



Resources to Address Gender-Based Violence



KROC SCHOOL
Institute for Peace and Justice

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IN OUR CITIES

Resources to Address Gender-Based Violence

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Introduction

As a member-driven organization, Peace in Our Cities is continuously working to meet the needs and requests of partner cities and organizations. In early 2025, members articulated a need for ‘one-stop shop’ resource guides on two topical areas: the prevention of Gender Based Violence and Youth Violence. The guide below is our effort to respond to those requests. This guide should not be taken as comprehensive. Rather, it is offered as a starting place to explore good practice from both PiOC partner cities and cities outside of the network, as well as up-to-date research and publication guides. The Peace in Our Cities Secretariat is here to help any member - existing or aspiring - in thinking through the relevance of materials in this guide, as well as offering direct connections or introductions to those carrying out research, administering programs or otherwise. Finally, because learning and improving happens continuously, these guides will be updated with some regularity. If you have or know of work that should be included in a future iteration of this guide, please send it to us at info@peaceinourcities.org or to any of the Secretariat members independently.

Background

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a widespread issue that intersects and compounds with various sectors of society. GBV refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their ascribed gender and the disproportionate impact of violence on a particular gender. It encompasses physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse that is rooted in gender inequality, power imbalances, and systemic discrimination.¹ A gendered understanding of violence highlights that there are violences that occur specifically due to an individual’s gender *and* there are differences in an individual’s experience of violence based on gender.

Men and boys are more likely to perpetrate and experience violence and die from it, yet women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals, are more likely to be killed because of their gender.² While all instances of violence require an understanding of gender and the roles that contribute to it, violence against women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals, or GBV, is particularly urgent. GBV manifests in both public spaces and within homes. On average 140 women and girls are killed every day, the majority by an intimate partner or family member.³ For cities, public spaces also present a particular concern, as the majority of sexual harassment occurs in public,⁴ exemplified within public transportation.⁵

1 Definition of GBV synthesized from: Kari, A. (n.d.). *Gender and health*. World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender/strengthening-health-sector-response-to-gender-based-violence-in-humanitarian-emergencies#tab=tab_1

and *Gender-based violence*. UNHCR US. (n.d.). <https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/protection/gender-based-violence>

2 Trejo, B et al., (2024). Characterising the killing of girls and women in urban settings in Latin America, 2000–2019: An analysis of variability and time trends using mortality data from Vital Registration Systems. *BMJ Public Health*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjph-2024-000985>

3 Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner/ ... (n.d.). <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/femicides-in-2023-global-estimates-of-intimate-partner-family-member-femicides-en.pdf>

4 A national study on sexual harassment and assault. (n.d.-a). <https://stopstreetharassment.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Executive-Summary-2018-National-Study-on-Sexual-Harassment-and-Assault.pdf>

5 Peake, L., Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, G., & Datta, A. (2024). Introduction: Gender and cities. *Handbook on Gender and Cities*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786436139.00006>

Cities often reflect and reinforce patriarchal power structures, making everyday safety and mobility unevenly experienced along gendered lines. For example, access to care is deeply unequal, with women and gender-diverse individuals often facing significant barriers to justice and health services.⁶ These include limited legal protection, stigma, lack of trauma-informed support, and unmet needs in reproductive and mental healthcare, all of which compound the various forms of GBV experienced.

However, gender-based violence is preventable. A comprehensive approach that incorporates gender throughout various strategies, can address root causes while also promoting equity, accountability and opportunity across gender lines. This brief is intended to help Peace in Our Cities partners find high quality resources related to gender based violence reduction and prevention. Namely, the brief highlights successful strategies to prevent GBV through the work of specific organizations, programs, and research with examples from around the world. This list is in no way comprehensive, but represents a good starting place with more resource support available from the PiOC team at any time.

⁶ Women's access to justice: A global snapshot. World Justice Project. (n.d.). <https://worldjustice-project.org/news/womens-access-justice-global-snapshot>

PiOC Partner Examples & Network Resources

Peace in our Cities in the Time of Pandemic: Preventing an Escalation of Violence Against Women

COVID-19 Series

As a part of a PiOC series addressing key issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, this brief looks at the exasperation of violence against women (VAW). Emphasizing the importance of a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach involving local governments, civil society, and communities, several key actions are recommended to address VAW.

Beyond the Battlefields: Practical Strategies to Halving Global Violence in Our Homes, Streets, and Communities

Flagship Report

The NYU's Center on International Cooperation (CIC) presents a roadmap for addressing violence in communities ostensibly at peace. Integrated throughout the report is an emphasis on addressing gender-based violence and gender inequality in an effort to reduce all forms of violence.

CHANGE: Gender Equality Toolkit

Toolkit, Launch Video

The Gender Equity Toolkit from CHANGE offers cities a practical guide to advancing gender equity across municipal systems. It highlights best practices in four key areas: the city as an innovator (embedding gender equity into city systems), as an employer (fostering a gender-inclusive workforce), as a provider (integrating gender considerations into policies and services), and as a connector (partnering with stakeholders to strengthen programs for the benefit of all residents).

Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention

Website, Highlight in OVP Report, PiOC Page

The city of Oakland, California, USA, takes a public health approach to violence prevention and reduction, placing one of their strategic focuses on gender-based violence, through their Department of Violence Prevention (DVP). The DVP is structured to focus on gun/group violence, gender-based violence, and community healing and restoration.

Safecity

Website

Safecity is a platform by Red Dot Foundation that enables anonymous reporting of sexual and gender-based harassment in public spaces. Launched in 2012, it uses user driven data to map unsafe areas, raise awareness, and support communities and authorities in making cities safer. By identifying local patterns of violence, Safecity empowers individuals, especially women, to reclaim public spaces and advocate for change.

The Línea Púrpura Distrital (District Purple Line), Bogotá, Colombia

Website

The Línea Púrpura Distrital is an innovative Bogotá-based program offering 24/7 psychosocial and legal support to women facing gender violence, with a women-to-women, empathetic approach. It stands out for its inclusive features, like sign language video calls for Deaf women, and its integration with health and justice systems to prevent femicide.

Evidence Platforms, Literature Reviews & Program Repositories

University of Notre Dame Eliminating Violence Against Women Lab

Website

This research institute focuses on the intersection of gender and violence in Latin America and the Caribbean and aims to promote evidence-based policies and strategies that can prevent gender-based violence, effectively provide services, and increase access to justice. The research lab highlights important thematic research and examples of policy and project implementations.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Website

The European Unions' EIGE provides independent research and resources of best practices to promote gender equality such as toolkits on methods for data collection and information sharing.

New Strategies to Address GBV in Urban Humanitarian Settings

Blog Post

This blog post highlights innovative strategies to address GBV in urban humanitarian settings across Uganda, India, Lebanon, and Ecuador, emphasizing the unique challenges faced by urban refugees. It underscores the importance of understanding the intersection of GBV and migration, and details pilot interventions showcasing community-driven approaches that engage local organizations and marginalized groups to prevent GBV and support survivors effectively.

Guidebooks, Frameworks, & Toolkits

RESPECT Women: Preventing Violence Against Women Framework

Implementation Package

Developed by the WHO and UN Women, this implementation package aims to support national and sub-national programming to address violence against women and girls. Under each of the "RESPECT" strategies, this package includes practical resources and tools for the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of prevention programs.

A Global Systematic Review of Reviews to Update the RESPECT Women Framework

Article

This article provides a systematic review of interventions addressing violence against women and girls. In reviewing intervention, this review provides insights into needed updates for the RESPECT women framework.

USAID Foundational Elements for Gender-Based Programing in Development

Approach Overview

This report offers an overview of gender-based violence and key principles in developing gender-based violence programming such as survivor-centered, rights-based, and accountable approaches.

World Bank Violence Against Women and Girls Resource Guide

Resource Guide

This comprehensive guide offers basic information on the consequences of violence against women and girls, guidance on how to integrate violence against women prevention, the provision of quality services to those impacted, and recommends strategies for integrating prevention into policies and legislation. The guide aims to be a starting point for initiatives to address violence against women and girls.

Handbook on Gender and Cities (Introduction)

Book Introduction

As a part of a volume of International Handbooks on Gender and focuses on applying gender theory to the city. In particular, this chapter highlights how urban spaces are experienced differently along gendered lines which in turn can perpetuate gender-based violence particularly in public spaces.

Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Design

Handbook

This handbook aims to demonstrate the connections between gender inequality, the built environment, and urban planning. It bridges the gap between gender-inclusive policies and real-world practice by providing practical guidelines and best practices for designing cities that are inclusive of women, girls, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups.

IPV Risk Assessment and Risk Management Toolkit

Toolkit

The European Institute for Gender Equality provides guidelines on risk assessment and management for intimate partner violence (IPV) to improve victim protection across EU Member States. It emphasizes the importance of assessing the severity of harm and implementing protective measures. The role of police in initial risk assessment is highlighted, with recommendations to standardize practices and improve victim safety through tailored national mechanisms.

Improving the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on Violence Against Women: Global Technical Guide

Guidebook

The World Health Organization in conjunction with UN Women created this technical guide to help support countries in collecting and ethically using data on Violence Against Women. Outlined in eight-steps this guide provides operational support in sectors wishing to develop comprehensive data systems.

Diagnosis & Analysis

World Bank Gender Data Portal

Gender-Based Violence Indicators

This page provides data on various experiences of violence, such as sexual violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and female genital mutilation, by county, age range, and by income group.

Demographic and Health Surveys: Gender Indicator Data

Gender Indicators

USAID provides survey data across several indicators, including gender metrics. Data can be broken down by country or by indicators on themes such as women's autonomy, intimate partner violence, and gender norms. This is a valuable portal to provide baseline data for those working to address gender-based violence.

Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides

Research Report

This 2023 report estimates the number of femicides globally, outlining definitions of femicides and the crucial need to address this form of violence. Focusing on patterns and trends, this report provides a baseline to understanding how and where femicides manifest.

Addressing Gender-Based Violence: A Critical Review of Interventions

Research Report

This article provides an overview of GBV, examining its risk factors and consequences. It then evaluates the effectiveness of various response strategies, focusing on three key areas: improving access to justice for survivors, providing support services for women affected by violence, and prevention to reduce the incidence of GBV.

The Great Gender Divergence: Insights from Brazil

Blog Post

This blog explores the paradox of Latin America scoring higher for gender equality attitudes than other regions, yet has much higher rates of femicide. Compiling data and interviews across Latin American countries, the most significant predictor of femicide was high levels of generalized violence, not necessarily sexist beliefs and attitudes.

Ending Violence Against LGBTQI+ People: Global Evidence and Insights

Research Report

This report explores the drivers and risk factors of violence against LGBTQI+ people, identifies promising interventions and practice in preventing such violence, and provides recommendations created in consultation with 12 LGBTQI+ organizations across the globe.

Urban Youth Violence: Do Definitions and Reasons for Violence Vary by Gender?

Research

This study examines how young children in cities perceive and explain youth violence, finding differences and similarities along gender lines. While many reasons overlapped, gender differences emerged, as boys linked violence to money and drugs while girls cited gossip, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive prevention strategies.

The Conversation: “Urban Planning has Long Ignored Women’s Experiences”

Article

This short article highlights five ways cities can make safer spaces for women, specifically highlighting how and who to gather information from. The insights provide a brief oversight of how to rethink safety in the city.

Programs & Policy Examples

Public Policy & Applied Research

Policy Approaches to Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality

Policy Brief

This policy brief from the World Health Organization outlines the rationale for using policy approaches to engage men in order to achieve gender and health equality, provides a framework of policy and program approaches, and highlights successful policy initiatives.

Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice

Website, Global Boyhood Initiative, Men Care

Equimundo is an applied research organization dedicated to achieving gender equality through transformational work with boys and men throughout their lives. Research, toolkits, and action guides are published on their website, and provide support for local program implementation. Initiatives like the Global Boyhood Initiative and MenCare have been replicated and evaluated in diverse global contexts.

City-Wide Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence, Chicago, USA

Strategic Plan

The City of Chicago's two-year Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Strategic Plan addresses GBV and human trafficking with a trauma-informed, survivor-centered approach. It focuses on seven key strategies, including strengthening city capacity, improving coordination and law enforcement responses, shifting cultural norms, using data, creating alternatives to the justice system, and reforming harmful policies. In collaboration with community partners and survivors, the plan aims to create a safer, more equitable city through systemic change and holistic support.

Violence Against Women Strategy, London UK

Strategic Plan

The Mayor of London's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2022–2025 adopts a public health approach, emphasizing prevention, support for survivors, and holding perpetrators accountable. Key initiatives include investing £17.7 million in specialized support services, implementing the Drive programme to reform perpetrators' behavior, and enhancing education through campaigns like "Have a Word" and school toolkits.

Data-Collection & Alert Systems

"Better Data" Project (TEDIC)

Blog, Framework

The "Better Data" project offers valuable resources for data-driven responses, particularly focusing on Online Gender Based Violence. bB analyzing perpetrators' behaviors and motivations and developing standardized frameworks for data collection and policy-making, the initiative aims to improve global responses to OGBV and ensure safer online environments.

Mexico: National Database and Information on Cases of Violence Against Women

Online Database

This online database (in Spanish) documents cases of violence against women in Mexico, capturing information about girls, adolescents, and women who have experienced physical,

psychological, sexual, economic, and patrimonial violence. It covers various contexts, including domestic, institutional, workplace, and educational settings, as well as community violence, gender-based and femicidal violence, and violence related to organized crime and human trafficking.

Mexico's Gender Violence Alerts Program

Blog Post, Declaration

Mexico's Gender Violence Alerts Program is a government-led initiative that takes a proactive, community-based approach to addressing GBV, activating only when requested by human rights organizations. Upon activation, an expert coalition investigates regional violence and develops mandatory, locally-informed recommendations for the state to implement.

Reducing Gender Based Violence in Public Transportation

Research Report

This study examines gender-based violence (GBV) on public transportation in Mexico City. Current efforts have focused on creating transit vehicles exclusively for women and children; however, these interventions offer only temporary relief. Through interviews with experts and users, the study found that more integrated, tech-driven solutions are needed. Recommendations include mobile phone reporting applications and social marketing campaigns, which can enhance safety, improve reporting, and increase responsiveness within the transit system.

Community Design & Planning

Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls, and Gender Diverse People

Project Report and Framework

As a part of a London initiative to transform cities to be more inclusive for women, girls, and gender-diverse people, this report provides a framework for thinking about gendered safety in public spaces and urban development.

Safe Cities Night Walk in Brisbane, Australia

Blog Post

To identify and understand feelings of safety within the city, this project engaged groups of women and girls in a one-hour walk through communities where they were asked to complete a digital survey that both identified areas of concern as well as gave participants to make suggestions to improve the paths.

Feminist Urban Design: A Gender Inclusive Framework

Framework

This gender-inclusive framework is designed to help cities evaluate their progress across key outcome areas, draw insights from gender-focused policies and programs implemented by other cities, and enhance their gender data collection and monitoring systems. It serves as a key tool for the City Hub and Network for Gender Equity (CHANGE), providing a platform for cities to exchange experiences and share lessons learned.

Freetown Caring City Project

Program

The "Freetown Caring City," implemented in Freetown's largest informal settlement Susan's Bay, is an adaptation of Bogotá's Care Blocks model, which reorganizes urban neighborhoods

to bring essential services within a 20-minute walk, offers caregivers personal development opportunities, and promotes gender equity through community engagement, health services, and the “Care Academy” for men. This project integrates research and communications efforts to ensure services are accessible and to drive shifts in gender norms.

Policing

Assessing Police Attitudes Toward Intervention in Gender Violence (Spain)

Research Report

This report examines how police officers’ attitudes toward intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) are shaped by training, perceived severity, and belief in common myths. The study highlights the importance of targeted training to improve police intervention in cases of gender-based violence.

Addressing Violence Against Women: The Effect of Women’s Police Stations on Police Legitimacy

Research Report, Research Evaluation

These studies evaluate the impact of women’s police stations (WPS) in Brazil, finding that WPS increase women’s trust in the police and narrow the gender gap in perceived police effectiveness by improving women’s sense of personal safety. WPS also appears to shift men’s attitudes, leading to greater rejection of violence against women and stronger support for bystander intervention, especially in areas where WPS have been in place longer.

Access to Care and Access to Justice

Experience of Implementing Women’s Justice Centers in Hidalgo, Mexico

Program Introduction, Report, Table of Women’s Justice Centers

This report presents the case study of the Women’s Justice Center (Centro de Justicia para las Mujeres) of the Mexican State of Hidalgo. This center provides integrated services (legal, medical, psychological, and social) for women facing GBV.

Justice Access for Victims and the Accused

Project Summary

The Justice Access for Victims and the Accused (JAVA) program, launched in 2019 by RE!NSTITUTE and USAID, improves access to justice in Mexico, especially in gender-based violence cases. Using intensive 100-Day Challenges, it strengthens institutions like Public Defender’s Offices and Women’s Justice Centers. Notable results include faster protective measures, improved victim services, and higher compliance rates among defendants.

Co-Designing an Outreach Intervention for Women Experiencing Street-Involvement

Research Report

This study outlines an inclusive, co-designed outreach intervention, grounded in feminist and community-based research principles, aimed at improving health and social care for women experiencing street involvement and GBV. The intervention emphasizes GBV prevention, relational and trauma-informed engagement, and harm reduction to build trust and facilitate access to care.

Casas de Justicia (Justice Houses) in Colombia

Program Overview

Colombia's Justice Houses, or "Casas de Justicia," are community-based centers that offer integrated legal and social services, including rights education, legal advice, and conflict resolution, all within a single location. Established in 1995 through a collaboration between the Colombian Ministry of Justice and USAID, these centers aim to enhance access to justice for vulnerable populations, particularly in areas with limited institutional presence, by providing free, informal, and culturally sensitive services.

Youth & Gender

Box Girls

Program Website, Evaluation

Through its training and support, Boxgirls contributes to addressing GBV by building resilience and leadership among youth. Boxgirls offers programs that empower women and girls by teaching life skills, self-defense, and de-escalation strategies, helping them become leaders in their communities.

Equal Playing Field

Program Website

Equal Playing Field (EPF) uses sport as a tool to challenge gender-based violence (GBV) and gender inequality, particularly in marginalized communities across 32 countries. Through empowerment programs, leadership training, and grassroots initiatives, EPF creates safe spaces for girls and women, promoting respect, equality, and the prevention of violence both on and off the field.

Intimate Partner Violence

Zethembe: Intervention Strategy for Couples

Initial program Evaluation

Zethembe is a co-developed intervention designed for young heterosexual couples in South African informal settlements to prevent violence against women and girls. Created through a participatory process involving young women, NGOs, and researchers, the program is grounded in local experiences and aims to address harmful relationship dynamics while promoting gender equity.

Stepping Stones and Creating Futures: A Group-Based Approach to IPV

Initial program Evaluation, Program Website

Stepping Stones and Creating Futures is a program implemented in South Africa that works to address intimate partner violence (IPV) through a combined "gender-transformation" and livelihood-strengthening" approach. Through two-sets of participatory group-workshops, the program aims to raise awareness, build skills, and shift harmful social norms surrounding various forms of GBV.

Martawa Zuromaye (Dignity and Security): A Survivor-Centered Approach

Program overview

The Martawa Zuromaye program in northeast Nigeria focuses on addressing intimate partner violence and other forms of gender based violence through building individuals capacity to address violence against women and girls, mobilizing community action to challenge harmful norms that perpetuate violence, and to strengthen supporting legislation. Participants in both individual and community training sessions reported notable shifts in attitudes toward gender-

based violence.

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre in Victoria, Australia

Website

Safe Steps provides 24/7 crisis support and specialized services for individuals experiencing family and domestic violence in Victoria, Australia, including crisis accommodation, legal advocacy, and disability-inclusive support. Evaluations highlight its effectiveness in delivering immediate, trauma-informed assistance and improving safety outcomes for diverse, high-risk populations.

Education

Raising Voices Violence Prevention Program: SASA!

Raising Voices Website, SASA! Approach, The Good School Toolkit

Raising Voices is an organization dedicated to preventing violence against women and children through evidence-based, community-driven approaches. One of its key initiatives, SASA! (Start, Awareness, Support, and Action), has been implemented in over 30 countries to help communities shift harmful social norms that perpetuate violence. Raising Voices also developed the Good School Toolkit, which has been used in schools across Uganda and has been shown to reduce children's experience of violence by 42%.

Evaluation of the Communities Care Program in Somalia

Evaluation, Communities Care Toolkit

The Communities Care (Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence Program) is a community-based initiative developed by UNICEF to prevent and respond to sexual violence against women and girls, particularly in conflict-affected settings. Central to the program is a strong educational component, aimed at raising awareness and transforming norms around GBV. This evaluation demonstrates promising results in shifting harmful social norms and boosting confidence in GBV response services within a challenging humanitarian context.

Harmonious Family Relationships Course in Moldova

Report, Press Release

The Harmonious Family Relationships course in 22 Moldovan high schools helped students better understand gender equality, healthy communication, and the dynamics of respectful romantic relationships. Evaluations showed improved attitudes toward nonviolence, greater awareness of harmful behaviors, and increased confidence in handling relationship challenges.