The Issue

Women and girls across the globe experience several forms of sexual violence in ways that negatively impact their health and wellbeing. In Egypt, women and girls are at risk of facing sexual harassment, varying from unwanted sexual remarks to rape, in streets, educational institutions, workplaces and other public spheres.

This universal reality, cause psychological, emotional, physical and economic damage and distress for women and girls. It reduces their freedom of movement and their ability to study and work, to access essential services, participate in public life and enjoy recreation opportunities. In addition, sexual violence against women hinders development goals and slows economic growth because of the difficulties women face in the workforce and the public sphere.

Our Strategy for Change

The Cairo Safe City and Safe Public Spaces programme was launched in 2011 as one of the founding programmes of the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Flagship Programme Initiative to prevent and respond to sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces.

City partners in Cairo commits to:

1. **Identify gender-responsive locally relevant and owned interventions**: Conduct a scoping study and a safety audit to prioritize needs of the targeted community, a mid-term evaluation to assess programme's intervention and develop an impact evaluation strategy for the programme. Prioritize programme intervention in Greater Cairo, in Imbaba, Hagganah and Manhsyet Nasser, targeting women, girls, men and boys, school students, faith based organizations, civil society organizations and other community members and leaders. Establish a network of 200 young volunteers to become pioneers of change in their circles by implementing programme's activities. Establish a coalition of 45 local NGOs and associations, in the three intervention areas, to build their technical and institutional capacities and align their activities of delivering preventative measures within the framework of the programme. Provide technical and institutional support to national authorities and women machineries on conceptual approaches to safe cities and the prevention and response to SVAWG in public spaces.

2. **Develop and effectively implement comprehensive laws and policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence in public spaces** Support national stakeholders and CSOs to draft and adopt the first Penal Code article clearly defining and criminalizing Sexual Harassment in public spaces, in the Egyptian Constitution. Review the articles of the family law and penal code to identify legislative gaps allowing VAW and draft alternative gender sensitive legislations to be proposed to the Parliament and adopted. Partner with the Office of National Public Prosecutors and the UNODC to develop a manual on how to deal with cases of crimes of VAW, collect evidences, filing and refer the case to essential services, in line with the current legislations and international conventions.

3. **Investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces** Support national stakeholders to adopt gender responsive policies in urban planning and public transportation. Upgrade the courtyard of a school in Ezbet El Hagganna, which has in turn become a sustainable community-run hub for after school hours. This has transformed the school courtyard into a public space for the community, making it safer for women and girls by fostering community engagement, participation and trust. Conduct a study, in cooperation with UN Habitat, to incorporate a gender dimension in the design of the new mobility project - Bus Rapid Transit – ensuring women and girls safety in accessing public services and navigating the city. Partner with Giza Governorate to incorporate gender perspective in safe workplaces, by planning to upgrade "Zenin Market" in Giza. Adopting a participatory approach, a sustainable survivor centered design will be developed and implemented, leaving no one behind. The Market should provide safe workplaces for over 150 female workers, responsible for households, and ensure safe public spaces and access to services to hundreds of women, girls and men on daily basis.

4. **Change attitudes and behaviors to promote women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from violence** Develop innovative communication campaigns, including the 'Speak Up' Campaign featuring PSAs and public banners addressing sexual harassment in public transport, and encouraging society to adopt a repulsive attitude towards sexual violence by changing "blame the victim" and silence culture. Social media interaction towards the campaign has reached millions of views and shares. Adopt a coordinated community-led response approach in intervention areas engaging over 16,000 community members changing their perception about gender norms, masculinity and violence against women. Mobilize over 200 volunteers to lead on community awareness raising activities, focusing on innovative techniques using interactive community theater, community street campaigns, sports, music to raise

awareness on sexual harassment and violence against women in Egypt. One of the innovative and effective tools utilized by Safe Cities is the shadow art, presenting community issues in an attractive yet impactful way. Through awareness raising activities, Safe Cities volunteers and local NGOs have reached out to multiple sectors of the community: women agents of change, religious leaders, Tuk-Tuk drivers, ex-drug abusers and other community members.

FACTS AND FIGURES

A scoping study conducted in 2012 in Cairo and National Statistics from the EDHS found that:

- 35% of women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 (EDHS 2014)
- One-third of women who experienced violence since age 15 ever sought help to deal with the violence; among those who did seek help, most turned to their family for assistance. EDHS 2014
- In Al Haggannah, 71% of never- married women reported experienced of verbal harassment
- It is reported that females exposed to any form of harassment do nothing as they believe that it may tarnish their reputation
- Exposure to harassment has changed the habits of around 20-30% of ever and never-married respondents in AL-Haganna by not going out alone, changing the roads that they take or avoiding passing or going to certain places

SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

- Establish a free of charge hotline at the Ombudsperson's Office of the National Council for Women to receive complaints of women survivors of sexual violence and provide legal support, nationwide.
- Support the National Council for Women and 12 inline ministries to develop and implement the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2020, with four main pillars on: prevention, protection, response and awareness raising.
- Physical upgrade of two shelters in Mansoura and Minya governorates, adopting a participatory gender sensitive and survivor centered-approaches, to ensure provision of quality services and effective response to female survivors of violence.
- Urban upgrade of a public garden in Imbaba intervention area, incorporating a gender sensitive perspective to provide safe space for women, girls and children using it. The garden will be overseen by an elected local committee from the community and will be used as a hub for awareness raising activities on violence against women, through sports days, interactive theater, shadow art and awareness raising sessions.
- In 2017, over 2000 female survivor of violence receive free-of-charge legal advice and legal aid at the Complaints office to resolve cases related to sexual violence in public spaces, domestic violence, obtaining divorce, accessing children's alimony, gaining guardianship rights on children, escaping domestic violence, and others

Flagship Brief   Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces

I. BACKGROUND

Assessment

Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces is a universal issue. Women and girls experience and fear various types of SV in public spaces ranging from unwanted sexual remarks and groping, to rape and gender-related killings. It occurs on streets, on buses and trains, near schools, in parks, public toilets, fields, at markets, and water and food distribution sites, and in diverse settings (urban, peri-urban, rural, conflict or post conflict, etc.).

In London, a study conducted, in 2012 reveals that 43% of young women have experienced some form of street harassment in the past year.[1] In Port Moresby, a scoping study[2] reveals that over 90% of women and girls have experienced some form of SV when accessing public transportation. In Kigali, baseline study[3] shows that 55% of women reported that they were concerned about going to educational institutions after dark.

The reality of SVAWG in public spaces infringes upon the rights and freedoms of women and girls as equal citizens. It reduces women's and girls' ability to participate in school, work and in public life. It limits their access to essential services and enjoyment of cultural and recreational opportunities. It negatively impacts their health and well-being, and the economic and social viability of cities and countries. Women and girls living in poverty or from socially excluded and stigmatised groups (indigenous, migrants, immigrant, living with disability, displaced women and girls, etc.) are at greater risk of SVAWG and more vulnerable to its negative effects.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) distinguished VAW as one of the 12 critical areas for achievement of GEWE. In 2013, the CSW57 specifically identified various forms of sexual harassment and SVAWG in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on governments to prevent it through various measures and programmes. This call should be further affirmed in the currently proposed indicators to monitor implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, specifically under goal 5 (gender equality) and 11 (making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

Analysis

Despite affecting millions of women and girls in every country of the world, SVAWG in public spaces has been long tolerated and perceived as a "normal" part of social life. This reflects discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender stereotypes and inequality and acts as a structural barrier to the recognition, prevention and adequate response to SVAWG. As a result, SVAWG, especially sexual harassment in public spaces, remains a largely neglected issue.

The under-recognition of SVAWG in public spaces is reinforced by the universal gap in availability of specific, valid, comparable, systematically and ethically collected data and the limited capacity of local governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders to produce it.

This contributes to a legal environment that simply does not have the legislation and policies to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces. While some promising initiatives have been developed to address women's safety in public spaces in the last 40 years, they have been limited in scale and scope. These initiatives have often consisted of stand-alone, fragmented activities (such as women's safety audits,[4] and awareness-raising campaigns). The lack of a holistic, multi-sectoral approach has exacerbated the already existing lack of cooperation among different stakeholders (local authorities, women's, men's and youth grassroots, the private sector, media, etc.) to design and implement safe public spaces programmes.

Limited capacity and the lack of dedicated measures to strengthen the capacities of the main stakeholders to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces, is another key challenge.[5]

Unsurprisingly, the lack of recognition and cooperation as well as unsupportive policies and limited capacities have translated into an underinvestment in the planning (both physical and social) and management of public spaces, urban development, and safety and security strategies, resulting in public infrastructure that is unsafe for women and girls.

As a result of these deficiencies, the global normative framework is also limited and does not provide required guidance for programming, policy development and monitoring.

Action

For participating cities in the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Flagship, transformative change- towards increased recognition of SVAWG in public spaces and its impact, and willingness to end it through multi-stakeholder partnership is achieved through the four outcomes below.

1) **Gender-responsive locally relevant and owned interventions identified:** Local ownership is the cornerstone for this flagship. This outcome focuses on building this ownership by creating multi-stakeholder partnerships and providing the evidence-base for stakeholders to identify solutions. The scoping study is an essential component. It is designed to provide valid and specific data to ensure a deep understanding of local forms of SVAWG in public spaces and the context in which it occurs. Programme design workshops are used to engage key stakeholders in active reflections on the findings of the scoping study, and to enable them to develop programmes with a specific set of results, based on the local context, vision, and joint stakeholders' accountability.

2) **Comprehensive legislation and policies to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces:** The capacity of local stakeholders will be assessed and enhanced to ensure that comprehensive legislation and policies to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces are developed, and effectively implemented including strengthening the capacity of services providers and institutions.

3) **Investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces:** including public infrastructure and economic development and with special concern for creating economic opportunities for women in the renewed public spaces. This includes building capacity of local governments to invest in engendering urban planning, including public infrastructure, such as markets, public transport, street lighting, social services, sanitation,, that provide safety, and economic empowerment for women and girls and benefits for the communities.

4) **Social and cultural transformation – to ensure that attitudes and behaviours** related to women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from SV improved, including through activities at community, institutional and individual level, engaging girls and boys and other influential champions in transformative activities in schools, and other venues that promote respectful gender relationships, gender equality and safety in public spaces, etc.

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1. Ending Violence Against Women Coalition (2012) 2. Kofi Annan (2015)
2. UN Women (2014) Safe Public Transport Scoping Study
3. UN Women (2013)

4. Women in Cities International (WICI), Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina and Huairou Commission. (2008) The Global Assessment on Women's Safety. Kenya: UN Habitat

5. UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (2012)

II. DRAFT THEORY OF CHANGE: Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls

A TOC by nature encompasses the actions required by all partners to achieve a transformative change. The aim of the TOC is to help UN Women identify these actions and strategic partnerships. Consequently this draft TOC reflects interventions beyond those that UN Women will do by itself.

Goal

Women and girls are socially, economically and politically empowered in public spaces which are free from sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence.
SDG indicators: Goal 5, target 2 (proxy): Proportion of women and girls subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, since age 15 (in public spaces, sites of intervention); Goal 11 target 7 (proxy) proposed by UN Women: Proportion of women and girls subjected to physical or sexual harassment, in public spaces, in the last 12 months, sites of intervention

Goal TOC Statement

If (1) gender-responsive, locally relevant and owned interventions are identified on creating safe public spaces (SPS); if (2) comprehensive policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are developed and implemented; if (3) investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces of public spaces are effective and accessible to all; and if (4) social norms related to women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from SVAWG are improved; then (5) women and girls are socially, economically and politically empowered in public spaces; because (6) the risks of SH and other forms of SVAWG have been reduced through sustainable local solutions.

Outcomes

1. Gender responsive locally relevant and owned interventions identified (Safe city partnerships in place and inclusive of women in decision-making positions and accountability mechanisms; Programme Document ,M&E Framework available and validated by local stakeholders)	2. Comprehensive legislation and policies to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces in place and effectively implemented (Number of laws, policies to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces that are informed by the local evidence and by international good practice are in place and implemented)	3. Investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces, including public infrastructure/ economic development are effective (Number and type of urban development/revitalization/economic development projects in public spaces in the sites of intervention that are assessed as economically viable and safe from SVAWG)	4. Attitudes and behavior related to women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from SVAWG improved (Proportion of women and girls, men and boys who agree that harassment and violence in public spaces is not acceptable under any circumstances, in the sites of intervention)

Outcome TOC

If (1) local authorities and community stakeholders have the capacity to engage in evidence based programming; if multi-stakeholder partnerships are established; and if data about SVAWG in public spaces is locally generated and gender expertise is available; then (2) gender responsive locally relevant, owned and sustainable solutions will be identified; (3) because evidence and the views of all stakeholders will have been have been leveraged.	If (1) local authorities, women's and community groups have the capacity to engage in policy reform to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces; if adequate financing and oversight mechanisms are in place; and if the capacity of service providers to implement policies is enhanced; then (2) policies to prevent and respond to SVAWG in public spaces will be effective; because (3) they will be locally owned and supported by the required human and financial resources	If (1) local authorities, women's and community groups have the capacity to engage in the formulation of gender inclusive plans to improve safety; if adequate financing and oversight mechanisms are in place; and if the capacity of service providers to implement gender inclusive plans is enhanced; then (2) investments in the safety, and economic viability of public spaces will be effective; because (3) they will be informed by designs that are gender sensitive and supported by the required human and financial resources	If 1) women and girls and men and boys participate in community mobilization strategies; if they are empowered to assert their rights; and if messages on preventing SVAWG are amplified by education and the media; then (2) transformative social norms, attitudes and behaviours that prevent SVAWG are promoted at community and individual level; because (3) evidence shows that multi-pronged prevention initiatives reinforce each other.

Outputs

1.1 Capacity of local authorities, women's and community groups to develop comprehensive interventions for prevention and response to SVAWG in public spaces in coordination with other stakeholders enhanced (conceptual approaches, key steps in integrated evidence-based policy and programme action on SC/SPS) 1.2 Multi-stakeholder partnerships established (vertical and horizontal partnerships established with mayors' offices, women's organizations, local authorities, private sector, media, civil society etc , consultations conducted; consensus building) 1.3 Local data collected, analyzed and informed participatory programme design shared with multi-stakeholder partners (scoping study/local diagnosis informed Programme Document, baseline, RBM and M&E frameworks; access to good practices, gender experts in various fields e.g urban planning, SVAWG, etc.)	2.1 Capacity and engagement of women's and community groups on model SVAWG legislation and policy enhanced (capacity assessments conducted, training, for awareness raising, community mobilization) 2.2 Capacity and engagement of local authorities and service providers on model SVAWG legislation and policy enhanced (capacity assessments, training, support provided) 2.3 Laws and policies adopted to prevent and respond to SVAWG based on local evidence and international good practice with accompanying financing and oversight mechanisms (assessment and adoption of laws and policies, budgets allocated, financing and M&E in place) 2.4 Capacity and engagement of service providers to implement legislation and policies strengthened (capacity assessments to identify capacity gaps of local service providers (police, justice, health, education sectors) trainings provided)	3.1 Capacity and engagement of women's and community groups in gender inclusive site-planning and income generation enhanced (capacity assessments, women's safety audits, business plans development trainings) 3.2 Capacity of authorities and other stakeholders to develop and implement gender inclusive public infrastructure/ economic development plans is enhanced (capacity assessments, training that responds to capacity gaps, including on women's economic empowerment in public spaces) 3.3 Gender inclusive plans that include public infrastructure/ economic development, inclusive of women's economic empowerment in public spaces, and other measures in place with accompanying financing, and oversight mechanisms (capacity assessments conducted to identify gaps; budgets allocated, incentives & leveraging of partnerships with the private sector, M&E mechanism)	4.1 Capacity of women and girls and men and boys to recognize SVAWG in public spaces as violation of women's rights, to respond and prevent it, enhanced (capacity gap analysis on understanding the root causes of SVAWG in public spaces, bystander role; trainings through women's organizations, civil society, government, etc. special focus on groups facing multiple discriminations) 4.2 Women, girls, men and boys at community level are mobilized in favour of respectful relationships, gender equality and safety in public spaces (community mobilization activities engaging men and women, boys and girls, and other stakeholders, including faith leaders, formal and informal key influencers, media, local businesses, set up of local-to-local dialogues, bystander programmes, etc). 4.3 Transformative Initiatives developed and integrated into formal and non-formal education & media messaging (development of curricula and programmes (arts based strategies) that promote gender equality and human rights, respectful relationships and non-violent communication skills, technical assistance to departments of arts, culture, educations, etc.).

Key Assumptions

- Stakeholders will become committed on a continuous basis to working in a collaborative manner in policy and programme action as a result of engagement in partnership building and in learning about the impact of SVAWG on their lives and on the community	- Sustained commitment from duty bearers to improving laws and policies and implementation framework for EVAWG; - Local authority and other main partners continuously committed to learning from global good practice incorporating gender equality and committing to EVAW	- Implementation partners have time and versatile expertise to raise awareness and train stakeholders - Local government leadership ensures that staff complete training - Turnover of staff does not affect the implementation of programmes and strategies to prevent and respond to SVAWG	- An integrated/multi-pronged approach to prevention is effective to change social norms and attitudes - Men and boys and women and girls interested in understanding their rights and entitlements

Risks & Barriers

- Acquired capacity and knowledge not translated in transformative action; -Action adopted is not women's rights and human-rights based - Data on SH/SV created negative publicity for a city which could affect the level stakeholder commitment.	- Changes in local authorities that may affect the degree of political will and commitment, as well as turnover of technical-level counterparts in the civil service. -Depending on the context and degree of decentralization in the country, the lack of budgetary authority of local governments. This can hamper efforts to support local government	- Positive changes and investments in the physical environment and overall safety of the areas of programme intervention may increase the value of land and housing, especially in the long-term. This can trigger gentrification and consequent out-pricing of the marginalized and the poor with a more wealthy population	- Social and cultural attitudes, and political will cannot be changed in favor of equal rights; -Equal rights are not translated into practice. - Changes that advance the right to enjoy public spaces for some groups of women may negatively and inadvertently affect the same rights for other disadvantaged/socially excluded women and men