

# PREVENTING GENDERED VIOLENCE – GLOBAL EVIDENCE REVIEW

February 2026

## What is the evidence for place-based saturation models?

Respect Victoria commissioned a review of Australian and international literature to understand how a saturation model adds to our understanding of **what works to prevent gendered violence**.

A **saturation model** goes beyond isolated projects. It involves coordinated and concentrated prevention activities across all the settings where people lead their lives – where they live, work, learn and play – to achieve impact.

### Main findings

- Well-crafted prevention interventions result in **statistically significant reductions in gendered violence**. Schools- and sport-based programs, positive parenting interventions and community mobilisation are among those showing such impact.
- Interventions that combine more than one strategy or setting (e.g. a workplace, school or sporting club) have a **mutually reinforcing effect that magnifies impact**.
- One meta-analysis of evaluated interventions showed multi-component interventions were on average **60% more effective** than single-component ones.
- Individual approaches are not enough to achieve and sustain impact across the population – what's needed are models that combine interventions to create a mutually reinforcing effect.

## Evidence of impact for specific groups

Most of the evidence on effective prevention looks at interventions that engaged specific groups, such as university students or new parents. These well-crafted interventions can reduce gendered violence for the groups they engaged, within the program's timeframes.

One review looked at 96 randomised controlled trials or quasi-experimental studies (those where randomised trials aren't appropriate) that aimed to reduce men's use of violence and/or women's experience of violence. It found:

- 41 studies had a statistically-significant positive impact at the end of implementation
- 18 were considered 'promising,' (meaning significant for a sub-group, or showing a positive but non-significant trend)
- 37 showed no impact on the reduction of men's use of violence and/or women's experience of violence, but may have reduced other forms of violence against women, such as emotional or economic violence.

## Positive and promising programs in high income countries

Interventions with positive and promising impact in high income countries included those run in schools and colleges, those aimed at couples and parents (including ante-natal and post-natal programs), those working with general populations, and interventions that addressed the drivers of violence<sup>1</sup>.

## Evidence of impact at the population level

Most of the evidence comes from evaluations of interventions that focus on a specific group, such as university students or new parents, so measuring population-level impact is usually beyond their scope. However, there is some evidence that two categories of intervention can have population-level impact:

- certain policy and legislative interventions that support multiple initiatives
- multi-component, place-based community mobilisation interventions that engage the whole community in prevention activities. The effective models are combined interventions that address multiple drivers of violence, use a phased approach, and work across individuals, relationships, organisations and the community.

### Three programs with population-level impact

Three multi-component, place-based community mobilisation interventions demonstrated population-level reductions in women's experience of intimate partner violence:

- **Rural Response System (RRS) in Ghana** – this program showed a statistically significant reduction in women's experiences of sexual intimate partner violence (IPV)
- **Safe Homes and Respect for Everyone (SHARE) in Uganda** – this program showed a reduction in women's reports of physical and sexual IPV in three years
- **SASA! in Uganda** – this program reduced ongoing sexual and physical IPV and prevented the onset of both types of violence. Evaluations of SASA! and the ways it has adapted over time make it one of the best evidence-based community mobilisation initiatives in the prevention of gendered violence.

All three programs took a community-wide approach to prevention and involved several thousand people across one or more administrative areas of a local municipality. What was interesting about these interventions is that, unlike the interventions with specific groups above, they had measurable impact on people who had never engaged directly with the intervention or its materials. Impact was achieved through 'organised diffusion': the result of new messages about respect, equality and non-violence being mutually reinforced across community groups, schools, workplaces, etc, and circulating through the population as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> There are four drivers that predict gendered violence: condoning, justifying, or trivialising violence; men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life; rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity; and male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control. For more information, see Our Watch. (2021). *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.

# What conditions and factors support success?

The evidence review found that there are three main enabling *conditions* that influence intervention success:

- **good prevention infrastructure** – including a trained workforce, coordination mechanisms, a supportive legal and policy environment, adequate resourcing and active civil society advocating for gender equality
- **adherence to quality design principles** – including a robust theory of change, an explicit gender analysis and addressing multiple drivers of violence
- **effective partnerships with response services and a high level of support to victim survivors** – evidence shows that prevention work can increase disclosures of existing violence and a lack of referral pathways to response services undermines the effectiveness of the prevention work.

There are also three main enabling *factors* that influence the extent and sustainability of impact:

- **an adequate number of skilled practitioners** who are supported to do their job well
- **an appropriate length of time for the program**, as well as
- (for direct participation interventions): **group-based methods with empowerment** as the core goal, and **an adequate number, duration, and frequency of sessions** to allow time for reflection and experiential learning

These three factors indicate the intensity of a program, and the evidence indicates that – assuming other quality design principles are met – higher intensity generally equates with greater impact.

## Want to find out more?

This information is a summary of the *Evidence Review: Reducing and preventing violence against women: factors affecting impact, with a focus on multi-component, place-based approaches* report. The full [Global Evidence Review \(2024\)](#) is available on our website.