



EVALUATION BRIEF



'BUILDING CAPACITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (BCPVAW)' IN BANGLADESH

March 2019

Context

Between June 2015 and September 2018, UN Women Bangladesh Country Office (BCO) in partnership with Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) and University Grant Commission (UGC) implemented the project 'Building Capacity to Prevent Violence Against Women (BCPVAW)' under Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Program, funded by the Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka with a budget of SEK 5,200,000 (US\$ 617,718). The project aimed to prevent sexual harassment through raising awareness, mobilization and development of mechanisms and actions considering the High Court Directive (HCD) 2009 in four selected universities - East West University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University and Sylhet University of Science and Technology. The project was developed within the framework of UN Women Bangladesh's Strategic Note (2014-16) and AWP 2015 under the Development Results Goal 3; and the extended project (second phase) contributed to the Strategic Note for 2017-2020 and AWP 2017. The project is also in line with sub-objective 1¹ of Sweden's Result Strategy for Bangladesh (2014-20); and with SDG target 5.2.²

The key objective of this final evaluation was to assess the results of the project that were undertaken in four universities followed by six evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, contribution towards impact and sustainability, and gender equality and human rights. The Evaluation also identified/documented lessons learned and provided actionable recommendations with respect to the UN Women intervention that project partners and stakeholders might use to improve the design and implementation of other related projects and programs.

1. Strengthened democracy and gender equality, greater respect for human rights and freedom from oppression.
2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

The evaluation was carried out with a utilization-focused and contribution analysis approaches; also followed the key human rights and gender equality principles of transparency and participation, ensuring consultation with stakeholders including women and marginalized groups, who are vulnerable and/or discriminated within the university settings. The evaluation also used mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) for data collection and analysis. The evaluation involved a desk review of relevant project documents; 62 questionnaire survey (both female and male students), 14 in-depth interviews (female students only), 8 focus group discussions (16 Multi Stakeholder Alliance members and 64 Student Campaign Group members from 4 universities) and 22 key informant interviews (Senior Management Officials, SHCC members, teachers, representatives from UGC & BNWLA). To ensure maximum validity and reliability of data, the evaluation ensured triangulation of the various data sources.

What has UN Women achieved?

Overall, the evaluation found that the project is very promising and made a significant contribution in terms of introducing a systemic change in addressing and responding prevention of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in university premises following HCD 2009.

The project has addressed very relevant rights and needs of women and girls to live a life free of violence and have implemented relevant programming strategies in doing so. The awareness raising activities and campaign (including cultural events, activism, debate, norm breaking activities, networking, information sharing, peer-to-peer learning along with employing effective communication and advocacy strategies) found to be very effective and useful in learning and improving knowledge of the students, teachers and administration on legal definition of sexual harassment. Establishment of new mechanisms broadened the universities' capacity in addressing the social norms and institutional structures that perpetuate violence against women.

Key Achievements:

- Recognition of sexual harassment as an important issue on campuses and enabled different stakeholders to come together to discuss the problem and develop strategies
- Interactive awareness building campaign activities created a non-hierarchical relationship between students and teachers who were involved.
- Disseminated HCD using different communication modes, i.e. booklet, posters, theatre, music, orange day observation, who found as effective in sharing legal information through learning environment.
- Project reached more than 12000 students at four universities indirectly through mass actions like rally, cultural programmes, theater, which could lead to the shift of perception of the role of women in society.
- Strengthening both UGC and universities institutional capacities in addressing the social norms and institutional structures that perpetuate violence against women.

Promising Practices and Lessons Learned

The evaluation confirms that the project generated many effective good practices (such as campaign, gender awareness raising cultural events, social media activism, partnership approach in policy advocacy, etc.), which could be replicated in other projects in other universities that have similar interventions.

Lesson learned

- 1) The campaign focus on the High Court Directive rather than on generic messages against sexual harassment was effective. This has enabled the university community to distinguish different forms of sexual violence and their legal as well as administrative implications.
- 2) Sustainable change needs long-term collaborative and institutional actions to uncover and challenge the structural and social norms that perpetuate violence against women.
- 3) Coordination among all stakeholders in comprehensive manner is crucial to prevent sexual harassment.
- 4) For long-term effect, Programme strategies need to be agreed at the design stage, this will help to identify synergies and ensure clear division of roles among partners and outcomes clusters.
- 5) Various proactive measure mean that more students are comfortable discussing their experiences
- 6) Social media activism can be a very powerful tool to foster social change with respect to address and prevent sexual harassment and other forms of gendered violence at the university campuses, if it is connected to other interventions.

Recommendations to move forward

1. UN Women should continue to provide guidance and technical support to strengthen institutional response to violence against women on campus and to bring sustainable changes in this regard.

Key Action Points:

- a) UN Women could continue to support technical inputs to UGC's monitoring mechanism and accountability on university compliance with the guidelines of the High Court Directive on Preventing Sexual Harassment on campus.
- b) UN Women could strengthen technical support to UGC to strengthen SHCC position and its active involvement within the University management - through dialogue, follow up of the SHCC's progress and cross university learning exchange.
- c) UN Women could support collaborative reviews of student orientation plans by university authorities and students and help them develop an innovative orientation package that encourages students to challenge harmful social norms and create a safer environment for women on campus.
- d) UN Women could assist UGC in consultation with universities to introduce a credit or non-credit university wide course on Gender education in increasing gender awareness in a large scale. [Very recently SUST introduced an Ethics and Cyber Law course which is mandatory for the students of every department.]
- e) UN Women should support UGC to establish standards for reporting sexual harassment cases. It is evident that the victim feels humiliated due to having to reveal her story multiple times in order to prove her case once reported formally.

2. UN Women should develop a comprehensive awareness raising campaign plan and knowledge management strategy to ensure wider participation of the students, teachers and staff within and beyond participating universities.

Key Action Points:

- a) UN Women can support advocacy efforts to MSA and SCG to plan and organize campaign in a systematic way which can cover the entire university community.
- b) UN women could use learning materials and good practices of this project as good evidence for UN Women and its partners in advocating for other public and private universities to prevent sexual harassment and create violence free environment.
- c) UN Women should continue Regional exchange and HeForShe campaign, which was found to be very effective in facilitating collaboration among UGC, public and private universities in combating VAW.