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## Engaging the private sector to prevent and address violence against women

### Questions to Panellists

Elizabeth Dartnall (SVRI)

1. What are the most successful interventions during Covid-19 for GBV or Domestic Violence?  
The private sector has an essential role to play, especially in creating supportive and safe working environments during COVID. Women are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, as doctors, nurses, health care workers they are on the frontline saving lives and providing care, as mothers, wives, partners, many times they shoulder the burden of caregiving and housework in the home, and many women are the lowest paid and first to be fired in times of crisis. Employers must be aware of the context of women's lives and work to ensure survivors of domestic violence are safe at work and at home. **UN Women have put out guidance on domestic violence and the workplace** – calling for the private sector to take action – they recommend workplaces and employers carry out prevention, risk assessments and safety planning; offer survivors support; ensure managers are able to recognise signs of violence and create workplace cultures where survivors can disclose violence and remain in their jobs and continue to engage in raising awareness of domestic violence among all staff. There is no evidence available to say what is best practice, what private sector interventions are effective right now to reduce GBV and support survivors during COVID. But calls to action like UN Women's and the experiences shared in this webinar are all excellent case studies to build on. For more resources on VAW and COVID visit SVRI's [COVID resource page](#).

Lucía Flores and Lauren Shields (BSR)

1. What do you find is the average timeframe between first engaging with a company in the private sector and an agreement being signed?  
There are lots of factors at play – the company's familiarity with us and our work, how the programming fits with their business priorities, available budget, internal buy-in. It can be anything from a few weeks to several months (or more!).
2. To what extent are employees in emerging markets working from home because of COVID? And how does this impact employer's duty of care to support employees who are subjected to GBV at home while working?  
In emerging markets, employees in white collar positions are mostly working from home, however, blue collar workers have been furloughed, dismissed or are being asked to continue working in spite of the health emergency.



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3. What do think should be the role of private sector in social responsibility - specifically toward women survivors of GBV? outside the workplace area.

The new [Convention on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#) voted by the ILO represents an important step forward on strengthening protections for all workers around the world against violence and harassment. The convention outlines guidance for addressing violence and harassment in the world of work, setting a high bar for companies and governments on their responsibilities to manage this critical issue. The convention looks beyond the walls of the workplace, recognizing there are risks of abuse throughout the “world of work,” e.g., when commuting to and from work, and provides clear guidance for companies to address violence and harassment even outside the workplace area. While the specific applications to businesses will depend on the country and type of business in question, the overall message is clear: More—much more—is expected from businesses when it comes to tackling violence and harassment.

#### Tolu Lawrence (Promundo)

1. For organisations looking to work on their gender ratio and trying to attract and retain more women, especially for difficult field positions, what advice would you give?

Don't tell women what you're committed to; show them what you're committed to. Organisations seeking to attract and retain more women should demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) via initiatives to elevate women's leadership, investment in the advancement of diverse women at all levels of the organisation, and incentivised and measurable diversity initiatives. Attracting and retaining women is not just about putting the right policies in place, it's about investing in a culture that supports those policies and makes them actionable. So, organisations should develop measurable plans to meet audacious goals that reflect their DEI value statements, leadership should openly promote and model the values of an inclusive workplace culture, and managers should be incentivised and held accountable for implementing plans that support these plans and further embed this culture. Without this level of commitment, organisations might be able to recruit women into positions, but they will struggle to retain them.

#### Thulani Duma (The Children's Place)

1. Have your surveys accommodated cultural values? How do we include more men in GBV issues? More women champion this agenda, yet we need to have a mind change/shift on issues concerning GBV and especially for the man, since the highest perpetrators are men, no wonder most researchers are biased on women.

The surveys have looked into acceptance of GBV as cultural norm during baseline & endline surveys. Attitude toward GBV showed an improvement in the end line survey as most women strongly disagreed compared to the baseline survey. All the factories had a few men participating as trainees. The modules targeting management i.e. understanding gender, communication, and gender-based violence are attended by managers and supervisors, most of whom are men. However, more can be done to include more men in HERrespect program.



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2. To what extent are employees in emerging markets working from home as a result of COVID? And how does this impact employer's duty of care to support employees who are subjected to GBV at home while working?

My response here is much generalized. In countries where there was lockdown, people stayed at home and gender-based violence seems to have spiked during this time. Unfortunately, there is no data to work with to confirm the extent of the increase in GBV.

#### Raania Rizvi (DFID)

1. Is DFID phase II open for WW for VAWG?

In June 2019 DFID's Secretary of State approved the next phase - ***What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale***. This £67.5million programme will be the first global effort to scale up tested VAWG interventions and test approaches in new areas, including in conflict and reaching the most marginalised. We are currently finalising the procurement strategy for the new programme and hope the Invitation to Tender will be issued shortly on DFID's procurement portal. Please do register via [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about/procurement](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about/procurement) to view the programme's terms of reference and other bidding documents.

#### Shruti Majumdar (UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, UN Women)

1. Is funding for existing grants or can others also apply? (question via Whatsapp)

In response to what we are learning from CSOs during the pandemic, and with the support of the EU Spotlight Initiative, we have been able to provide a cohort of existing grantees with core funds in order to meet their programmatic and operational needs. We are also exercising flexibility to enable our grantees to modify or delay project activities or reallocate budgets to respond to the crisis. Going beyond our existing grantees and subject to increased resources, the Trust Fund aims to launch a global Call for Proposals to fund projects specifically designed to support long-term interventions for women and girl and survivors within the context of the pandemic.



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