Photo: UN Women/ Maphuti Mahlaba

ACCELERATING GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE:

A POLICY ROADMAP FOR G20 LEADERSHIP AND BEYOND

UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Suggested citation: UN-Women and DWYPD. 2025. Accelerating Global Action against Gender Based Violence and Femicide: A Policy Roadmap for G20 Leadership and Beyond. Pretoria: UN-Women.

Lead author(s): Jennifer Francesca Acio, Sunita Caminha & Hazel Gooding (PhD)
Primary author: Jennifer Francesca Acio
Production and design: Jennifer Francesca Acio and Maphuti Mahlaba

© UN-Women and DWYPD 2025
All rights reserved.

Acknowledgements

We express our sincere appreciation to all contributors and reviewers whose expertise and insights were instrumental in shaping this policy brief. Special thanks to colleagues from UN Women's South Africa Country Office, East and Southern Africa Regional Office, and Headquarters for their rigorous review and constructive feedback, which significantly strengthened the quality and relevance of this work. We gratefully acknowledge the oversight provided by South Africa's Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, ensuring alignment with the objectives and spirit of the G20. We further recognize the valuable contributions of colleagues from UNICEF, UNODC, UNFPA, ILO, and members of the GBVF priority area content creation workstream under the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group, as well as all partners who offered guidance and shared knowledge throughout the drafting process. Their collective efforts have ensured that this brief reflects robust evidence and inclusive approaches to accelerating global action against GBVF.

Reviewers and contributors:

UN Women:

Evelyn Letiyo
Giuliana Newmann
Hazel Gooding, PhD
Sunita Caminha
Yeliz Osman

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities:

Esther Maluleke
Joyce Maluleke
Mandla Neku
Ranji Reddy
Shoki Tshabalala

UN Agencies, including UNFPA, UNODC, UNICEF, and ILO.

ACCELERATING GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE

A Policy Roadmap for G20 Leadership and Beyond

Ending Violence Against Women Section
UN Women South Africa
Pretoria, 2025

UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4
2. CONTEXT 5
3. SITUATION ANALYSIS 6
4. POLICY OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS 7
5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 11, 13
6. CONCLUSION 14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) remain a pervasive and escalating global crisis affecting women and girls globally. According to the World Health Organization, one in three women experiences physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner during their lifetime[1]. Prevalence rates within the G20 reveal stark disparities, ranging from 13% in some European countries, including Spain and Austria, to alarming highs of 36% in the United States and 38% in Türkiye[2] [3]. The scale of the problem is staggering: In 2023, an estimated 51,100 women and girls worldwide lost their lives due to intimate partner or family violence, with Africa exhibiting the highest femicide rates, followed by the Americas, Oceania, Asia, and Europe[4].

The personal toll of GBVF is immense, imposing profound psychological, social, and economic costs. Economically, violence against women is estimated to cost some countries up to 3.7% of their GDP, exceeding expenditures on education[5]. The cyclical nature of GBVF means that children exposed to violence are at increased risk of perpetuating or experiencing violence themselves, further undermining societal cohesion and sustainable development.

The legal and justice frameworks across G20 countries often fail survivors, with low conviction rates—only 8% of reported rape cases in South Africa[6] and fewer than 25% of reported rapes in the United States lead to arrests or convictions, highlighting systemic barriers including victim blaming, insufficient forensic resources, and retraumatizing judicial processes.

Addressing impunity for perpetrators and improving survivor-centered justice is foundational to GBVF prevention and response.

Prevention efforts require multisectoral, evidence-based, and gender-transformative approaches that challenge deeply entrenched social norms, patriarchal masculinities, and power imbalances.

Successful models from G20 countries include community mobilization, male engagement, socio-economic empowerment for women, and legal reforms—exemplified by Brazil's Maria da Penha Law, India's microfinance initiatives, and Canada's White Ribbon campaign[7]. Sustained political commitment, financial resourcing, and coordinated multi-agency action are critical for scalable impact.

Given South Africa's chairing of the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group in 2025, this policy brief calls for renewed leadership to leverage previous commitments and scale impactful interventions. It urges the adoption of inclusive, survivor-centered, data-driven strategies that integrate prevention, justice reforms, and economic empowerment to usher in a new era of gender equality and safety for all women.

[1] WHO: Fact sheet on violence against women (March 2024)
[2] OECD: Ending gender-based discrimination in G20 countries: A frame for action (2021)
[3] UNODC: Global Meeting on Measuring Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (July, 2025)
[4] UNODC & UN Women: Femicides in 2023: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides" (2024)
[5] Ouedraogo, R. & Stenzel, D., "The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender-based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," IMF Working Paper 2021.
[6] The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 2024 GBVF Prevalence Study (2024) & OECD: Ending gender-based discrimination in G20 countries: A frame for action (2021)
[7] OECD: Ending Gender-Based Discrimination in G20 Countries" (2021)

1. Context

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) is a pervasive global crisis that transcends economic, social, and cultural boundaries. Despite decades of advocacy and international commitments, the trends are still alarming. According to the World Bank and UN Women, nearly 1 in 3 women globally—approximately 30%—have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner in their lifetime[8].

G20 countries reflect similar alarming trends: for example, prevalence ranges from 13% in some European member states, such as Spain and Austria, to as high as 36% in the United States and 38% in Türkiye[9]. The magnitude of GBVF is staggering. Globally, 35% of women have suffered intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence[10].

It is estimated that 51,100 (45,400–56,700) women and girls worldwide lost their lives due to intimate partner violence or violence by other family members in 2023, with Africa recording the highest rate, followed by the Americas, Oceania, Asia, and Europe.[11]

In G20 contexts, intimate partners perpetrate nearly 38% of femicides[12]. Beyond physical harm, GBVF imposes profound psychological, social, and economic costs. It is estimated that violence against women costs some countries up to 3.7% of GDP[13], outstripping spending on education in many cases. The cyclical nature of violence means children exposed to GBVF are at heightened risk of perpetuating or experiencing violence themselves, undermining social cohesion and development goals.

Addressing impunity for perpetrators is a key element of prevention efforts and requires greater attention, considering the low usage and formal justice remedies for survivors of GBV. For example, conviction rates for sexual violence cases are alarmingly low in countries such as South Africa (only 8% of reported rape cases result in convictions), underscoring the formidable barriers survivors face throughout the legal process.[14]

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) GBVF Prevalence Study (2024) highlights that the vast majority of GBV survivors in South Africa do not seek help from justice actors, with reporting rates likely below 30%, primarily due to systemic barriers and fear of secondary trauma.[15]

These obstacles—such as inadequate police response, insufficient forensic resources, victim-blaming by law enforcement and judiciary, and lengthy, retraumatizing court procedures—are not unique to South Africa. In the United States, less than 25% of reported rapes lead to arrests, and even fewer result in convictions, often due to systemic biases and procedural hurdles.

These patterns across G20 nations reflect a persistent crisis of accountability and access to justice for women and marginalized groups, despite international commitments to gender equality and human rights[16].

South Africa, as the chair of the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG), offers a pivotal platform to build on previous commitments made by the G20 to address GBVF, notably, the Bali Summit of 2022, which focused on the care economy, closing the digital gender gap, and boosting women's leadership; the New Delhi Summit 2023-where discussions addressed digital safety for women, and Rio de Janeiro Summit 2024 which marked a progressive step by explicitly committing to eliminating misogyny and promoting

[8] World Health Organization (WHO) fact sheet on violence against women (updated March 2024)
[9] OECD Gender-Based Violence policy paper (June 30, 2025)
[10] WHO fact sheet on violence against women, updated in March 2024
[11] UNODC, UN Women, femicides in 2023; Global Estimates of Intimate Partner/Family Member Femicides
[12] UNODC & UN Women: Global Meeting on Measuring Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (Femicides/Feminicides) (July 2025
[13] Ouedraogo, R. & Stenzel, D., "The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender-based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa," IMF Working Paper 2021.
[14] UNOHCR, UNODC & UN Women: Gender Based Violence against Women and Girls in South Africa; Key Human Rigts Trends (2024)
[15] Clooney Foundation for Justice: Barriers to Justice: Gender-Based Violence in South Africa (2025)
[16] OECD, Policy sub-issue: Gender Based Violence (2024)- available at https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/gender-based-violence.html

gender-responsive climate action, care systems, and women's economic autonomy. Addressing GBVF is urgent for G20 nations as it infringes upon human rights, impedes gender equality, and hinders inclusive economic growth.

2. Situation Analysis

Despite decades of progress and the adoption of robust legal frameworks across G20 countries, GBVF remains a complex challenge for all countries, requiring a holistic approach to shift deeply entrenched patriarchal power structures that perpetuate systems of inequality, impunity for perpetrators, and fuel the cycle of violence.

Inadequate investment in evidence-based prevention, weak institutional infrastructure to enforce legislation, and discriminatory social norms, marked by patriarchal masculinities, imply continued impunity where justice systems frequently fail to deliver meaningful protection and redress for survivors or deter potential perpetrators of abuse.

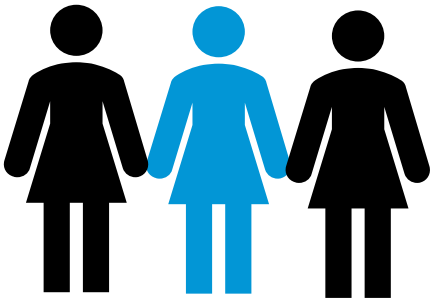
Notable investments in the prevention of violence against women, including in evidence-driven programming, have been made, but the scale and consistency of these are not aligned with the magnitude of the problem.

Effective policy implementation to end GBV relies critically on prevention. Effective prevention and response efforts require promoting an organizational culture supportive of gender equality, addressing power imbalances, reducing impunity, and improving accountability.

Addressing harmful social norms is critical for preventing gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), as these norms perpetuate gender inequality, normalize violence, and silence survivors. Transforming deeply entrenched attitudes—such as male entitlement, victim-blaming, and tolerance of abuse—requires evidence-based, multi-sectoral strategies. Efforts to include a masculinities perspective to address GBV have increasingly gained traction in recent years, both in government policies and frameworks, but also through programmatic approaches. However, GBVF prevention efforts in G20 countries are often fragmented, short-term, and focused on crisis response rather than addressing root causes[17].

Many interventions overlook the influence of entrenched discriminatory social structures and norms—such as patriarchal masculinity, patriarchal attitudes, and the normalization of violence—that perpetuate GBV[18]. For instance, in Japan and South Korea, cultural stigma surrounding domestic violence discourages reporting and limits the effectiveness of prevention campaigns[19].

In Germany and Canada, for example, while there are robust support services, prevention programs often fail to engage a critical mass of men and boys to analyse the harms of patriarchal forms of masculinity and systematically challenge structures which reinforce those norms, lack of accountability to women and girls, or impunity by male leaders in positions of power[20].



BOX 1

Status of GBVF Globally

Gender-based violence and femicide affects approximately **one in three women globally**, with G20 countries showing prevalence rates between 13% and 38%.

[17] OECD: Breaking the Cycle of Gender-based Violence; Translating Evidence into Action for Victim/ Survivor-centred Governance (2023)

[18] OECD, Policy sub-issue: Gender Based Violence (2024)- available at https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/gender-based-violence.html

[19] ibid

[20] OECD: Breaking the Cycle of Gender-based Violence; Translating Evidence into Action for Victim/ Survivor-centred Governance (2023)

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide prevention efforts in G20 countries are often fragmented, short-term, and focused on crisis response rather than addressing root causes

Without a holistic, multi-level approach—including community mobilization, addressing gender equality and non-violence in the education system, as part of couples' interventions and parenting practices, peer supports and social empowerment for women and girls, social protection and poverty reduction, safe public and online spaces—prevention efforts are unlikely to achieve sustainable change.

Economic dependency remains a powerful barrier preventing survivors from escaping abusive relationships. Economic dependency traps many women in cycles of abuse, exacerbated by persistent gender gaps in employment, land and asset ownership, and access to financial services—trends seen in both developed and developing G20 nations.

For example, in South Africa, women's unemployment rates are significantly higher than men's, and limited access to land, credit, and social protection exacerbates their vulnerability[22].

This trend is mirrored in countries like Italy and Japan, where traditional gender roles and wage gaps restrict women's economic autonomy[23]. In the United States, studies show that financial abuse—where abusers control access to money or sabotage employment—is present in 99% of domestic violence cases[24]. In India and Mexico, limited property rights and a lack of access to formal financial services further entrench women's dependence on abusive partners[25].

3. Policy Options and Analysis: Global Promising Practices from G20 Countries

An enabling legal and policy environment is a cornerstone of effective GBVF prevention, which must be accompanied by the existence of survivor-centered multi-sectoral response services. Reforming legal and judicial processes to remove discriminatory laws and policies and prioritize survivor safety, dignity, and access to justice are part of this environment. Additionally, investing in multi-level, long-term prevention strategies that address the root causes of GBV—including patriarchal masculinities—is essential for sustainable change.

Primary prevention of GBVF requires multi-sectoral National Action Plans (NAPS) that integrate diverse, evidence-based prevention strategies, are adequately resourced, systematically monitored, and invest in data collection on the drivers and intermediary measures of social change. Best practices from G20 nations and other international organizations demonstrate that successful social norms transformation in GBV prevention requires comprehensive, community-driven, and multi-sectoral approaches that combine education, legal reform, media campaigns, and community mobilization, tailored to local contexts, to transform harmful norms and reduce GBV.

Examples of best practices from the G20 countries include:

i) **Australia's *Counting on Change*** guide exemplifies this approach by providing a robust framework for monitoring population-level progress in preventing violence against women.

[21] ibid
[22] OECD: Ending gender-based discrimination in G20 countries: A frame for action (2021)
[23] Ibid
[24] OECD: Gender Based Violence. Policy Sub-Issue (2024)
[25] OECD: Ending gender-based discrimination in G20 countries: A frame for action (2021)

It emphasizes addressing the underlying gendered drivers—such as unequal power relations and harmful social norms—through coordinated actions across sectors, including education, health, justice, and community services. *Counting on Change* stresses the need for measuring not only individual program outcomes but also broader societal shifts, using indicators such as changes in community attitudes, gender equality, and willingness to intervene in violence.

The Australian *Change the Story* framework, embedded in the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2010–2022), highlights the importance of long-term, collaborative efforts that combine legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and community-based programs to shift attitudes and behaviours.

ii) **Brazil combines legal protections** like the Maria da Penha Law with community-based prevention programs and multisectoral coordination mechanisms, emphasizing norm change and survivor support[26].

iii) **South Africa's National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (2020–2030)** integrates urgent response services with prevention efforts focused on changing social norms and behaviours through high-level awareness campaigns, community mobilization, and multisectoral collaboration.

The plan is backed by significant government funding and institutional mechanisms to ensure accountability and sustained impact[27]. South Africa's community dialogues on positive masculinity and survivor-centered approaches further demonstrate how policy-driven social norm change—backed by high-level political commitment—can reduce GBVF risk and highlight the importance of multisectoral coordination.

iv) **Sweden's National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Men's Violence Against Women (2017-27) and Canada's programme entitled "Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence**" put the participation and responsibility of men at the heart of this violence prevention strategy28.

v) **In India, the "Ring the Bell" campaign** has reached millions by mobilizing communities and leveraging media to challenge patriarchal masculinities and encourage men to take a stand against violence[29]. India's initiatives emphasize engaging men and boys as allies to shift patriarchal attitudes, informed by rigorous research that contributed to UN Women's RESPECT Framework.30

vi) **In Canada, the "White Ribbon" campaign** is recognized as the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls, promoting healthy masculinities and gender equity through education, public advocacy, and community engagement.[31]

vii) **Italy has integrated gender equality into policy dialogues**, workplace rights, and leadership promotion, reinforcing norm change through institutional reforms and public awareness campaigns. These campaigns demonstrate the power of involving men in prevention efforts and fostering new models of masculinity[32].

Other notable examples from non-G20 contexts include.

i) **Trinidad and Tobago** (although not a G20 member, a relevant example supported by the Spotlight Initiative), developed a National Strategic Action Plan on GBV

[26] Ibid
[27] UN Women, *Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls*, 2024
[28] Eriksson, 2018, as cited in OECD's Joining Forces for Gender Equality, 20xxx
[29] SIDA (2016): Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence: Expressions and Strategies
[30] UN Women: Preventing violence against women and girls through SOCIAL NORM CHANGE (2016)
[31] White Ribbon Campaign. (2014). Men's Engagement in Gender-Based Violence Prevention: A Critical Review of Evaluation Approaches. White Ribbon Campaign, Toronto, Ontario. March 2014.
[32] Engaging Men & Boys to End Violence Against Women: An Annotated Bibliography of Online Resources. Learning Network Brief (8). London, Ontario: Learning Network, Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children.

(2023–2027) through extensive consultations, multisectoral collaboration, and evidence-based advocacy, illustrating best practices in multisectoral NAP development[33]. Comprehensive, data-driven approaches ensure that prevention strategies are responsive, scalable, and capable of achieving measurable reductions in GBVF over time.

ii) **Equimundo, a global advocate for the promotion of positive masculinities**, has been successful in implementing evidence-informed programmes that increased fathers' involvement in childcare and household work, promoted gender-equitable decision-making between partners or parents, and reduced domestic violence both towards women and children[34]. To ensure sustainable transformation, the *Global Boyhood Initiative* aims to deconstruct restrictive masculine norms at an early age, with a view to empowering both girls/women and boys/men.[35] These approaches, validated by the RESPECT Framework's "Transformed attitudes" strategy, prove that sustained investment in norm-shifting interventions is essential for lasting GBVF prevention.[36]

By working with a wide range of actors and professionals, initiatives like these carry the potential to initiate a shift in mindset both at the individual and community levels. Evidence underscores that reaching a "critical mass" within communities—where enough members adopt equitable behaviours—triggers wider social change. Expanding women's access to employment, financial services, land rights, and social safety nets is critical. Integrating economic empowerment with GBV prevention and response helps break cycles of dependency and abuse, promotes long-term resilience and recovery, and advances gender equality and economic growth.

Examples of economic empowerment interventions in G20 countries include:

i) India's microfinance and self-help group programs, which have demonstrated reductions in intimate partner violence by increasing women's financial autonomy[37].
ii) Brazil's Bolsa Família cash transfer program, which has been linked to lower rates of GBV, as economic support empowers women to leave abusive relations.[38]
iii) France's Women's Leadership School, which empowers rural women through leadership training, rights awareness, and increased participation in governance structures, resulting in enhanced self-confidence and political engagement.

For economic empowerment to work effectively, it requires cross-sector collaboration and sustained funding. It may not immediately reach the most marginalized without targeted outreach, and there is a risk of backlash if not accompanied by community engagement and norms change[39].

At a policy level: The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) tracks progress on shifting social norms and removing legal barriers, providing G20 countries with evidence-based guidance for effective interventions[40].
The G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG) is also mapping innovative prevention practices, including the integration of gender-transformative education and the response to technology-facilitated GBV.[41]

At the institutional level: Spain has pioneered specialized gender violence courts, resulting in higher conviction rates and improved survivor

[33]OECD (2021): Violence against women is preventable: Global "What Works" programme increases learning
[34] OECD (2023): Joining Forces for Gender Equality
[35] Kering Foundation and Equimundo, as cited in OECD's Joining Forces for gender Equality 2023.
[36] WHO (2019): RESPECT women – Preventing violence against women. Available at https://respect-prevent-vaw.org/
[37] Cynthia McDougall, et al. 2023. Beyond Gender Inequality: How the G20 can Support a Gender Equitable Future and Accelerate the SDGs
[38] ibid
[39] Prevention Collaborative: WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: UNTANGLING THE INTERSECTIONS (August 2024)
[40] Yimin Chen, et al. (2024): Canadian Gender-Based Violence Prevention Programs: Gaps and Opportunities
[41] ibid

experiences by streamlining cases and ensuring that judges and staff are trained in GBV sensitivity[42].

For economic empowerment to work effectively, it requires cross-sector collaboration and sustained funding. It may not immediately reach the most marginalized without, and there is a risk of backlash if not accompanied by community engagement and norms change[1].

South Africa's Victim Support Bill strengthens legal protections and support services for GBVF survivors, aiming to make the justice process more accessible and less traumatic[43]. The United Kingdom has piloted "special measures" in courts, such as allowing survivors to testify via video link, which reduces re-traumatisation and increases reporting rates[44].

While justice reform and survivor-centered approaches increase conviction rates and accountability, reduce secondary victimization and trauma, and build public trust in the justice system, they require significant investment in training and restructuring, face potential resistance from entrenched institutional cultures, and implementation may vary across regions due to resource disparities.

The benefits of these comprehensive prevention strategies are clear: they shift attitudes, reduce violence over time, and address the underlying drivers of GBV, leading to more sustainable change. Validated by the RESPECT Framework's "Transformed attitudes" strategy, these approaches prove that sustained investment in norm-shifting interventions is essential for lasting GBVF prevention.[45]

However, the impact is often gradual and requires long-term commitment, and measuring immediate outcomes can be challenging. Additionally, such initiatives may face cultural resistance, particularly in more conservative communities[46].

BOX 2

Situation Analysis

Despite robust legal frameworks, GBVF persists across G20 nations due to deeply entrenched patriarchal power structures and inadequate prevention investments. Justice systems frequently fail survivors through weak institutional infrastructure, discriminatory social norms, and systemic impunity for perpetrators.

Notable investments in evidence-driven programming have been made, but the scale and consistency remain misaligned with the magnitude of the problem. Prevention efforts are often fragmented, short-term, and crisis-focused rather than addressing root causes like patriarchal masculinity and normalized violence.

Transforming harmful social norms, including male entitlement, victim-blaming, and tolerance of abuse, requires evidence-based, multi-sectoral strategies. While masculinities perspectives have gained traction in government policies and programming, many interventions still overlook entrenched discriminatory structures. Cultural factors, such as stigma in Japan and South Korea, further discourage reporting. Effective prevention demands promoting organizational cultures supportive of gender equality, addressing power imbalances, reducing impunity, and

[42]OECD (2021): Ending gender-based discrimination in G20 countries: A frame for action

[43] Department of Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities, South Africa (2025): Statement on the Cabinet meeting, 25 June 2025

[44] OECD (2021): Ending gender-based discrimination in G20 countries: A frame for action

[45] WHO (2019): RESPECT women – Preventing violence against women. Available at https://respect-prevent-vaw.org/

[46] White Ribbon Campaign. (2014). Men's Engagement in Gender-Based Violence Prevention: A Critical Review of Evaluation Approaches. White Ribbon Campaign, Toronto, Ontario. March 2014.

4. Policy Recommendations

1. **Adopt multi-level, gender-transformative approaches engaging all societal spheres:**

- Implement integrated interventions that operate simultaneously at individual, community, institutional, and governmental levels. This includes engaging men and boys as allies to challenge harmful masculinities, promoting gender-equitable norms within communities, strengthening gender-just laws and policies, and fostering institutional cultures that prevent GBV. Such comprehensive approaches, as demonstrated by the Prevention+ program, are essential to shift entrenched social norms sustainably.

- Combine education, legal reform, media campaigns, and community mobilization as complementary strategies: Effective norm change requires coordinated use of diverse tools tailored to local contexts. Education programs (including school curricula), public awareness campaigns, legal reforms enforcing gender justice, and grassroots community activism must work in synergy rather than isolation. This multi-pronged strategy ensures broader reach and reinforces new norms by addressing attitudes, behaviours, and structural barriers simultaneously.

- Foster inclusive community engagement and build "Critical Mass" for norm transformation: Achieving a "critical mass" of community members adopting equitable behaviours is key to triggering wider social change. Policies should support participatory approaches that involve diverse stakeholders—including survivors, youth, religious and traditional leaders—to co-create locally relevant solutions. This inclusive engagement mitigates backlash risks and

2. **Economic empowerment and social protection for women:**

- Design and implement integrated policies that combine women's economic empowerment—such as access to employment, financial services, land rights, and social safety nets—with GBVF prevention and survivor support. This holistic approach breaks cycles of dependency and abuse by increasing women's financial autonomy, as demonstrated by India's microfinance/self-help groups and Brazil's Bolsa Família program.

- Develop Gender-Responsive economic policies and care economy support plans. Governments should adopt gender-responsive procurement policies and create comprehensive care economy support plans that recognize and reduce the unpaid care burden on women. These measures, as recommended by the G20 W20, will expand women's access to capital and economic opportunities, fostering resilience and promoting sustainable gender equality while mitigating risks of economic marginalization.

- Ensure cross-sector collaboration, targeted outreach, and community engagement: To maximize impact and prevent potential backlash, economic empowerment initiatives must be supported by sustained funding, multisectoral coordination, and targeted outreach to marginalized groups. Complementary community engagement and social norms change interventions are essential to address resistance and foster supportive environments for women's empowerment and GBVF prevention.

3. **Strengthen political commitment, sustainable funding, and multisectoral coordination for effective GBVF prevention:**

- Secure dedicated and sustainable funding for GBVF prevention and justice reforms: G20 countries should allocate consistent, long-term budgetary resources specifically earmarked for GBVF prevention, survivor support services, and justice system reforms. Sustainable funding must cover specialized training for judicial and law enforcement personnel, establishment and maintenance of specialized courts (e.g., Spain's gender violence courts), survivor-centered services, and infrastructure improvements to ensure accessible, trauma-informed justice processes. This financial commitment is essential to maintain program quality, scale effective interventions, and reduce disparities in implementation across regions.

- Strengthen high-level political leadership and accountability mechanisms: Governments must institute GBVF coordinators or task forces with clear mandates to oversee multisectoral implementation, ensuring accountability at national and local levels. Political leaders should publicly prioritize GBVF elimination, enact enabling legislation (such as South Africa's Victim Support Bill which is under development), and foster an enabling environment for justice reforms and survivor-centered approaches. Strong political will is critical to overcoming institutional resistance, driving cultural change within justice systems, and sustaining momentum for multisectoral collaboration.

- Establish and enhance integrated multisectoral coordination and data sharing: Countries should institutionalize inter-agency coordination mechanisms that link justice, health, education, social services, and civil society actors—modeled on Australia's National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children. These mechanisms must include streamlined referral systems, centralized data-sharing protocols, and joint monitoring frameworks to track progress, inform evidence-based policy, and improve survivor outcomes. Coordinated multisectoral action ensures holistic support for survivors, reduces secondary victimization, and strengthens the overall effectiveness of GBVF prevention and response.

CONCLUSION

The G20 has a pivotal opportunity to elevate GBVF as a macroeconomic and governance priority. By adopting coordinated, multisectoral, evidence-based actions that align justice reform, economic empowerment, and prevention strategies with global best practices, member states can address the structural drivers of violence, including patriarchal masculinities and harmful social norms.

Promising practices from Brazil, India, Canada, and South Africa show that legal reform, community mobilization, male engagement, and robust data systems can drive transformative change. With sustained political will and investment, the G20 can lead a global shift from fragmented responses to systemic action that protects women and girls, upholds their rights, and fosters safer, more equitable societies.

UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviours and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action. UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.

UN WOMEN FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

South Africa Country Office
Metro Park Building
351 Francis Baard Street
Pretoria 0001, South Africa
https://africa.unwomen.org