

Key Takeaways/Lessons Learned from Prevention+

Gender inequality is one of the most pressing barriers to global social and economic progress and the fulfilment of human rights. One of the most prevalent symptoms of gender inequality is gender-based violence (GBV), with one in three women worldwide experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. The root causes of GBV and gender inequality are deeply embedded in patriarchal values and power structures within societies, policies, and legislation.



In 2016, Rutgers and partners Sonke Gender Justice, Promundo US, and the MenEngage Global Alliance started Prevention+ - a five-year, multi-country programme in Indonesia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Rwanda, and Uganda that seeks to end gender-based violence. It is a first of its kind programme that transforms the harmful gender norms that drive GBV at the individual, community, institutional, and governmental levels of society. The programme targets men as agents of change and uses intersectional interventions to address the root causes of GBV and gender inequality.

A recent external evaluation of the programme showed that it was impactful across all four levels of interventions. Here are five key takeaways or lessons that we learnt:

1. Simultaneously working across socio-ecological levels was critical to the success of this violence prevention programme:

The Evaluation found that within the context of a time-limited intervention and the original ambitions of the Prevention+ programme, there was a positive impact across all four socio-ecological levels within each country, with evidence that some results would not have occurred (or would have been significantly diminished) without the mutually reinforcing effect of working simultaneously across the different socio-ecological levels.

2. Participatory programme design, where participants themselves were offered meaningful chances to shape and co-develop core programme messages and elements, was exciting and impactful.

The programme in Lebanon emphasised participant-driven topic additions and adjustments to its interventions. For example, one of the men's groups suggested that men help to prepare food with their spouses, while another group added discussion sessions related to planning dates and outings for both men and women. In Rwanda, Parents Evening Dialogues (PED) committee members also had similar leeway to shape monthly sessions based on community needs, making the programme more relevant and ultimately more responsive.

3. Working within, building on, or improving existing institutions can result in improved and more sustainable programmatic outcomes:

The predominant strategy across all countries was working with and strengthening pre-existing structures and institutions. New institutions were not built; instead, new processes and ways of working strengthened both the institutions themselves and the GBV prevention and response systems within which they operate. In all countries, key programme components are expected to continue beyond the scope of Prevention+ in their current format. The creation of formal and informal networks was considered a key success, especially when these were shown to be self-organizing. The development of materials for ongoing knowledge transfer and programme management was another important aspect of the sustainability and institutionalization across all contexts which included manuals (Lebanon, Rwanda, Uganda), reporting books for tracking and monitoring (Rwanda) and a video guide for a prison standard operating procedure (Indonesia).

4. Multi-level, cross-sectoral relationship-building was key to ensuring collaboration, capacity-building, and accountability:

Across all countries, relationships between actors across (and within) the socio-ecological levels were strengthened, bringing about increased collaboration, increased knowledge sharing, and accountability. Many collaborations involved informal knowledge transfer which widened the network and served to promote the goals of the programme.

5. Engaging men as part of the solution and promoting positive masculinities are key to preventing violence against women and girls:

This was cited as a key component of programme strategy and design across all four countries as men were targeted and engaged as agents of change to promote positive masculinity. This led to external engagement and a wider impact, as leaders became collaborators and a call for men to be engaged to help prevent GBV was even cited as part of the District Development Strategy (2018-24) in Rwanda.