

# SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBAL INITIATIVE

## GLOBAL RESULTS REPORT 2017-2020



SAFE CITIES  
AND SAFE  
PUBLIC SPACES

UN WOMEN GLOBAL FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME





## FOREWORD BY UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the implementation of UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global initiative. Much has happened over the decade, most recently with the COVID-19 pandemic changing the ways our cities function – closing businesses, moving schools online and limiting access to healthcare, social services recreation and transport. In that crisis we saw a 'shadow pandemic' of violence against women and girls, with both domestic violence indoors, and empty streets and fewer witnesses leading to women in public spaces experiencing heightened risks of sexual and other forms of violence with additional need for shelters and gender-sensitive response by police and others.

Despite these challenges, we have come a long way together in our efforts to end sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces and to create safe, smart and sustainable cities for all. Together with local and national governments, grassroots women and women's organizations, researchers and young feminists, we have responded to the strong call from women around the world to work with cities on this neglected issue. We have seen the Initiative grow from five founding cities – Cairo (Egypt), Delhi (India), Kigali (Rwanda), Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) and Quito (Ecuador) – to 50 cities in the Global South and North, with expansion continuing within and across countries. And we are not done yet. This year we launched six Generation Equality Action Coalitions – including one on gender-based violence that will help to drive the initiative even further by adding an additional 50 cities by 2025.

This second global report presents results across the initiative's "champion" cities – from Quito, Ecuador, La Paz, Bolivia and Montreal, Canada to Kericho, Kenya and Manila, Philippines. It stresses the need for investing in local data and evidence to inform participatory safe city approaches engaging women and girls, including those groups of women who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence (e.g., women from minority populations living in under-served communities). It calls for the further development and implementation of comprehensive laws and policies that prevent and respond to sexual violence in public spaces – one of the main gaps identified in the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The report highlights many encouraging partnership initiatives from 2017- 2020 that are yielding results at both outcome and impact levels through interventions that enhance the political participation and economic empowerment of women in all their diversity, and that increase women's sense of safety, improve their autonomous mobility and reduce sexual violence against women in public spaces.

By sharing locally tailored solutions from cities around the world, including those adapted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and which foster an integrated approach, I hope that this report will continue to advance the international knowledge base on the prevention of sexual harassment of women and girls, and inspire action from many more cities and communities to focus on localization and the full achievement of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda to ensure safe, healthy, green and sustainable cities for all.

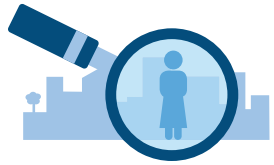
**Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**

*United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women*



UN WOMEN GLOBAL INITIATIVE: SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

# MAKING CITIES AND PUBLIC SPACES SAFE FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



**KEY OUTCOME 1:  
GENERATE EVIDENCE AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE**

Initial scoping studies provide specific and often unique data to ensure a deep understanding of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces. Key stakeholders from different sectors reflect on the findings that help to inform the design of their safe city programme and helps to foster local ownership.



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women Bolivia

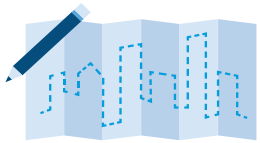


Photo: UN Women Mexico



**KEY OUTCOME 2:  
DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE LAWS AND POLICIES**

Laws and policies are specifically focused on preventing and responding to sexual violence in public spaces. Capacity-building measures in place help local governments, women's rights groups and other partners to advocate for legislation and policies, allocate adequate resources, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of these measures.



**KEY OUTCOME 3:  
INVEST IN THE SAFETY AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF PUBLIC SPACES**

Greater safety for women and girls may come through specific investments in public infrastructure (e.g. better lighting, improved visible sight lines, and safe and accessible public toilets, etc.). Economic development interventions help to expand opportunities for knowledge transfer and skills training for women, and increase opportunities for economic empowerment at the local level.



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women



Photo: UN Women

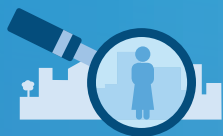


Photo: UN Women



**KEY OUTCOME 4:  
TRANSFORM SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS**

Transformative activities in schools, communities and other settings raise awareness on gender equality, and promote women and girls' rights to safety in public spaces, and respectful relationships.



## GENERATE EVIDENCE AND BUILD PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE

### MONTREAL, CANADA

The city of Montreal, Canada, began a pilot approach in 2018 to apply an intersectional gender analysis (ADS) within its policies, services and programmes. Lessons from ADS will inform the implementation of the Montreal Safe City and Safe Public Spaces with Women and Girls Initiative.

Following the principle of *leaving no one behind*, this new intersectional gender analysis tool was implemented in the city and used as the preferred framework to build an inclusive city. The city began to lead a review of its programmes, paying particular attention to the experiences of women facing multiple forms of oppression (indigenous women, women living with disabilities, racialized women, women of sexual diversity, and homeless women).

This approach has since been translated into other pilot projects in two districts and five administrative services, including the Property Management and Planning Department; the Planning and Mobility Department; the Great Parks Service, Mount Royal and Sports; the Housing Department; and the Diversity and Social Inclusion Service.

In 2019, specific awareness raising tools were developed, a ‘train the trainers’ approach was rolled out including for civil servants, and assistance was provided on how to use an intersectional gender-differentiated analysis.

Collaboration with the Department of Urban Planning and Mobility has been key in helping the city to develop more inclusive public spaces and reflect on issues related to women’s experiences and fear of sexual violence.

### QUITO, ECUADOR

Similar to other cities, violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces is widespread in Quito, Ecuador. The baseline study for the Quito Safe City Programme found high rates of VAWG in public transport and on streets. 91% of women and girls had experienced some form of violence (e.g. physical assault, robbery, and sexual harassment, including verbal abuse, threats and intimidation) on public transport. Also, 84% of women participants said that they felt public transport is unsafe, and 79% said they had experienced sexual violence at least once

in the past 12 months, taking place on streets. It also noted that incidents were more prevalent during peak hours when transportation is overcrowded, with high congestion on buses mentioned by participants as a contributing factor to sexual harassment, particularly unwelcome physical contact. Risk factors for sexual harassment and other forms of VAWG in public spaces included: a lack of enforcement of laws on VAWG, high levels of alcohol consumption that can exacerbate sexual harassment, and attitudes on sexual harassment in public spaces as “normal” held by men and some women. Bus stops, taxis and streets were identified as places where sexual harassment and other forms of VAWG often occurs.

A mixed methods participatory impact evaluation of the Quito Safe City programme was conducted in 2019. It measured changes in the prevalence of VAWG in public spaces and related programme outcomes.

The evaluation engaged 737 participants (90% women), and 50% of women participants were users of public transportation.

**“You see the changes among women survivors of sexual harassment who have gone through the process. They start gaining trust and self-confidence. They start making decisions and ask questions about their rights, and they feel supported. They know the problems in the community and are the best advocates. They share their stories with other people.”**

— MUNICIPAL LEGAL OFFICER



Photo: UN Women



The field inquiries were complemented and supported by secondary research that drew on an extensive desk review of more than 279 programme specific or related documents.

Main evaluation findings:

- The prevalence of sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces was reduced
- Improved legislation on the prevention and response to sexual harassment and other forms of VAWG in public spaces.
- Knowledge about available mechanisms to report sexual harassment in public transport among women increased.
- Increased awareness of multi-stakeholders on initiatives that include women's participation in urban planning.
- A significant increase in bystander willingness to support women during sexual harassment incidents occurring in public transport in Quito.

### DAKAR, SENEGAL

Senegal is the first country in West and Central Africa to participate in the Global FPI. The city of Dakar has adapted the Global Framework on Safe Cities and accompanying tools, with the support of UN Women and women's organizations.

As a first step, the city conducted a scoping study to identify and better understand the nature and forms of sexual violence in public spaces in three suburbs (Guediawaye, Pikine and Rufisque) to inform the design of the safe city programme with community partners. The study included a desk review, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. The main spaces identified by study participants where women and girls often face high risks to sexual harassment included: marketplaces, public transportation, bus stations, on roads leading to schools and universities, garages, in open public spaces (e.g. beaches and fishing wharves), and learning and work spaces.

The study also revealed that there is a heightened risk of sexual harassment and other forms of VAWG in public spaces around public holidays and festivals, including incidents that may be often facilitated by substance abuse. Some of the recommended actions for the design of the Senegal safe city initiative include: ensure community mobilization interventions with women and men and boys and girls to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, strengthen the capacity of local government and women's rights groups on gender responsive urban and transport planning and how to mainstream gender and women's safety in a range of policies related to ending VAWG. Also, work with the police, justice and other governments at national and local level to improve reporting, employ a victim/survivor centered approach in the response to sexual harassment, and ensure the accountability of perpetrators.

### UKRAINE

Rubizhne is the first city in the Ukraine to participate in the Global FPI, and this has drawn interest of other cities in the country to consider their participation in 2021, including Novoaidar and Hirske (including Zolote), Luhansk region and Toretsk, Donetsk region. In 2020, safe cities for women and girls' actions were institutionalized through the establishment of ten local Gender Coordination Councils, with the support of UN Women. This includes an expanded mandate to include safe cities and safe public spaces for women and girl approaches in target communities in the conflict-affected East of Ukraine. These councils are mandated to coordinate and monitor the implementation of gender commitments at the local level and serve as a dialogue platform between the local government and community members. As a result of the convening of partners and joint policy advocacy on safe cities by UN Women, the Regional Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Luhansk oblast has now included specific measures on Safe Cities. It is the first time that these measures have been included in a regional socio-economic policy in the country.

### CORPORATE EVALUATION

A [Corporate Evaluation](#) of UN Women's UN coordination and broader convening role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021) reveals that UN Women is working with UN agencies and other partners to mainstream gender and reduce the risks associated with VAWG including by working with non-traditional and male dominated sectors such as urban and transportation infrastructure and planning, agricultural commodity sectors (working with women smallholder farmers), and making links with broader security initiatives focused on transnational criminality. These are sectors where UN Women has had very limited reach in the past, and the Global FPI has helped to position and support the uptake of women's safety action in these sectors. For example:

- In Egypt, Cairo's transport authority, in partnership with UN Women and UN-HABITAT designed and implemented the first gender-responsive the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the region with an aim to make public transport more responsive to the needs of women and girls and curb congestion and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- In Colombia, linking UNODC's programme on citizenship security, UN Women worked with local government and the UN entity to address women's safety issues in the public spaces, and maximize potential synergies.

The Evaluation also notes that Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative, maintains a high focus on intersectionality and disability inclusion in programming, ensuring inclusive representation from stakeholders (LNOB).

In **Colombia**, safe cities free of violence against women has been embedded in the local development plans of five cities (Bogota, Cali, Medellin, Popayan and Villavicencio) that participate in the Global FPI, with initial allocations of US \$1.3 million. All five mayors signed a political declaration of commitment recognizing the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women in private, public and virtual spaces. They reaffirmed that in partnership they will work to "reduce, prevent and comprehensively address sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in all spaces". They also committed to implement a gender approach in urban planning and transportation; prevention- through social norms change; and strengthen women's rights organizations, including a focus on minoritized women and girls.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the City of Banja Luka was undertaking a scoping study on sexual harassment when lockdowns were implemented as part of COVID-19 measures. Rather than stopping the research, methods were adapted with careful attention in continuing to uphold the ethical and safety principles for violence against women data collection. Drawing on and validating the findings of the study, a participatory programme design workshop was held that integrated recommendations made by diverse grassroots women, local government departments, women's organizations and other civil society groups.

In **Chile**, a scoping study was undertaken to better understand the nature and extent of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces. Adapted online methods to capture the views and expertise of women's organizations and civil society groups and other stakeholders were used. A desk review of available research and quantitative data on sexual harassment was also conducted. Given the increased use of technology for educational purposes during the pandemic, city partners are conducting a large-scale study to assess online violence against women and girls.



# DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE LAWS AND POLICIES

## MANILA CITY, THE PHILIPPINES

As part of efforts to scale up a safe city for women and girls intervention in the Philippines, a local city ordinance on the prevention and response to sexual harassment in public spaces was developed and endorsed in the city in 2018 by the Office of the Mayor of Manila City, in collaboration with the Institute of Politics and Governance (IPG) and UN Women. Informed by the results of the scoping study conducted in Manila which identified a gap in legislation on sexual harassment (SH), city partners agreed to review legislation and policies including the Quezon City ordinance on sexual harassment in order to inform the development of the Manila City Ordinance. The Quezon City Ordinance was the first one of its kind to be endorsed in the Philippines in 2015 as part of the Quezon Safe City for Women and Girls Programme which participates in UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative. While the Quezon city ordinance was achieved through an amendment of the Gender and Development (GAD) Code to include provisions on SH in public spaces, Manila city's local ordinance is a stand-alone ordinance - with specific provisions on SH.

The ordinance was drafted in one year in collaboration with legal and gender experts, advocates and government partners. It recognizes SH as a matter of gender inequality and a violation of human rights, and advocates for equality of treatment for those who report and offenders. In a practical way, the ordinance identifies clear, simple and accessible procedure pathways and has mandatory training.

**“The women from the villages in different districts showed up to their city official’s office to help place this issue on the agenda. The training taught us to take a positive approach. We explained our concerns and the importance of this ordinance for us and for the community. We brought flowers as a symbol of dialogue on safety and they actively listened to us and they took action.”**

— WOMAN PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT, MANILA



Photo: UN Women

Using a multi-pronged advocacy strategy was key in passing the ordinance to address sexual harassment in Manila city. Key champions were identified across sectors to participate in this process such as city government, including women city council members, women's rights organizations, the City Committee on Women, and legal experts. Strategic partnerships at the national level were also developed and strengthened with the criminal justice system, including with the judiciary and law enforcement.

Advocacy efforts led by civil society, specifically grassroots women organizations, helped to increase the understanding of the issue, and strengthened advocacy efforts of village legislators. ILAW ng Manila, a women's rights organization with support of UN Women, strengthened the leadership skills of women's advocates through training sessions, and mentorship programmes.

Women leaders conducted community consultations in neighbourhoods to inform women residents of their rights to live a life free of violence. Community engagement was further reinforced through ongoing in-person discussions and online. In total, the community awareness and advocacy efforts reached over 22 barangays (administrative divisions), and 226 barangay officials.

## GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA

In Guatemala City, a 2017 study revealed that nearly all women respondents said they had experienced some form of sexual harassment in public space during their lifetime. As part of the commitment to build solutions and create a safe and inclusive city for women and girls, with support of UN Women, the city has developed and approved the Women's Development Policy (2019-2027).

This policy extends to different local development plans, it takes advantage of existing resources and enhances political commitment towards ensuring transformative change in the lives of women and girls. It focuses on equal participation, liveable and inclusive neighbourhoods, women's economic empowerment, and institutional strengthening.

To ensure that a comprehensive approach to prevent sexual violence against women and girls can be sustained, the city has prioritized women's safety in public spaces in their agenda. They have launched a plan that includes specific indicators to monitor the reduction of harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces.



Strong leadership, a participatory consultation process with women and other partners, and gender-responsive budgeting helped to ensure the success of the programme. Given these elements, the Women's Municipal Directorate obtained authorization to develop and implement municipal policies that would serve as the basis for any municipal policy, plan, programme or project relevant to the status of women.

For the first time, the city developed a long-term plan to ensure that the benefits of municipal services and infrastructure are distributed among the population, helping to achieve gender equality and address multiple and intersecting forms of oppression of women.

### COLOMBIA

UN Women organized the Safe Cities and Universities against Violence and Sexual Harassment Colloquium (Bogota, 19 and 20 September 2019) with over 140 participants in attendance. This included stakeholders from the five participating safe city programmes in the country (Popoyan, Bogota, Medellin, Cali and Villavicencio), and 12 guest universities (including from Chile and Mexico), who presented their good practices to prevent and address sexual harassment in university settings.

At the end of the event, 20 universities in Colombia agreed to implement institutional policies to address the issue. In partnership with the Ministry of National Education, 107 protocols to prevent and respond to cases of sexual violence in higher education institutions were analyzed, resulting in recommendations to create and implement institutional policies to prevent harassment at universities, guided by [UN Women's Guidance Note on Campus Violence Prevention and Response](#).

### MONTERREY, MEXICO

In the Monterrey Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Programme, women's organizations and other civil society organizations (CSOs) have been supported to participate in the initiative in diverse ways. Thirty organizations have received training on policy advocacy and monitoring

of violence prevention initiatives. Participants were trained on legal frameworks, monitoring, advocacy skills, and evaluation tools.

Following the training, participants applied their knowledge and skills acquired in assessing the implementation of existing policies aimed at addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) at the local level. Participants from different CSOs developed a joint advocacy plan and developed a strategic coalition that addresses the multiple interrelated forms of discrimination in private and public spaces.

In February 2020, a Mexico Safe Cities for Women and Girls Citizen Monitoring Guide was developed to assist local government in strengthening partnerships to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in public spaces, and ensure that the integrated plan on safe cities and safe public spaces can be sustained over time.

### TORREON, MEXICO

As part of the Torreon Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Programme with Women and Girls, a group of lawyers with experience in human rights and the prevention of violence against women (VAW) analyzed municipal ordinances related to safe public transport. From this analysis a series of recommendations were made in relation to the prevention, response and sanctions against sexual violence.

Local councilors, different municipal departments, including transport authorities further worked with women's rights and other civil society organizations to identify necessary changes in mobility regulations to address sexual harassment. This regulation became mandatory, and public messages were issued by local government. The regulation for transport authorities and passengers include:

- Prevention messages on VAW
- Information on places to report sexual harassment
- A telephone service number on how to access essential services
- Mandatory training for all public transport personnel on VAW

In **Belgium**, the City of Brussels, in partnership with the organization Garance, is conducting training with women and men police officers so they can better understand the nature and extent of sexual harassment in public spaces and have the knowledge and skills to respond effectively.

In the **United Kingdom**, the Mayor of London led a partnership of front-line voluntary sector agencies to support those that were fleeing violence during the first 'lockdown'. A network of accommodation spaces were implemented across the city with wrap around support which included counseling and help to move survivors/victims and their children on to more permanent housing. The city also distributed much needed funding to organizations to enable them to adjust their services to provide support to women remotely.

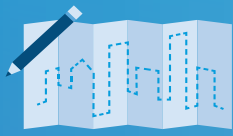
In **Egypt**, a surge in reports to the helpline run by the Women's Complaints' Office prompted the establishment of a dedicated WhatsApp modality together with training of an "emergency intervention team" to facilitate timely and effective referrals for support, including brokering of arrangements with employers. In the underserved areas of Alexandria and Damietta, economically hard-hit women were provided with skill-building and training, paired with information on COVID-19 preventative measures. Similar information was provided to women's shelters through various Government platforms and broadcast through national television. Together with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, four shelters were re-designed ensuring a survivor-centred approach adapted to COVID-19.

In **Ethiopia**, in the City of Addis Ababa, in partnership with the Association of Women's Sanctuary and Development and the Ethiopian Network of Women's shelters, adjustments were made to ensure that safe accommodations remained available. During this period, the first transitional shelter with comprehensive support services also opened its doors.

As part of their COVID-19 response, some cities are offering free and safe transport services to health workers, the majority of whom are women, such as New York, USA and La Paz, Bolivia.



Photo: UN Women



# INVEST IN THE SAFETY AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF PUBLIC SPACE

## RABAT, MOROCCO

Morocco continues to experience high urbanization which has been accompanied by high levels of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces. In 2011 a national study revealed that about 63% of Moroccan women had experienced some form of violence – of which 33% took place in public spaces.

The city of Rabat started to participate in the Global FPI in 2015 and develop a comprehensive approach to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in public spaces. One of the key areas for action identified in the participatory programme development process was to strengthen the capacities of local government departments and women's rights organizations to implement gender responsive urban planning.

In 2016, the first women's safety audits (WSA) were implemented in the country and were carried out by the Moroccan Institute for Local Development (IMADEL), supported by UN Women. These audits were conducted once again in 2017, this time by four additional civil society organizations (CSOs). Each CSO presented the methodology and recommendations made by grassroots women during the audit process to local and national government representatives.

Informed by the implementation of WSAs at the local level, the Moroccan Ministry of Housing committed to mainstreaming the gender perspective across urban development initiatives in the country. In 2020, the Ministry developed and launched National Guidelines on Gender-Responsive planning with an intersectional approach to guarantee safe access to urban public spaces for all Moroccan women.

Practical recommendations in the Guidance can be implemented in several public spaces (e.g. streets, parks, markets etc.). These include clear signage, improvement in visible sightlines, design of toilets with a gender and climate smart perspective, safe access to water sources, mixed-use spaces focused on gender and age, the installation of benches and rest areas. An awareness and training strategy on planning with a gender perspective has been developed, and the Ministry of Housing will provide a series of training sessions on the benefits of implementing an approach to planning that takes account of the needs of women and men, and mainstreams women and girls' safety.

## EL ALTO, BOLIVIA

El Alto is the second largest city in Bolivia, one of the fastest growing urban centers, where 78% of the population identifies itself as Aymara. The city has a high rate of migration and carries out its activities through networks between rural and urban environments.

The El Alto Safe City and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls initiative was launched in 2018 with support of the Spanish Agency for International Development and Cooperation (AECID) and UN Women. In 2019, a scoping study was conducted to better understand the nature of sexual harassment in public spaces. It identified streets, bars and public transport as spaces where sexual harassment is more likely to occur.

Over a period of two months, Aymara women reflected on their daily experiences using public space in their neighborhoods. Using a map, they located frequently used transit areas and identified the elements of the physical and social environment that made them feel unsafe. During the design of the programme, an intersectional approach was prioritized, in order to guarantee that the lived experiences of migrant women would be at the center of planning.

From these reflection sessions, two initial priorities were highlighted: to include better signage and ensure women as active users of public spaces. Aymara women recommended the need to create more intuitive, visual and multilingual signs. UN Women is working with them and other partners to respond to this recommendation. Also in 2019, a women's soccer programme for girls, adolescents and adult women was developed at the request of local women and this has helped to change public perception of soccer as an exclusive activity for men.

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**“We want the community to shape municipal public policies. Women also need their spaces to organize and demand change. Although NGOs, and other civil society groups can help them to develop the tools to advocate, decisions must be made by women in all their diversity.”**

— INFORMANT INTERVIEW, AYMARA LEADER



Photo: UN Women

## PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The Port Moresby Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Initiative was launched in 2011 as one of the founding programmes of the Global Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Initiative. A scoping study conducted by UN Women in 2014 found that more than 90 per cent of women and girls experienced some form of violence when accessing public transport, including on buses, waiting at bus stops, walking to and from bus stops, or in taxis. To address sexual harassment in public transport, the Port Moresby local authority National Capital District Commission (NCDC) has been working in collaboration with the Secretary of Transport, UN Women, and other partners since 2015 to support the provision of a safe, reliable and affordable public transportation for women and girls.

In order to ensure women and girls' safety, a temporary special measure – women-only buses were launched in Port Moresby, known as the Meri Seif Buses (MSB) to improve safe access of women and youth to employment, and children to education. The MSB service set up the first bus timetable in the city in 2017, with the objective to reduce wait times and reduce the risk of SH against women and girls in bus stops. Having access to this information, women commuters are able to make decisions on the best travel options and plan their multiple trips across the city. This is particularly important for women who have to plan their daily activities around their socially assigned triple roles: productive, reproductive and community managing roles.

According to the evaluation of the Safe Transport component of Port Moresby Safe City with Women and Girls' Initiative, from 2015 to 2017 this service has increased the sense of safety, freedom and mobility





Photo: UN Women

for women commuters in the city. Though this is a temporary special measure to deal with daily occurrences of sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women (VAWG) in and around public buses and bus stops in the city, many women and girls who have used the MSB have said they feel safer when commuting.

In the same year, a training programme for women drivers was set up in collaboration with Ginigoada Foundation and UN Women. As part of an integrated safe cities approach, free-of-charge six month training was implemented to increase the participation of female drivers which has also helped to increase female passengers' feelings of safety while providing more employment opportunities for women in transportation.

The MSB has also created a safe space for women and girls to discuss and learn about their rights. A team of youth volunteers involved in the Safe City Behaviour Change Campaign (Sanap Wantaim) have conducted weekly awareness sessions on all MSBs. During these sessions, women and girls are given information about gender equality, VAW, and what to do in cases where they may experience or witness violence. Often women commuters board the MSB with their young sons who access the information provided and engage in discussions on equitable gender norms. In 2017, a total of 4,765 women and girl commuters have accessed useful information about where and how to access essential services.

The Department of Transport, the RTA, NCDC and UN Women developed a long-term city-wide mobility plan including women's specific mobility and safety needs. A gender and transport study was conducted, including quantitative and qualitative data, key informant interviews and participatory consultations to identify and address women's safe mobility needs in the city.

## CAIRO, EGYPT

Cairo is a founding city programme in the Safe Cities and Public Spaces Global Initiative. Since 2011, several interventions have been implemented to ensure a safer and more viable city for all women and girls. Two urban components of the Cairo Safe City programme that apply a gender responsive approach are: safe school environments and markets.

Local government with community groups prioritized young girls and women's safety needs in the selected neighborhoods for the programme (Imbaba and Ezbet El Hagganah neighbourhoods in Giza and Cairo). Physical changes to the built environment informed by grassroots women and girls were put in place to enhance their feelings of safety. The new design explicitly separated the different functions of the area into a recreational pedestrian space and a functional vehicular zone.

The new design of the school environment included increasing the area for recreation outside the school, and promoted the mixed use of space through physical infrastructure. The design took account of gender and age, climate smart, among many other factors, as part of an integrated approach aimed at increasing the feelings of safety of girls and boys.

Economic activities have also been promoted in the space to encourage an informal and friendly surveillance. On the weekends, this space has been adapted to provide women entrepreneurs a space to promote and sell their handmade products with the objective to increase their economic empowerment. Cultural activities, including theatre and musical recitals have also been promoted to encourage the continued use of the space at different times and days of the week, making school streets feel safer at all hours while also fostering commercial activity on the streets.

On the other hand, markets in Cairo represent important livelihoods for women and men, and have the potential to increase the economic empowerment of women. Zenin's market was the first market to be designed with a gender perspective, helping to create a safe and inclusive space for customers and vendors, including women with disabilities.

This market offers a useful space for more than 70 women, who often contribute to their household income. Some women vendors also contribute to their relatives' household income as well. The recommendations made by women users and vendors in the market helped to increase accessibility in the market for all. For example:

- The market was expanded by 750m<sup>2</sup>, in addition to another 800m<sup>2</sup> that include tree-lined sidewalks and better lighting.
- Accessibility has been improved by widening paths and ramps to accommodate strollers and wheelchairs.
- Sanitation facilities in the market were improved by increasing their privacy and equipping them with changing tables and handrails.



## EXAMPLES OF ACTION ADAPTED TO COVID-19 BY PARTICIPATING SAFE CITIES

In **Japan**, the City of Sakai has established a Steering Committee in 2020 composed of managers across diverse departments to define strategic and evidence-based approaches to mainstream women's safety across the departments of the city government including in their COVID-19 recovery plans. In October 2020, the city also provided information on the concept and step by step approach of safe cities with women and girls based on local and global experience during a consultation related to Japan's National Resilience Programme.

In **Colombia**, the city of Bogota has developed Manzanas del Cuidado "Care Blocks" to reduce time poverty, commute time and increase women's access to care services within short distances including equal opportunity services, playgrounds, community centers and services for persons with disabilities.

The cities New York, **United States**, and Winnipeg, **Canada** are providing more space for pedestrians and cyclists by closing down streets to traffic, so they can maintain a safe distance, and enables safe mobility, increased health and wellness.



# TRANSFORM SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS

## CALI, COLOMBIA

In June 2017, the Under-Secretary of Gender Equality of the municipality of Santiago de Cali created a Committee of Universities for Gender Equality, including 20 members. It aims to implement a gender approach to all policies and services provided by tertiary institutions, including a focus on the prevention of sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in campus settings.

- A **Chair on Gender Equality** was established to understand and reflect on the discriminatory practices and gender equality gaps within the universities, including its governance structures, policies, systems and services. Young women's needs and experiences are placed in the center of this analysis and reflection to identify the discriminatory practices and barriers to access equal services and benefits, and to develop targeted solutions. Some of the challenges included: high levels of SH and other forms of SVAWG, largely perpetrated by male students and professors against female students, limited representation of women students in male-dominated fields such as information technology, and few women with decision making roles.
- **Thematic Dialogue Tables.** Initially, each university implemented its own workplan supported by capacity-building activities provided by the Secretariat of Women. Training sessions were tailored to diverse audiences including professors, administrative/operations staff and students on key legal frameworks such as Law 1257 (2008) 46, VAW, and positive masculinities. Since 2019, this methodology was introduced to thematic working groups with the objective of streamlining efforts according to their needs for capacity-building and their respective journey towards gender equality. Teachers, staff and student representatives who participate in the thematic dialogue sessions are selected according to their level of skills to adapt the knowledge and lessons learned, and decision-making power to foster institutional changes.
- A **University forum** is conducted annually under a specific theme to reach additional students and staff and to exchange in-person knowledge and lessons learned. The first forum, held in 2019, focused on response protocols on VAW in universities including participants in different panels and round tables who discussed methodologies and shared best practices.

In total, after two years of implementation, over 250 students and 50 staff members have increased their knowledge on gender equality and how to address SH and other forms of SVAWG in universities through the Committee of Universities on Gender Equality.

## MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA

Medellin was the first city in Colombia to participate in the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative. The Medellin Secretariat of Women, in collaboration with the Centre of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Ruta-N and other community partners is implementing strategies to prevent SH in public spaces.

Guided by several groups of teachers who formed a network of schools, a project was launched aimed at increasing awareness among students about the causes and consequences of sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and girls and how to prevent it. Teachers developed a curriculum which integrates human rights and gender equality, and conducted five sessions during the school year with students (10-12 years of age).

Other communication strategies were also designed in various public spaces in the city. These strategies include the:

- Display of videos on 40 public buses (over 249 times) on the negative effects of sexual harassment. These videos reached more than 1,500 passengers and passengers.
- Use of theater and the 'invisible theater' technique to increase awareness among the community, and also women and men in non-traditional educational sectors.
- Implementation of a "game of emotions" as a participatory strategy that allows the public to identify and describe emotions in a safe space.

## MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

In 2016, the city of Maputo launched its Safe City and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls programme, as part of the Global Initiative. A scoping study was conducted which revealed that many girls had experienced some form of violence in public spaces. The city prioritized a strategy to be implemented in four schools focused on changing social norms to promote women and girls' rights to use public spaces free of sexual harassment.

**“For Maputo to be a safe city we need to create more safe spaces. We talk among us guys and girls, about what we need. Boys need to change the machismo culture and regard girls as equal.”**

— ADOLESCENT BOY ADVOCATE, 14 YEARS OLD



Photo: UN Women

Over 3000 girls and 1000 boys have been reached by prevention interventions, including many young activists. The programme included a focus on two main actions: leadership skills for girls and youth-friendly complaint mechanisms.

Boys and girls are divided into two separate groups to debate independently issues on gender equality, gender based violence, social norms, power, sexual harassment, and unsafe infrastructure. The two groups then come together to share reflections on how to create safer environments. Students have used their voice, including through art and social media to amplify their messages and participation in public life - including gender responsive policy making.

Suggestion boxes have been installed in the selected schools where students and teachers can anonymously report any complaint they may have, which is then directed to the competent authority. The young activists also identified the Photovoice methodology as a mechanism to convey opinions. This a process that combines photography with social action. They take photos of sites that they consider unsafe and present the recommendations to the community and government authorities.



Photo: UN Women

This complaint mechanism enabled young people to change the location of the toilet services, since they did not guarantee privacy or security for the girls. On the other hand, an abandoned school was also identified in a risk zone that was presented to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry's staff and youth visited the site to assess the situation and provide recommendations.

In addition, regular training sessions were provided to 32 teachers and members of school directorates, 142 school council members, 123 community leaders (87 women and 36 men), 426 students (217 girls and 219 boys), and 40 magistrates. These groups now participate in a new multi-sectoral network established in 2019 with over 700 champions who advocate for gender equality.

## KENYA

In Kericho, Kenya, UN Women worked in partnership with the Unilever Women, Girls and Boys Safety Programme to raise awareness on sexual harassment in public spaces and workplace settings. Traditionally in most communities in Kenya, men come together over goat eating sessions and they discuss rites of passage of their children, gather during weddings and other occasions. The idea of meeting where men gather and discuss community issues is an effective strategy to introduce difficult conversations. These dialogues target men of diverse age and social status in the community including farmers, traders, provincial administrators, religious and cultural leaders (Kipkas). Through the assistance of a trainer, men do a self-reflection of themselves and gives them an opportunity to engage with the experts on the existing laws and policies that seek to eliminate sexual harassment and gender based violence in Kenya. They reflect on how they can play active roles in changing cultural practices that are retrogressive and develop a plan

of action for their community, including how to reach out to their peers and other young men in the village.

The initiative also involved younger men and boys using mural designing techniques. The Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) facilitated the community painting of two murals, one which was placed at a business wall at Kapsuser in Kericho, and the other places in Mogogosiet business center in Bomet County.

A participatory process was carefully facilitated to ensure that community members, mostly women and children could illustrate forms of sexual harassment and other forms of GBV, the essential comprehensive care services that survivors of violence should receive, and how to contact institutions for support, including the police, hospital, legal and psychosocial services.

During the mural design process, discussions are held with the community on the mural images and messaging. The pictures depict information on how to handle cases of defilement and domestic violence, ensuring that survivors can be supported to access justice comprehensively. By having the murals in an open space where people are always on the move, community members are reminded on a daily basis what to do and not do in responding to and preventing GBV.

This community art project also employs a child-centered approach, and places children at the centre of developing messages in the murals to increase awareness among other children about child abuse, helping to increase their knowledge on how to detect, report and prevent sexual harassment and all forms of violence against children.

**“We are now able to interrogate and speak against some of the harmful cultural practices such as sexual harassment and gender based violence that have for long time inhibited women to achieving their full potential.”**

**— MALE AGENT OF CHANGE, KERICHO**



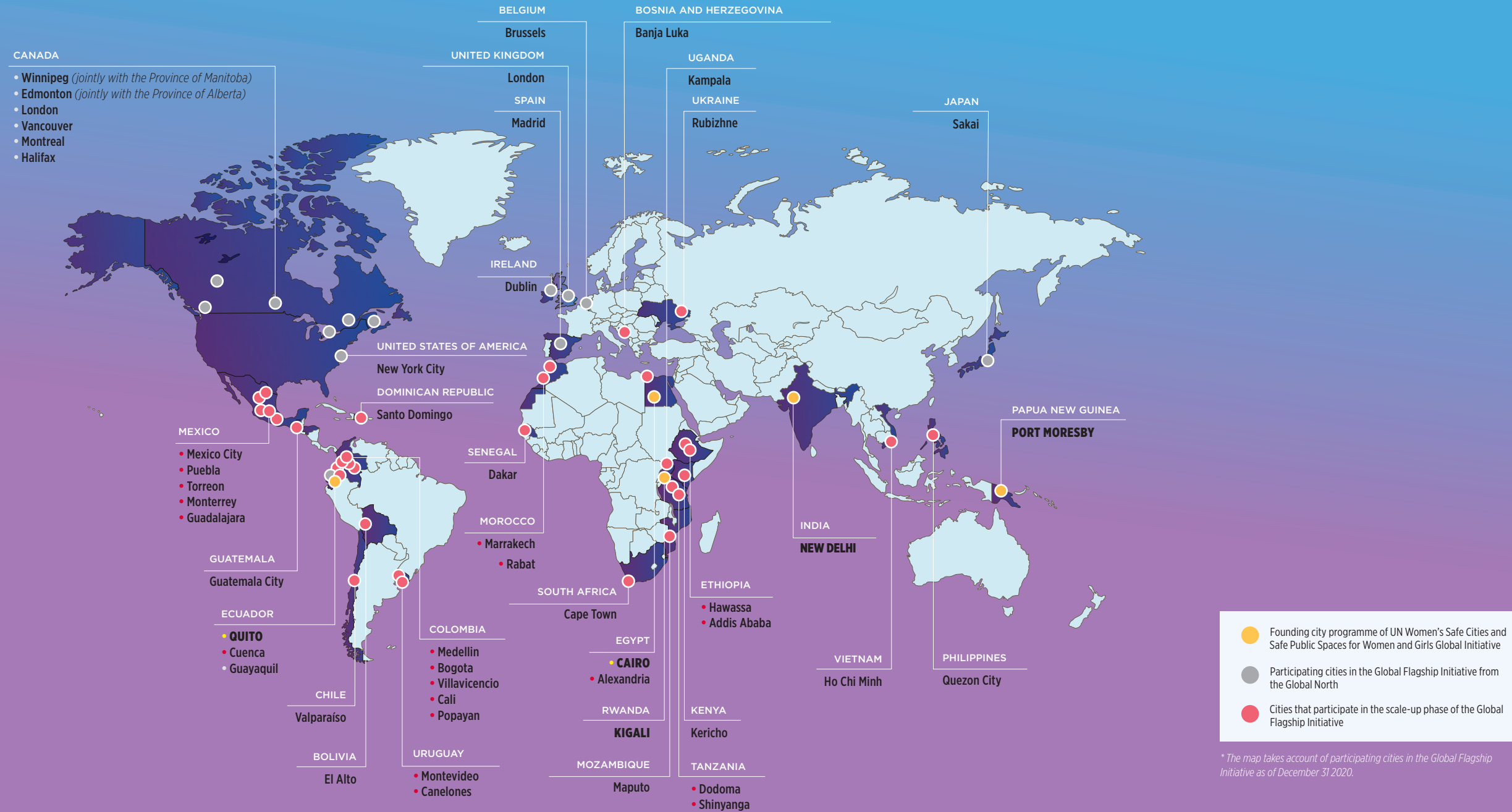
## EXAMPLES OF ACTION ADAPTED TO COVID-19 BY PARTICIPATING SAFE CITIES

In Guadalajara, **Mexico**, in partnership with the University of Guadalajara and representatives of indigenous peoples' groups, a community campaign was developed using primarily radio to raise awareness on COVID-19 and violence against women. Campaign messages were made available in five languages using an inter-cultural and human rights based approach.

In **Bolivia**, the City of El Alto, brought together representatives from neighborhood councils and school boards to increase awareness around COVID-19 and including a tailored digital media platform providing information, guidance and care for survivors/victims of sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and COVID-19. The initiative will be accompanied by a communication strategy to prevent cyberbullying and ICT facilitated sexual violence. The city also developed communication materials and an “Active Online Listening” initiative with the women's rights organization Kullakita and #TeAyudamos Platform to provide survivors of online sexual harassment and other forms of violence with care, guidance, how to report it and information on COVID-19.

The city of Valparaiso, **Chile** is promoting bystander interventions around empty buildings to prevent violence against women in public spaces during COVID 19 in collaboration with the mayor's office and UN Women.

# THE SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBAL INITIATIVE: CHAMPION CITIES \*



## SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

UN Women is a strong technical partner in city led programmes, and facilitates a Global Community of Practice for Global Flagship Initiative. At global level, a package of guidance notes and other tools are available to support policy and programme action which can be adapted to context. In collaboration with partners across cities, UN Women also co-organizes webinars and global policy advocacy sessions and convenes a multi-stakeholder biennial Global Leaders' Forum to promote exchanges and advance knowledge on trends, and practices in safe city and safe public space initiatives with women and girls.

The important role that the global community of practice plays in supporting participating city teams in the Global Flagship Initiative was also noted in the Corporate Evaluation: Effectiveness and Efficiency Assessment of UN Women Flagship Programme Initiatives and Thematic Priorities of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (See pages 33, 52-53 in the [Report](#)).

### THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND A GLOBAL PACKAGE OF TOOLS

From 2017 to 2020, at global level, UN Women expanded its global package of tools in the community of practice, with **over 10 knowledge products**, including global guidance, compendia of practice and policy briefs. Most recently, three COVID-19 policy briefs/guidance on safe cities were launched, with adapted programming on prevention and response to sexual violence in public spaces during the pandemic in over 15 countries.

- [COVID-19 and Ensuring Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls](#)
- [Recommendations into Action Brief COVID-19: Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls](#)
- [COVID-19 and Ensuring Safe Transport with and for Women and Girls](#)

### WEBINARS AND GLOBAL POLICY ADVOCACY SESSIONS

From 2017 to 2020, UN Women's Ending Violence against Women (EVAW) Section organized with its partners **over 25 webinars** and other policy advocacy sessions to support multi-stakeholders in the Global FPI. Some examples include: 1) Adapting safe city programmes to the different phases of the COVID 19 pandemic (e.g. Thinkathon for safe public spaces for women and girls post COVID-19, north-south exchanges on opportunities and challenges to women's safety in public spaces during the pandemic), 2) Online cyber violence, 3) Gender responsive tools and safety in campus settings, 4) School-based interventions to address sexual harassment in public spaces, and 5) Strategies to deal with the backlash in the women's safety movement, etc.

### GLOBAL LEADERS' FORUM ON SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES

Since the launch of the Global FPI in 2011, UN Women has been organizing a biennial Global Leaders' Forum for participating cities in the Flagship.

In partnership with the City of **Edmonton, Canada**, UN Women co-organized the Fourth Global Leaders' Forum on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces on 16-19 October 2018 in Edmonton on the theme "Leadership and Catalytic Partnerships: Delivering Integrated Safe City and Public Spaces Programmes with and for All Women and Girls." South-south and north-south exchanges were also held on two sub-themes selected by safe city programme partners: Practically implementing intersectionality in safe city programmes and Implementing comprehensive approaches to safe transportation with women and girls. As part of the Forum, a Second Global Meeting of Mayors for Gender Equality was held, with commitments made by governments to policy and programme action on gender equality and safe city approaches.

In partnership with the local government of **Rabat, Morocco**, UN Women co-organized the Fifth Global Leaders' Forum on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces on 26-28 February 2020 in Rabat on the theme "Integrated Action and Building to Scale: Safe and Empowering City and Public Space Initiatives with Women and Girls". International exchanges were held on two sub-themes selected by programme partners: Accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Generation Equality: local leadership and action; and Examining the role of different sectors in comprehensive safe city and safe public spaces partnerships. As part of the Fifth Leaders' Forum, the city of Rabat co-hosted with UN Women the Third Global Meeting of Mayors for Gender Equality, with a [Global Commitment to Action](#) launched and endorsed by 30 local governments.

These two events brought together over 400 leaders/experts from more than 25 countries, including grassroots women's organizations, youth leaders, and representatives from national and local governments, partner research institutions, the media, private sector, and global networks specialized on women's safety.

Good practices, key takeaways from sessions and main recommendations for different safe city partners and evaluation findings are made available in comprehensive Global Forum proceeding reports.

- Proceedings Report: [Fourth Global Leaders' Forum on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces](#)
- Proceedings Report: [Fifth Global Leaders' Forum on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces](#)



## DONOR PARTNERS OF THE SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBAL INITIATIVE

UN Women with support of donor partners has helped over 39 cities in the global south create an enabling environment for women and girls to enjoy public spaces free from violence through the Global Initiative “Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls”.

For the period 2017-2020, a total of US \$11 million was mobilized to support the Global Initiative. AECID, the Netherlands, and USAID were the largest contributors.

### DONOR PARTNERS

Founding global donor partner to the FPI: AECID (the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation).

The Governments of the Republic of Korea, Japan, Sweden, the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) the Netherlands, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Kingdom, Canada, and the European Union.

The city of Madrid, Spain, and the State of Puebla, the Nuevo Leon Government, and the cities of Guadalajara and Mexico City, Mexico support interventions as part of their own locally owned programmes, and have supported UN Women and its partner organizations for technical assistance.

Other donor partners include Unilever and the National Committees for UN Women (Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Iceland, Singapore, and New Zealand).

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**A TOTAL OF US \$11 MILLION WAS MOBILIZED FROM 2017-2020 TO SUPPORT ACTION IN THE SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES GLOBAL FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE.**

FROM 2017 TO 2020, UN WOMEN’S SAFE CITIES AND SAFE PUBLIC SPACES GLOBAL INITIATIVE HAS PARTNERED WITH:

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**OVER 400** WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS, INCLUDING AT THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

**120** MAYORS’ OFFICES, LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND DONOR PARTNERS

**20** UN AGENCIES, CITY NETWORKS AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

# MAIN PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS (2017-2020)



**AECID** - The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation provided support for cross regional activities to help build to scale the Global Flagship Initiative (e.g. Biennial Global Forum, Global Communications Visibility Project, etc.). AECID provided seed funding for a range of programme interventions in country-based safe city initiatives adapted to COVID-19, and has helped to launch new programmes to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in public spaces in Africa, Latin America, and the Arab States. Spain also contributed to evaluations of three founding safe city for women and girl programmes (Ecuador, Papua New Guinea and Egypt).



**Sweden** - The Government of Sweden has contributed to catalytic safe city interventions on social norms change including in the engagement of men and boys, essential services for survivors, and gender responsive urban planning in Ethiopia and Tanzania safe city programmes, including adaptations to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**The Netherlands** - The Government of the Netherlands has contributed to catalytic safe city interventions on social norms change, gender responsive planning, and the provision of quality and accessible services for survivors in programmes in Egypt, as part of efforts to build to scale the initiative in the country, with support towards the adaptation of programming to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Australia** - The Australian Government Department for International Development and Trade (DFAT) has contributed to catalytic safe city interventions on social norms change, and gender responsive planning in safe markets and safe transport for women and girls policy and programming in Papua New Guinea.



**USAID** - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has contributed to safe cities in Colombia and has contributed to catalytic safe city interventions on social norms change, gender responsive planning, and the provision of quality and accessible services for survivors in programmes in Egypt.



**European Union** - The European Union has supported start up interventions in safe city initiatives in the Ukraine. Through the Spotlight Initiative, the EU has supported some countries to adapt the safe city methodology in Africa.



**United Kingdom** - The United Kingdom provided support for the launch of the Hawassa Safe City and Safe Public Spaces with Women and Girls Initiative in Ethiopia.



**Republic of Korea** - The Republic of Korea provided support for cross regional activities to help build to scale the Global Flagship Initiative. This support has helped to build policy coherence in the Global Initiative and capacity of multi stakeholders in safe city programmes (local governments, police, women's rights and civil society partners, etc.) in different action areas.



**Canada** - The Government of Canada has supported prevention interventions in safe city programmes in Morocco. The city Government of Edmonton contributed with other partners as co-host of UN Women's Fourth Global Leaders' Forum on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces.



**Government of Japan** - The Government of Japan supported global technical policy advice and country interventions that involved catalytic partnerships between local and state government and women's rights partners in India.

## This report on UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Space for Women and Girls Global Initiative shares achievements gleaned from various participating city programmes in Africa, Latin America, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, North America and Europe.

It illustrates what governments, grassroots women, women's organizations and other community partners can do to implement interventions that form part of a comprehensive human rights-based approach to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces.

This report places particular emphasis on sharing examples of solutions across four action areas of the Global Flagship Programme Initiative (2017-2020). It follows from the first Global Results Report produced (2012-2016). [Available here](#).

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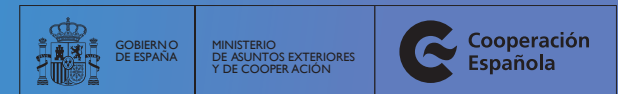
### FRONT COVER

#### Top Line Photos (Left to Right)

- A woman agent of change presents results of the city's scoping study on the nature of sexual harassment in public spaces in a multi stakeholder design session of the Ho Chi Minh Safe City for Women and Girls Initiative in Vietnam. *Photo: UN Women*
- Women's rights groups lead awareness raising measures related to the prevention of and response to sexual harassment in and around public transportation in Quito, Ecuador. *Photo: UN Women/ Martin Jaramillo*

#### Bottom Line Photos (Left To Right)

- Women market vendors actively participate in the revitalization of public markets in Tanzania, ensuring an integrated approach to safe cities and safe public spaces for all. This includes a focus on the participation of women market users and vendors in the development of safe and sustainable markets including practical changes to the built environment to increase women's economic empowerment and experiences of safety. *Photo: UN Women/Tsitsi Matope*
- Male young volunteers trained on sexual harassment prevention and response, including in transport, affix a sign to tuktuk reading: My tuk tuk is safe- free from sexual harassment. *Photo: CARE/Salma Salim*



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