underlying causes of violence
- Need for **monitoring progress** on prevention
- Using quality data to monitor incremental changes prevention supports a more precise **tracking of change toward the long-term goal of eliminating VAWG**
- Using **intersectional and whole-of-population approach**
- Measuring change in the **short, medium and long term**
- **The Framework aligns with key regional/global frameworks, including Indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

We are positioned now to **make a real difference** to **women's and girls' lives,** and it is imperative to **take action** and **monitor progress.**

Expected Progress of Change



Short-Term Measures

1. A growing expert workforce
2. Political commitment from leaders and policy-makers
3. Investment in and support for women's organizations
4. Enforcement of relevant laws and policies
5. Build the evidence
6. Quality programmes and implementation of RESPECT
7. Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance
8. Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks

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Medium-Term Measures

9 Gender equality is advanced

10 Reduced justification of violence

11 Women have greater decision-making power

12 More positive, equal, and respectful relationships

13 More positive expressions of masculinity

14 Gender roles are less rigid

15 Reduced experiences of other forms of violence (child abuse, etc)

16 Reduced acceptance of violence in general

17 Reduced harmful use of drugs and alcohol

18 Greater social and economic equality

19 Men and boys are engaged, and backlash is reduced

20 Reduced rates of mental health issues (depression, anxiety, PTSD)

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Long-Term Measures

21

Reduced violence against women by intimate partners

22

Reduced violence against women by non-intimate partners

23

Reduced sexual harassment and online trolling

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Example Indicators

Domain 11: Women have greater decision-making power	
Target 11.1 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. **(SDG target 5.5)**	
11.1.1	Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments. **(SDG 5.5.1)**
11.1.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions. **(SDG 5.5.2)**
11.1.3	Proportion of women age 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care. **(SDG 5.6.1)** Percentage of rural women with access to and decision-making power over credit.
Target 11.2 Ensure women have equal decision-making power in the home.	
11.2.1	Proportion of women who work for an income, who have control over how their income is spent.
Target 11.3 Ensure women and girls have access to effective response services when seeking help for and/or escaping violence.	
11.3.1	Proportion of women and girls experiencing violence seeking formal support services increases over time.

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Example Indicators

Domain 18: Greater social and economic equality	
Target 18.1 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance. **(SDG target 1.4)**	
18.1.1	Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services. **(SDG 1.4.1)**
18.1.2	Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation, and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure. **(SDG 1.4.2)**
Target 18.2 Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. **(SDG target 5.c)**	
18.2.1	Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. (SDG 5.c.1)

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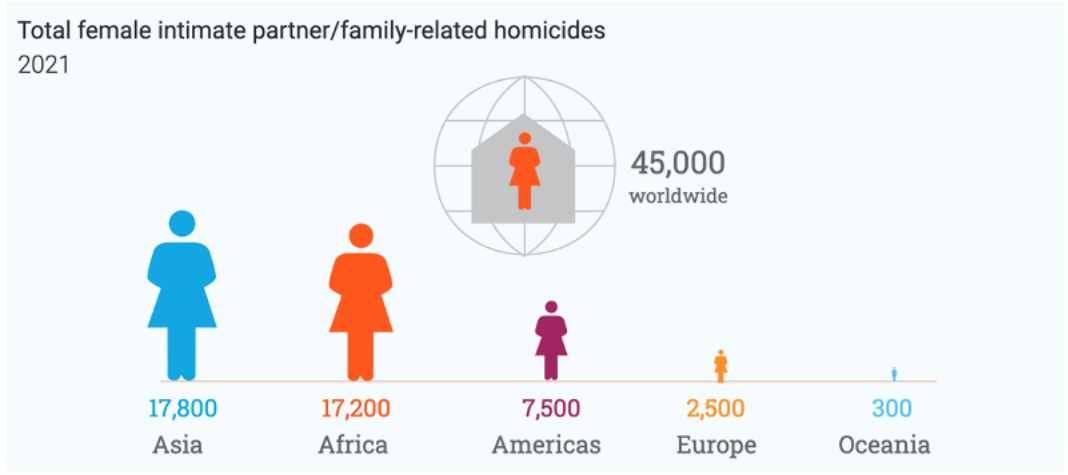
Gender-related killings (Femicide/Feminicide)



- Femicide as the **most extreme form of violence against women**, yet there are significant **gaps in terms of data collection and analysis**

- The **gender motivation of the killing has been challenging to measure** - *this is the gap that the **Statistical Framework** (UNODC and UN Women) fills in.*

- Linking **femicide data, investigations, and prevention** – will result in better interventions, preventing harm and death, and saving lives of women's and children

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