

## WEWORLD-GVC SUPPORTS THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE INDIVIDUAL PROTECTION APPROACH (IPA)

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*“If I could have one wish granted, it might well be a total end to rape. That means a significant weapon of war gone from the arsenal of conflict, the absence of a daily risk assessment for girls and women in public and private spaces, the removal of a violent assertion of power, and a far-reaching shift for our society” (UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka)*

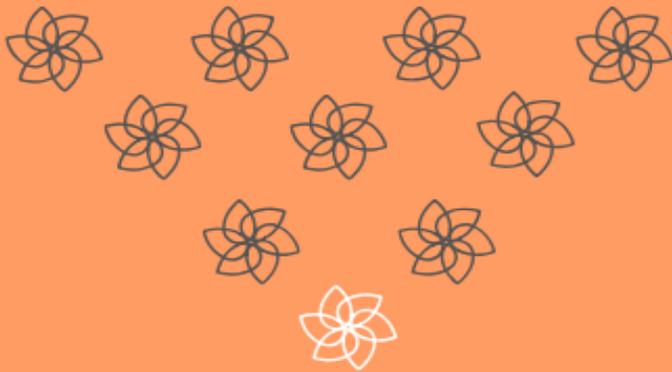
For almost two decades now, the 16 days between 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and 10 December (Human Rights Day) have been dedicated to initiatives and activism against gender-based violence, as a reminder of the fact that women’s rights are human rights, and that gender-based violence is a violation of human rights. In 2019, to mark the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, and under the umbrella of UN Women’s *Generation Equality: Realizing women’s rights for an equal future* campaign, United Nations Secretary-General’s *UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women* campaign (UNiTE Campaign) is calling for global action **to combat sexual violence and put an end to the rape culture.**

Sexual violence, rape, and abuse are a universal phenomenon. Sexual violence can take different forms, ranging from domestic violence to assault by a non-partner, to rape as a deliberate tool in conflicts, but it does not spare any country in the world, irrespective of its income or geographical location. Estimates by the World Health Organization show that up to **35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner** (not including sexual harassment) at some point in their lives. But sexual violence is not only a pervasive phenomenon in terms of statistical data: it is rooted in and reinforces the so-called “rape culture”, a set of norms, beliefs, expectations, and patterns of relation and control conducive to the normalization of sexual violence. Such culture, which reposes upon patriarchal models of masculinities and power, gender inequality and discrimination, and stigmatization of survivors, is embedded in all societies and needs to be addressed as a root cause of violence, along with the practices and the narratives perpetuating it.

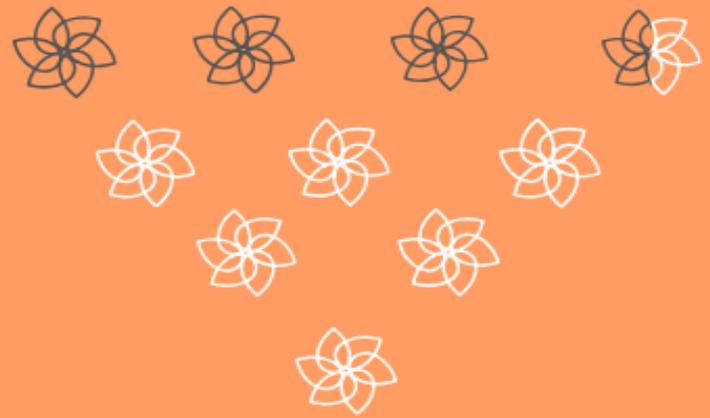
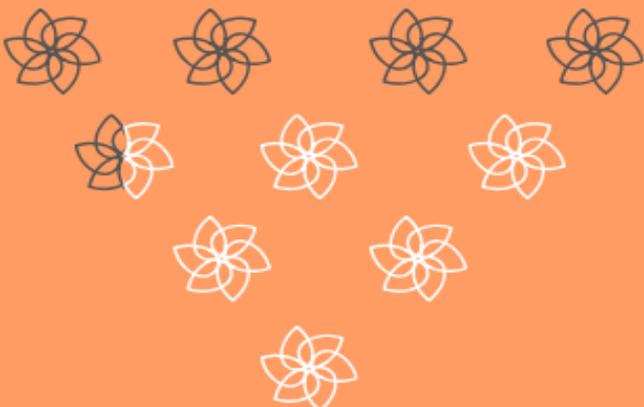
Social norms and models of relation, including expectations on what it means to be a “real man” or a “real woman”, power unbalances between different social groups, as well as stereotypes and stigmatization affecting certain populations, contribute to this culture of rape, intersecting to increase the vulnerability of individuals associated with certain characteristics. This is, for example, the case of girls with disabilities, who find themselves at higher risk of sexual violence due to their gender, age, and disability.

The same social environment that allows for sexual violence to become pervasive and normalized (“When women say no they really mean yes”) also creates conditions **making reporting violence and seeking help daunting if not outright impossible**, as survivors face lack of services and information, risk of re-victimization, as well as stigmatization and shame. By stifling the voices of survivors, the system, in turn, reinforces itself, ensuring impunity for perpetrators and the invisibility of sexual violence and abuse.

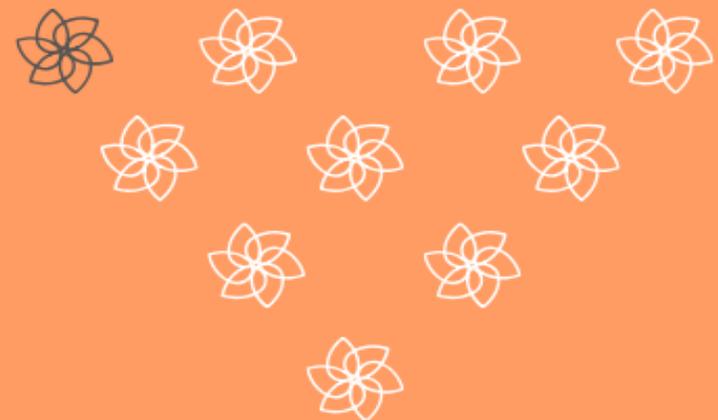
35% OF WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED  
EITHER PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL  
INTIMATE  
PARTNER VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE BY A NON-PARTNER (NOT  
INCLUDING SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT) AT SOME POINT IN  
THEIR LIVES



AROUND 120 MILLION GIRLS  
WORLDWIDE (SLIGHTLY MORE  
THAN 1 IN 10) HAVE  
EXPERIENCED FORCED  
INTERCOURSE OR  
OTHER FORCED SEXUAL ACTS  
AT SOME POINT IN THEIR  
LIVES



...BUT FOR WOMEN WITH  
DEVELOPMENT  
DISABILITIES THE RATE  
OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
RISES UP TO 90%



46 PERCENT OF BISEXUAL WOMEN  
HAVE BEEN RAPED AT SOME  
POINT IN THEIR LIFETIME

*“Along with criminalizing rape, we need to get much, much better at putting the victim at the centre of the response” (UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka)*

Combating sexual violence means breaking the silence, contesting the culture of violence out loud and building new models of interaction. It means supporting survivors in reporting the violence and accessing services, applying an approach that respects safety, dignity and human rights of all persons, with particular attention to the most underserved, disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

With this in mind, **WeWorld-GVC has developed the Individual Protection Approach (IPA)**. The IPA is an integral component of the Community Protection Approach (CPA) methodology, whose design has been driven by the Protection Mainstreaming principles— meaningful access, prioritizing safety and dignity and avoid causing harm, accountability, and promoting participation and empowerment. The CPA provides a people-centred system of analysis of the causal factors of a population’s needs, with the objective to increase the capacities of communities and individuals to make informed decisions, assert their rights, and develop local protection strategies.

Within this framework, the IPA has been purposely designed to identify community members whose immediate needs are unmet, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable and invisible ones, comprehensively assess their needs and link them to the best-placed service provider(s). Gender inequality, and the multiple violations of the human rights of women and girls it entails, precedes and is exacerbated by shocks and crises. This results in community members being exposed to heightened risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, including rape and different forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. The IPA system takes into account the specific factors that affect the ability of the population and especially of women and girls to cope with and recover from shocks and crisis, as well as the particular forms of rights’ violations they are exposed to on the basis of their gender, age, different ability or other characteristics.

**The IPA system supports the safe identification of survivors of gender-based violence**, building on the opportunities offered by the CPA methodology and in particular by the Narrated Community Perspectives (NCP) steps. The NCP participatory process, through continuous and meaningful field presence, contributes to the establishment of a trust relationship with persons in the community, creating an environment in which they feel comfortable to open up about distressful experiences. This allows for the identification of potential cases of gender-based violence. Following the identification, the assessment step is designed to involve the survivors in an active discussion, whereby they are listened to and can freely and safely express their concerns. After this discussion, both the assessor and the person concerned agree on the most suitable response through the adequate referral pathway, in respect of the views of the survivor. Upon agreement on the response, the staff ensures an adequate follow-up, to the extent possible and in compliance with privacy considerations, in order to understand whether the person is able to access the service she is in need of, or document the reasons why this is not the case. Finally, the data collected through the process are analysed in order to understand the adequacy and timeliness of the response provided, the possible challenges hindering the survivor’s access to services, and whether services were available to respond to the person’s needs, in order to support evidence-based advocacy.

The CPA is proposed to be replicated, further developed or used in the design of derivative mechanisms. For this reason, WeWorld-GVC has developed the CPA Handbook, which includes different modules openly available to any organization, individual or institution interested in studying or applying the CPA. The first 2 modules of the CPA Handbook (Overview and Guidelines) are available at the section [Resources](#), while the IPA module will be released in **mid-December** 2019.

If interested, please write to [cpa@gvc.weworld.it](mailto:cpa@gvc.weworld.it).