



SHIFTING CULTURAL NORMS TO ADDRESS GBV

In Nepal, researchers are mapping the diffusion of ideas, attitudes, and practices. Equal Access.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is rooted in harmful gender norms and attitudes – unspoken social rules of behavior that are maintained by the approval or disapproval of a group. Gender roles and norms that condone violence against women are deeply embedded to varying degrees throughout most societies in the world, and are predictive of violence perpetration. Without changes in norms, laws and other interventions to reduce and prevent GBV can prove ineffective. Evidence indicates that transforming gender norms and power relations is one of the most effective ways of tackling violence against women.

Several interventions funded by the [Development Marketplace: Innovations to Address GBV](#) show promise at addressing cultural norms.

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO REDUCE CHILD MARRIAGE

RESULTS

In addition to the profound negative impact on girls' physical and psychological health, child marriage limits access to formal education and increases vulnerability to GBV. Girls who marry early are at greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence, and tend to be less healthy, less productive and less empowered. Researchers from

Queen's University and the [ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality](#) studied the experience of Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon.

The study found that increased poverty, protection concerns, and a lack of services and protective social and legal mechanisms exacerbated child marriage among Syrian girls. It also found a difference between how men and women perceive why child marriage happens. Men mainly thought it happened because of increased poverty while women felt it was because of increased insecurity. This suggests that it may be more effective to use different strategies according to gender to address the drivers that lead to the acceptability and practice of early marriage by men and women.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT

RESULTS

In the Amazon of [Peru](#), community health workers co-designed intervention activities with communities to prevent GBV, through participatory workshops, community meetings, and peer-led data collection. Through this process, 7 criteria were identified as required for community engagement to be successful in reducing GBV: support from community leaders, community dialogue, evidence of bystander intervention in VAW, ownership by community health workers and community leaders, links

to government or other formal stakeholders, awareness of gender-related risk factors of violence at a social and structural level, and support from 'agents of change' beyond the community.

WORKING WITH FAITH COMMUNITIES

WORK IN PROGRESS

In Cambodia, [Monash University](#) aims to harness local culture to combat GBV in Cambodia. Through action research, the researchers are working to identify cultural drivers of GBV to inform the development of a culturally embedded model of GBV prevention in Cambodia, and how women, men, girls, and boys use their local cultural references to make sense of the GBV they have experienced or witnessed. Thus, the project will expose and analyze the cultural forces that underpin and shape the GBV "landscape."

Through collaborations with the Buddhist network, the researchers are also exploring and testing how interventions by monks and female devotees could modify risk behavior and contribute to the primary prevention of GBV. The team will examine theories and interventions used by monks to mitigate the effects of GBV and prevent further violence. The team will document why perpetrators and survivors seek help from monks and female devotees and how it changes attitudes towards women and girls and the sense of impunity on GBV.

MAPPING HOW NORMS CHANGE

WORK IN PROGRESS

It is believed that only a small group of "trendsetters" may be needed to reject a standing norm and to effect change. But research into how norms change, particularly diffusion from a group to a community, is limited and best practices are nonexistent. In Nepal, [Equal Access](#) and [Emory University](#) are working to close the gap in evidence on the diffusion of gender norms in low-income settings, by investigating the diffusion effects of an existing norms-change intervention. They will identify the characteristics which support diffusion through mixed-methods analysis of existing data spanning over 24 months, and map the longitudinal diffusion of ideas, attitudes, and practices within a community through participatory research and GPS documentation of support for violence-free households. Preliminary findings suggest there is considerable value in understanding, measuring and strategically targeting diffusion to enhance the impact of social norms interventions.

HARNESSING YOUTH SOCIAL NETWORKS

WORK IN PROGRESS

In Jordan, [Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health](#), [The University of Jordan](#), and [The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for](#)

[Human Development](#) are exploring how social interactions among youths influence attitudes related to gender and sexual and gender-based violence. The research will take place among 1,000 youths (men and women aged 18-24) living in East Amman. The researchers will use these insights to promote evidence-based recommendations for research and interventions.

EXPLORING EFFECTS OF A MEDIA CAMPAIGN

WORK IN PROGRESS

[BRAC University](#) is evaluating the impact of a media campaign (using video clips and podcasts) in Dhaka, designed to reduce the acceptability of intimate partner violence. The researchers will assess its effects on victimization, and on gender attitudes and beliefs. They will examine how these results differ when the intervention is targeted to individual husbands, couples, or to couples and their closest neighbors. ■

Development Marketplace: Innovations to Address Gender-Based Violence funds ground-breaking GBV research in low- and middle-income countries across the globe. It is a partnership between the [World Bank Group](#) and the [Sexual Violence Research Initiative](#). Over four years, the partnership has funded research projects in 28 countries.