

UNESCO's Events to Mark the

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

25 November 2020

Concept Note

A 2013 *United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence* reveals that 10% to 62% of all interviewed men reported having raped a woman or girl in their lifetime. In some places, more than 75% of women aged 15 to 24 think that there are conditions under which a man has rightful reasons to beat his wife.

Millions of girls are victims of violence in and around schools worldwide, and 1 in 3 women experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime (up to 2 in 3 in some countries), predominantly by their intimate partner. That is more than 243 million women in the last twelve months. It is estimated that 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives (World Health Organization).

Data also show that, in 2017, 1 in 2 women killed worldwide were killed by their partners or family. In comparison, only 1 out of 20 men shared the same fate. Beyond femicide and rape, violence against women and girls (VAWG) consist also of harassment and bullying, online and offline, at school, at the workplace and in the street, of glass cliffs and glass ceilings, of inadequate safety equipment where their lives are at stake, and of constant and blatant discrimination everywhere on the planet, despite all our efforts to this day.

The recent pandemic has exacerbated this phenomenon with confinement measures having a dramatic impact on the life and wellbeing of women and girls. Only days after the lockdown measures, domestic violence increased up to 40% in certain countries. Already prevalent before COVID-19, this "shadow pandemic" was aggravated by several factors including isolation, financial and food insecurity, stress, unemployment and the impossibility to escape perpetrators of violence.

UNESCO and the UN System are responding to this crisis with initiatives supporting Member States and other partners adopting survivor-centred measures, such as ensuring safe learning environments for girls, or combating online violence and harassment - among many others. While urgent and tailor-made responses are needed to face the current emergency situation, it is important to recognize that the phenomenon of violence against women is structural and endemic in all societies, and as such its response cannot be limited to short term contingency-based solutions and it should be grounded in the transformative power of education, culture and information.

Socialization processes are intrinsically linked to structural gender inequalities, among which violence, aggressiveness and sexual entitlement are too often considered as appropriate expressions of "how to act like a man" in different societies (Connell). In order to be effective in tackling and eradicating this attempt against the human rights of women, it is important to identify and address the root causes of Gender Based Violence in an intersectional perspective, and to develop measures that are likely to bring about a lasting change in mentalities. Violence against women should, in fact, primarily concern men.

As the UN Specialized Agency for Education, Culture, Sciences and Information, UNESCO is uniquely placed to support communities worldwide in deconstructing stereotypes and addressing violent patterns of behaviour and mentalities. By promoting a lasting change in attitudes and mentalities through education, culture and information, we can help establish the right conditions for men to uphold this cause of social justice, for women to live free of violence, and for communities worldwide to strive towards gender equality for the wellbeing of all.

UNESCO was among the first multilateral agencies to launch a debate around engaging men and boys for Gender Equality, in Oslo in 1997, and has recently launched the initiative Men4GenderEquality to strengthen its impact in this area.

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, UNESCO is offering a space to nurture ideas and give visibility to solutions that work to eradicate VAWG at the 2030 horizon with a high-level roundtable and a Master Class for youth.

In efforts to raise the awareness among a wide audience, the two virtual events will be open to the public, up to 500 persons on Zoom, and broadcast in a livestream on UNESCO's website, with interpretation. Said public will be invited to ask their questions in writing in the Zoom Q&A box and the moderators will select a few during the Q&A sessions.

The 'Man Box' in a nutshell:

- If societies got rid of the "Man Box" (a set of restrictive, harmful ideas about what it means to be a man), we could reduce sexual violence by at least 69 percent and bullying and violence by 40 percent every year. (Promundo)
- Men who witnessed their fathers using violence against their mothers, and men who experienced some form of violence at home as children, were significantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate partner violence in their adult relationships. (International Men and Gender Equality Survey IMAGES 2017 – Middle East and North Africa. UN Women and Promundo-US).
- Between 40 and 60 per cent of women said they had ever experienced street-based sexual harassment (mainly sexual comments, stalking/following, or staring/ogling), and 31 per cent to 64 per cent of men said they had ever carried out such acts. (International Men and Gender Equality Survey IMAGES 2017 – Middle East and North Africa. UN Women and Promundo-US).

Transforming mentalities Engaging men and boys to address the root causes of violence against women

Online high-level roundtable

(3:00 pm – 4:30 pm CET)

Interpretation: English, French, Spanish

This virtual roundtable provides an opportunity to learn from inspiring global leaders and activists what it takes to eradicate violent mentalities harming women, how to engage and educate men to reject all forms of gender-based violence, and how to translate this commitment into actions that can make a lasting difference.

Towards a Call for Action

The roundtable will target decision makers at all governance levels, including UN Senior officials, Government representatives, community leaders and the civil society organizations and conclude with a Call for Action to scale up their efforts for the elimination of violence against women and take commitments to :

1. Recognize that all forms of VAWG – including domestic, sexual, physical and psychological violence – seriously impact on the lives and freedoms of women and girls, and as such must be priorities on the agenda of the public and private sectors alike, and need to be addressed in coordinated ways through multi-stakeholder partnerships with a view to achieve policy coherence, effectiveness and efficiency;
2. Leveraging the transformative power of education to promote peace and respect for diversity and raise awareness on the harm of gender stereotypes for societies by working with the media on gender responsive representations, thus supporting young generations to embrace healthy socialization processes, especially with women and girls;
3. Undertake research and collect data to better understand effective ways of ending VAWG, especially based on VAWG prevention. Use this data to inform policies, legislations and practices that take into consideration specific gender-related vulnerabilities in an intersectional perspective;
4. Identify and support innovative ways to engage men and boys for gender equality to prevent violence before it happens, building on the wealth of knowledge and expertise that local organizations have consolidated in this area and supporting such initiatives or scaling them up as appropriate;
5. Launch advocacy actions to end violence against women and girls by engaging men and boys that will not only engage international bodies, but also build public support and engagement.

**[Click here to register and join
the online high-level roundtable](#)**

Password: 820451

High-level roundtable – Proposed agenda

Moderator: Ms Danielle Cliche (UNESCO CAB/GE)

Opening	
15:00/15:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Audrey Azoulay – UNESCO Director-General (video message)
15:05/15:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Katrín Jakobsdóttir – Prime Minister of Iceland, co-lead of the UN Women Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on gender-based violence (video message)
15:10/15:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Gabriela Ramos – UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences (Introductory remarks)
Interactive discussion	
15:15/16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Gary Barker – CEO and founder of Promundo Ms Céline Bonnaire, Executive Director of the Kering Foundation Dr. Julio César González Pagés – Director of the Ibero-American Network of Masculinities Mr Robert T. Coulter – President and Executive Director of the Indian Law and Resource Centre for Ending Violence against Indigenous Women Dr. Edit Schlaffer – Founder of Women without Borders
Q&A	
16:00/16:20	<i>Questions from the audience</i>
Closing statements	
16:20/16:30	Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka – Executive Director of UN Women (video message) - TBC
16:30/16:40	Call to Action: Ms Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO ADG/SHS

Should you have any question, kindly contact:

gender.equality@unesco.org

SHS.inclusion-rights@unesco.org

More information on this International Day [here](#).

Youth against gender-based violence

Online Master Class

(10:00 am – 12:30 pm CET)

Interpretation: English, French

The Master Class will aim not only at engaging secondary education students from all around the world to combat VAWG but also at providing them with concrete action-oriented recommendations and tools to sensitize their peers, families and communities in turn.

While targeting youth aged 14 to 18 years old, this virtual Master Class will be open to the public, including decision makers, community leaders, teachers and the international community, to welcome their questions and suggestions, widely disseminate good practices and foster interactive dialogue between youth and relevant stakeholders.

The Master Class is expected to attract media coverage to draw the attention of the wider community to VAWG, and how gender norms, including norms of masculinity, affect societies as a whole. By supporting young men and boys, among others, identifying and rejecting stereotypical and harmful gender norms, the Master Class will ensure that everyone could free themselves from gender stereotypes and create inclusive, sustainable and gender-transformative change.

Objectives:

- To empower young people, including young men and boys alongside young women and girls, through this peer-learning forum by building their understanding and capacity to combat VAWG;
- To draw attention and visibility to, and understand how and why harmful gender norms and VAWG are being spread in all their forms online and offline, in the media, in public space and all spheres of life;
- To engage youth to become proactive agents of change and trainers within their own schools, families and communities for a sustainable impact;
- To inspire policymakers, at the global, national and local levels, and community leaders and teachers to pursue collective efforts in the fight against VAWG.

[Click here to register and join the Master Class against gender-based violence](#)

Password: 401973

Master Class – Proposed agenda

Opening	
10:00/15:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNESCO (Welcome remarks)
10:05/10:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderator (Introduction of the Master Class)
Keynote speech	
10:10/10:25 10:25/10:30 Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Dubravka Šimonovic – United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences since 2015
Lectures	
10:30/10:45 10:45/10:50 Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr Tim Shand – Co-founder and Director, ShandClarke Consulting Ltd, Expert in women’s empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence prevention, education and men and masculinities
10:50/11:05 11:05/11:10 Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr Ashwin Chandrasekhar – Host of “The New Manifesto” Podcast
Interactive dialogue	
11:10/11:50	<i>Discussions with the young audience</i>
11:50/12:10	<i>Elaboration of concrete commitments</i>
Closing	
12:10/12:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNESCO

Should you have any question, kindly contact:

masterclass@unesco.org

More information on UNESCO’s Master Classes [here](#).