

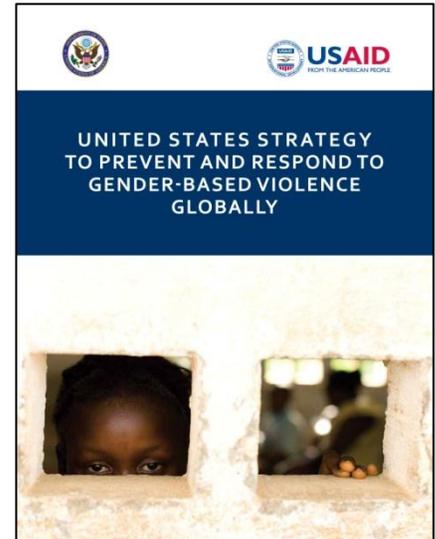


**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally

Gender-based violence (GBV) violates human rights and presents a significant public health challenge with civic, social, political, and economic consequences for individuals, communities and whole societies. Different forms of GBV cause physical and mental harm, limit access to education, incur medical and legal costs, reduce productivity, and lower income. Gender-based violence undermines the safety, dignity, health, and human rights of the millions of individuals who experience it, and the public health, economic well-being, and security of nations.

GBV is a global pandemic that is inflicted upon men, women and children. However, women and girls are the most at risk and most affected by gender-based violence. An estimated one in three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. According to the UN Population Fund, almost 50 percent of all sexual assaults worldwide are against girls 15 and younger. Although statistics on the prevalence of violence vary, the scale is tremendous, the scope is vast, and the consequences for individuals, families, communities, and countries are devastating. For instance, a recent USAID funded study in Bangladesh found that the cost of domestic violence is equivalent to two percent of the country's GDP – nearly equal to the amount of the government's annual expenditures in health and nutrition.<sup>1</sup>



### WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

This strategy defines “gender-based violence” as violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. It includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life. Gender-based violence can include female infanticide; child sexual abuse; sex trafficking and forced labor; sexual coercion and abuse; neglect; domestic violence; elder abuse; and harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriage, “honor” killings, and female genital mutilation/cutting.

Women and girls are the most at risk and most affected by gender-based violence. Consequently, the terms “violence against women” and “gender-based violence” are often used interchangeably. However, boys and men can also experience gender-based violence, as can sexual and gender minorities. Regardless of the target, gender-based violence is rooted in structural inequalities between men and women and is characterized by the use and abuse of physical, emotional, or financial power and control.

*- Definition adapted from Gender-based Violence and HIV: A Program Guide for Integrating Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response in PEPFAR Programs*

<sup>1</sup> Cost of Violence Against Women (COVAW), implemented by CARE Bangladesh, 2012.

## THE U.S. STRATEGY

The goal of the strategy is to marshal U.S. expertise and capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally, based on three guiding principles:

**Prevention** of gender-based violence from occurring in the first place, by working with local organizations, civil society, and key stakeholders, including men and boys.

**Protection** from gender-based violence by identifying and providing services to survivors once the violence occurs.

**Accountability** to ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and to end impunity by strengthening legal and judicial systems.

The U.S. strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1 • Increase Coordination of Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Efforts among United States Government Agencies and with Other Stakeholders
- 2 • Enhance Integration of Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Efforts into Existing United States Government Work
- 3 • Improve Collection, Analysis, and Use of Data and Research to Enhance Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Efforts
- 4 • Enhance or Expand United States Government Programming that Addresses Gender-based Violence

*“It is time for all of us to assume our responsibility to go beyond condemning this behavior, to taking concrete steps to end it, to make it socially unacceptable, to recognize it is not cultural, it is criminal.”*

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

## THE USAID IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

USAID has managed the majority of the U.S. Government’s international investment in GBV prevention and response efforts over the last several years. Moving forward USAID will align programs towards two outcomes:

An increased share of the population will view gender-based violence as unacceptable

USAID resources will be appropriately focused on addressing the most prevalent forms for gender-based violence in the country

In implementing the strategy, USAID will prioritize:

- Identifying, developing, adapting, and disseminating toolkits and best practices to assist missions in assessing current programming related to gender-based violence and refine criteria for identifying and prioritizing gender-based violence focus countries
- Monitoring and evaluating programs focused on the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence
- Initiating research to address pervasive gaps in understanding gender-based violence
- Mobilizing resources to address gender-based violence

USAID has reinvigorated its internal Agency- wide gender-based violence working group, which is chaired by the Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. The working group will develop guidance for incorporating gender-based violence prevention and response efforts into Country Development Cooperation Strategies, project design, and learning and evaluation products.

View the policy at [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACT888.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACT888.pdf)