

BUILDING CAPACITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Location: Bangladesh – Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, and East West University

Time Frame: 2014 – 2016

Participating Agencies: UN Women, Hedda Produktion, Bangladesh National Women's & Lawyers' Association, Bangladesh Gender Equality Advocates, the University Grants Commission and selected tertiary educational institutions, with technical support from Partners for Prevention Joint Programme (P4P) and with financial support from the Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh

INTERVENTION TO PREVENT VAWG IN BANGLADESH

Many women and girls in Bangladesh experience physical, sexual or psychological violence throughout their lives, mainly due to structural inequalities and deeply-rooted social norms that condone violence and the subordination of women. Gaps in national capacities and limited knowledge of prevention strategies constrain effective prevention.

In response, UN Women has launched a project piloting and promoting good practices in four of Bangladesh's tertiary educational institutions. The project aims to prevent sexual harassment through raising awareness, mobilization and developing mechanisms to implement the High Court Guidelines on Prevention of Sexual Harassment (2009). It also engages adjacent communities through civil society interventions.

The project covers approximately 28,000 students and 2,900 staff at four universities. Excluding the technical universities, where men constitute the majority, the universities' gender breakdown is roughly 34% female students and 19% female teachers, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics' 2012 report on public universities.



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KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) IN BANGLADESH

- **High prevalence of intimate partner violence:** 87% of currently married women reported experiencing some type of violence from husbands or partners, 67% of which was physical violence (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2013).
- **Gender-inequitable attitudes towards acceptance of violence:** Almost half of ever-married men in Bangladesh who reported physically or sexually abusing their wives had no concerns about their behaviour. (Naved et al., 2011).
- **Violence is widespread outside the home:** 76% of tertiary-level female students faced sexual harassment either on campus or from other students while off campus (UN Women, 2012).
- **Correlated factors:** A nexus of economic (poverty and economic inequality), social (violence condoning attitudes) and legal factors (institutionalized impunity) were found to be significantly correlated with patterns of VAWG in Bangladesh (Naved et al., 2011).

Sumaya, Law student at Rajshahi University

"I am devoting my time and passion to this program because I want to see my campus safe. Prevention of sexual harassment starts with raising awareness. Therefore, I am actively involved in the campus campaign to raise students' awareness about violence against women, specifically, sexual harassment.

Our campaign is making perpetrators afraid – and sometimes ashamed, and we are giving victims courage to speak up. Female students are now asking me how and where to complain, whereas before, women didn't really want to. They feel they are not alone and they have the support of the administration, of the teachers and of other students."



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Sumaya (left) at a campaigning event on campus

PROJECT OUTCOMES & OUTPUTS

- **Outcome 1:** Civil society capacity is strengthened to engage communities and public institutions in preventing violence against women.
Output 1: SEVEN, a theatrical documentary intervention, is available to gender equality activists in four selected locations in Bangladesh to advance efforts for the prevention of violence against women.
- **Outcome 2:** Capacity of tertiary educational institutions and student communities increased to prevent violence against women.
Output 2.1: Four selected tertiary-level educational institutions have increased capacity to make the premises safer for women and girls.
Output 2.2: Students, faculty and administration in each of the four institutions have increased capacity to develop an overall strategy for engaging the education community in taking action to address and prevent sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women.

STAY CONNECTED

Partners for Prevention: Working to prevent violence against women and girls
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