

UNFPA Implementation of the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence: A consultation report

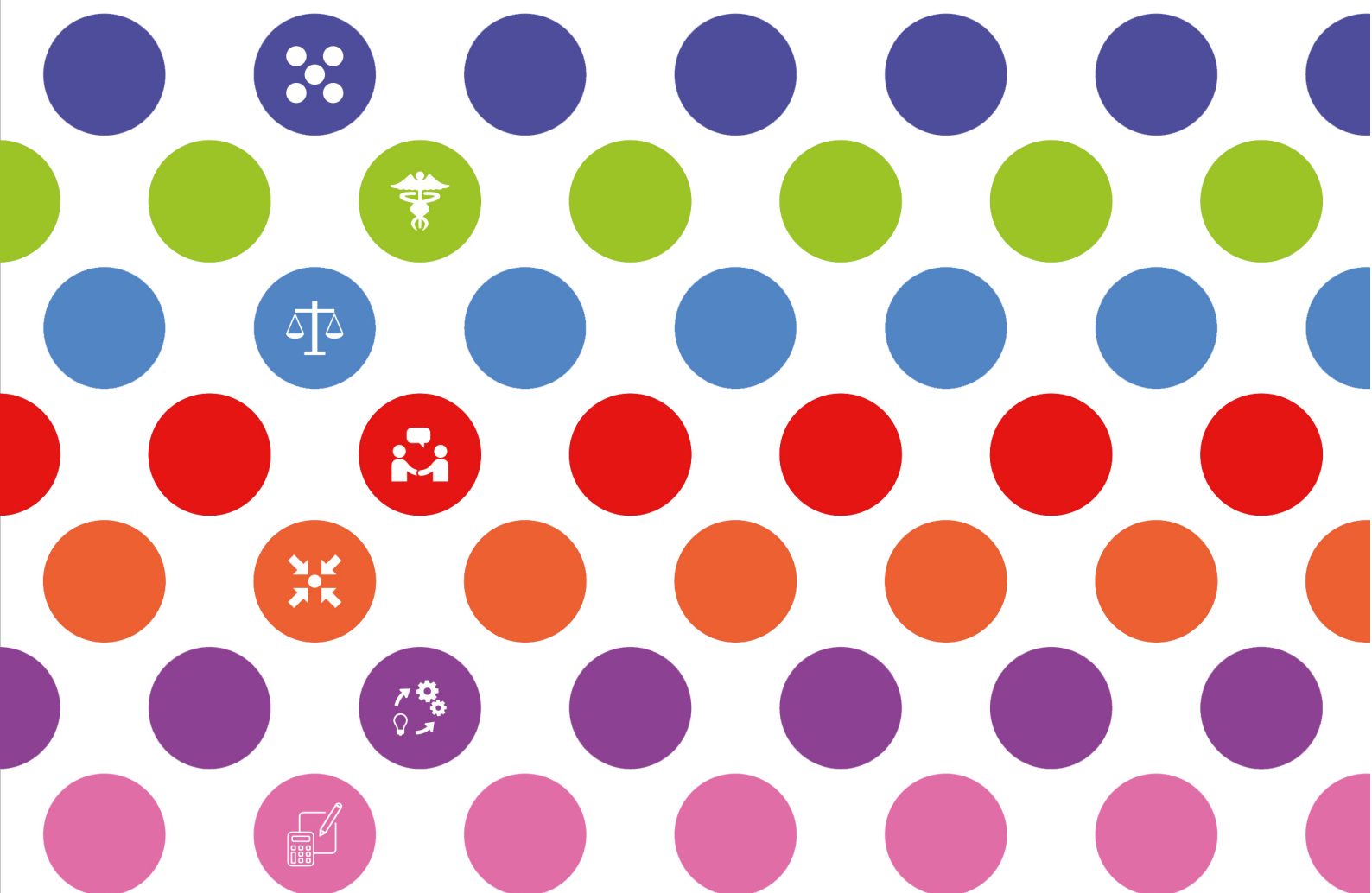


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Introduction to the Essential Services Package

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world and a public health issue of pandemic proportions. The number of women and girls impacted by GBV is staggering: almost 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual abuse by an intimate partner or sexual violence by someone other than their partner in their lifetime.¹ Yet less than 40 per cent of those who experience GBV seek help of any sort or report the abuse.²

Survivors of GBV need access to quality services that meet their needs for protection and safety in a confidential, comprehensive, and survivor-centred manner. The essential services required to meet a survivor's needs are multisectoral and span the health, social services, justice and policing sectors. States are responsible for providing and coordinating these services in order to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and to address its structural causes.

Table 1. Data snapshot on the work of UNFPA within the ESP Joint Global Programme

Of all 120 UNFPA offices who work to end GBV in 153 countries and territories in 2020	
92%	use the ESP to guide provision of essential services to survivors of GBV
92%	invested in health system strengthening
88%	worked to strengthen social services
69%	engaged in strengthening judicial services
64%	worked with the police and military to strengthen security services
97%	were involved in multisectoral engagement and coordination

Source: UNFPA (2021)³

¹ WHO (2021). Global, regional and national estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. Available at:

<https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>

² United Nations (2015). The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. Sales No. E.15.XVII.8.

³ UNFPA (2021). Getting to Zero: Mapping UNFPA Leadership on Ending Gender-based Violence. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/getting-to-zero>

The United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence was developed to “support countries as they work to design, implement and review services for all women and girls who are victims and survivors of violence in a broad range of settings and situations”.⁴ UNFPA and UN Women launched the joint programme in 2013, soon joined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The joint programme provides guidance and support to countries in filling the gap between expectations for GBV services that are set out in international agreements and the national institutional capacity that exists in practice.

The Joint Programme has been implemented thus far in two phases. In Phase I (2013-2015) the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (ESP) was developed through a global consultative process with experts in the fields of health, law enforcement and justice, and social services. The resource was published in 2015, and during Phase II (2016-2019) it was pilot-tested in 10 countries.⁵ Over 80 other countries began implementation as “self-starter” countries with UNFPA technical support but using their own funding and resources. Implementing countries worked to develop joint coordination structures, propose improvements to national laws and policies affecting violence against women and girls (VAWG), and create national action plans.

The ESP is recognized as the global standard of normative guidance for supporting national systems to respond to GBV and presents a roadmap for comprehensive GBV services by the health, social services, police and justice sectors. The package includes:

- 1** Three sector-specific modules (Health, Justice and Policing, and Social Services) that outline the standards and characteristics of services for survivors of GBV, particularly focusing on survivors of intimate partner violence in development contexts.⁶
- 2** One module on coordination of essential services and governance of coordination, with recommendations to local and national governments to ensure that services, processes and mechanisms to respond to GBV are coordinated and accountable to survivors.⁷
- 3** One module on the process of implementation (2017) to support States in the systematic roll-out of the ESP.⁸
- 4** A costing tool (2021) to support national planning and budgeting processes for VAWG response.⁹

⁴ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP & UNODC (2015). Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/essential-services-package-women-and-girls-subject-violence>

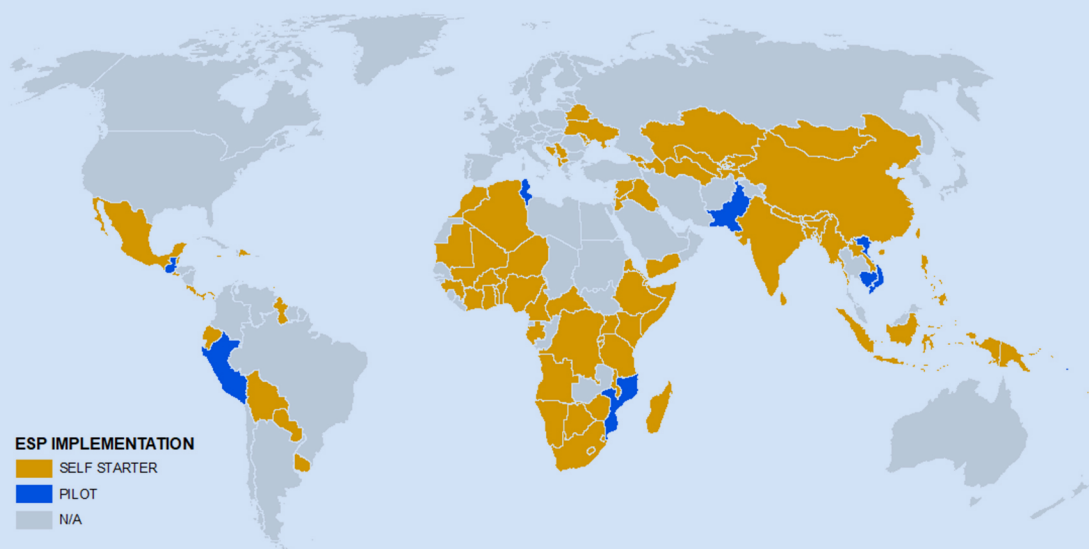
⁵ Cambodia, Egypt, Guatemala, Kiribati, Mozambique, Pakistan, Peru, Solomon Islands, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

⁶ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP & UNODC (2015) Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, Modules 1-4. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/essential-services-package-women-and-girls-subject-violence>

⁷ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP & UNODC (2015) Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, Module 5. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/essential-services-package-women-and-girls-subject-violence-module-5>

⁸ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP & UNODC (2017) Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, Module 6. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/essential-services-package-women-and-girls-subject-violence-module-6>

⁹ UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP & UNODC (2017) Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, Module 7. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/essential-services-package-women-and-girls-subject-violence-module-7>



Disclaimer : The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

As UNFPA and the partner UN agencies move into planning for Phase III of the ESP Joint Programme (2022–2025), UNFPA conducted a series of global consultations to determine key achievements and next steps in the programme. This report serves as a summary of those findings.

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