



Pillar 2: Institutional strengthening

Under Pillar 2, Spotlight Initiative prioritises institutional strengthening to ensure that laws and policies that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and harmful practices are implemented, well-funded, effective and sustainable over time across diverse sectors. Institutions play a crucial role in ending violence against women by providing the resources, frameworks and action for awareness, prevention and response. This pillar focuses on strengthening multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms, ensuring that sector and national action plans address violence against women and girls, strengthening capacity development within institutions, such as gender-lens training of ministries, duty-bearers and secondary and higher education counterparts, and implementing gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

The following good and innovative cases are shared in the section below. In Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea, good and innovative gender-responsive budgeting practices are described. In Malawi, successful innovative gender lens-trainings for government, duty-bearers and engagement of traditional leaders are shared. In Ecuador, good practices related to the development of gender equitable national and higher level curriculum are detailed.

Gender-responsive budgets

2.1 Greater budget allocation in Timor-Leste for women's rights and to end violence against women and girls

Overview

Sexual and gender-based violence are critical issues in post-conflict Timor-Leste. Almost 67 percent of women have experienced intimate partner violence, and more than 74 percent of women believe that a man is justified in physically beating his wife.⁶³ Furthermore, 37 percent of married women that have experienced violence from their partners described domestic violence as normal and, in some cases, noted that violence was a daily occurrence.⁶⁴ In order to effectively address domestic violence, national budgets must be in place to support critical and life saving services and prevention activities.

In Timor-Leste, the percentage of the national budget allocated to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls became a significant point of concern, following a drastic funding reduction between 2019 and 2020.⁶⁵ In 2019, 0.6 percent of the budget (10.4 million USD) was allocated to gender equality initiatives. This was reduced to a mere 0.1 percent of the budget (1.4 million USD) in 2020. Reductions in budget allocated to gender equality initiatives have adverse consequences that impede the protection of women's rights and safety, the advancement of policies and programmes that address gender-based violence, as well as equitable access to education, healthcare, employment and other opportunities.

In order to address this, through Spotlight Initiative, UNDP, UN Women and Forum Komunikasaun Ba Feto Timor Loro Sa'e (FOKUPERS) actively engaged with different levels of government and 23 civil society organisations with the objective to increase budget allocations for preventing and ending violence against women and girls.⁶⁶ This engagement also ensured that stakeholders had a greater understanding of the budget and budgeting process, so that they could actively engage, contribute to and monitor its implementation.

Results

Spotlight Initiative's efforts to strengthen gender-responsive budgeting in Timor-Leste have resulted in notable outcomes, including increased budget allocation for gender equality and increased confidence of civil society organisations in overseeing budget implementation.

⁶³ Over 54,000 Lives Transformed in the Efforts to End Gender-based Violence in Timor-Leste (International Organization for Migration, October 2023).

⁶⁴ Op-Ed: The Countdown to an End to the 16 Days of Activism and an End to Gender-based Violence (UN Women, December 2020).

⁶⁵ The 2021 Global Annual Narrative Progress Report, page 86.

⁶⁶ The 2021 Timor-Leste Annual Narrative Programme Report, page 32.

Spotlight Initiative developed a multi-pronged approach to address the decline in funding, involving training on gender-responsive budgeting with ministries, municipalities and civil society, among others. For example, the programme engaged a gender expert to advocate in parliament to increase funding for women’s human rights and ending violence against women and girls. In addition, Spotlight Initiative carried out gender-based violence prevention training with the Municipal Gender Working Group, Sectoral Directors at the municipal and post-administrative level, and the Gender Working Group from different line ministries. This training included components of gender-responsive budgeting and reached over 300 participants.⁶⁷

Another key activity supported by Spotlight Initiative was capacity development on gender-responsive budgeting for community members, civil society organisations and local governments. The programme employed an innovative method that translated state budget execution and expenditures into simplified information using infographics. This training assisted stakeholders in acquiring the necessary skills to assess the coherence between the state budget, public policies, programmes and projects, and the impact on citizens and monitoring of the budget programmes. These efforts highlighted the important role civil society organisations can play in monitoring government activities, such as comprehensive budget analysis.⁶⁸

“This initiative recognizes the role that CSOs play in overseeing government activities and provides tools that empower CSOs [to] strengthen checks and balances systems and enhance the democratic system.”

Bruno de Lencastre, Chief Technical Advisor of UNDP Parliament Project

These strategies were effective and resulted in a 247 percent increase in the budget between 2021 and 2022, specifically 203.78 million USD. In addition, 233 million USD (over 12 percent of the budget) was allocated to gender equality and social inclusion. In 2023, 259 million USD was allocated for gender equality and social inclusion programmes. This amount represented the third largest allocation from the total budget (or 8.2 percent), indicating the importance of gender equality and inclusion in the 2023 budget. The increased budget allocation will contribute to better governance, and it is expected that future budgets will be more gender-responsive, transparent and accountable to the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls.

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Spotlight Initiative’s interventions also contributed to the approval of the new National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence 2022-2032 (hereafter referred to as the “National GBV Action Plan”) by the Council of Ministers in June 2022. This action plan engaged a number of government offices, including the Municipality Authority Planning Unit under the Ministry of State Administration, the Gender Working Group, and the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion. This work has resulted in the incorporation of the National GBV Action Plan into the Municipality Annual Plans for 2022, as well as an assessment of the municipality’s work on the National GBV Action Plan. Aligning programme objectives with actual budgets is critical for implementation.⁶⁹ These efforts facilitated holistic planning and development and helped to avoid duplication of efforts and resources.

“It is hard to understand the state budget and especially to analyse it from a gender perspective. The training has increased my understanding to analyse the programme and budget, and I look forward to familiarising and understanding all the budget books.”

A Gender Responsive Budget Working Group member training participant

These results clearly illustrate a renewed government commitment to gender equality, particularly in the case of the Secretariat of State for Equality and Inclusion. It is hoped that these efforts will contribute to sustainable, long-term allocations for gender equality in future budgets, coordination across different levels of government, as well as increased engagement and oversight of civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Gender Responsive State Budgeting Analysis Workshop – EU-UN Spotlight Initiative (Delegation of the European Union to Timor-Leste, June 2022).

⁶⁹ The 2022 Timor-Leste Annual Narrative Programme Report.

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication

- **Strengthen government accountability and transparency to end violence against women and girls through training civil society and citizens to monitor gender budgets.** Citizen and civil society budget tracking is essential to ensure that funds are allocated to issues, such as ending violence against women and girls. These measures can contribute to the advancement of gender equality and women's rights in a city, region, municipality or country.
- **Engage a gender expert in the parliament or government body responsible for gender budgeting.** The gender expert was able to work within government structures to promote and advance issues related to gender equality. Through advocating for policies, programmes and initiatives that address gender-based violence, a significant budget increase was achieved. Positioning gender experts strategically in government or parliament could be replicated in other countries to achieve increased budget allocations, policies and programs aimed at ending violence against women and girls and increasing gender equality.
- **Train and build the capacity of civil society organisations to monitor budgets and expenditures that are allocated to end violence against women and girls and support gender equality.** Through innovative methods that simplified complex budgets, civil society representatives increased their confidence and skills to engage not only in the budgeting process, but also in overseeing the implementation of the budget and programmes.
- **Align local and national gender action plans and budgets to preserve resources and minimise duplication.** This promotes efficiency, accountability and targeted development and can contribute to maximising limited resources to promote gender equality.

2.2 *The institutionalisation of the Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and the first-ever budget allocation for gender-based violence programming in Papua New Guinea*

Overview

Papua New Guinea has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world. Around 56 percent of women and girls aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence and 28 percent have experienced sexual violence. Furthermore, 63 percent of ever-married women have been subjected to physical, sexual or emotional abuse.⁷⁰ In 2020, lockdowns necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased domestic violence: 68 percent of women experienced physical violence, and 50 percent of women were sexually assaulted in their own homes. By the end of 2020, Papua New Guinea recorded 761 cases and 9 deaths related to gender-based violence.⁷¹ Amid the elevated rate of violence against women, two widely publicised cases of domestic violence led to public outcry, urging the government to take action.

Gold-medalist boxer and international rugby player, Debbie Kaore, was burnt by an iron and beaten by her former partner, as witnessed by her children.⁷² The brutal attack was captured on video and publicly released in June 2020. A few weeks later, a 19-year-old mother of two, Jenelyn Kennedy, was tortured and killed by her husband.⁷³ These cases were the turning point that sparked a civic and political movement against gender-based violence. Vigils and peaceful marches were held to commemorate Jenelyn's death and address violence against women.⁷⁴ The "PNG Man Up" involvement at one vigil, for example, called for justice for the victims and was attended by senior government officials, including the Prime Minister, who signed the pledge to end gender-based violence.⁷⁵

Results

Shortly after these events, the National Capital District Governor championed ending gender-based violence with all of the governors across Papua New Guinea. The Spotlight Initiative programme in Papua New Guinea organised a Governor's Conference on Gender-Based Violence in August 2020, which convened governors and ministers from different provinces. The state officials discussed strategies for addressing gender-based violence in the country and formed an alliance to end gender-based violence. One of the strategies formulated by this Coalition of Parliamentarians was to hold the first ever National Summit on Ending Gender-Based Violence. Through Spotlight Initiative, UNDP provided technical, operational and financial support around the proposed event. The first-ever summit to end gender-based violence was successfully held in November 2020⁷⁶ and attended by approximately 750 people from different sectors all over the country. Representatives from the private sector spoke about the impact of gender-based violence on their businesses, while representatives from civil society shared their difficulties in securing funding for gender-based violence-related initiatives. The summit was live-streamed and covered by both social and traditional media.

⁷⁰ Papua New Guinea Demographic and Health Survey 2016-18 [FR364] (National Statistical Office Papua New Guinea and ICF, 2019).

⁷¹ The 2020 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 10.

⁷² [Champion boxer beaten by ex-partner with hot iron raises profile of domestic violence plaguing PNG](#) (ABC News, 2020).

⁷³ [Papua New Guinea women demand end to domestic violence after death of 19-year-old mother Jenelyn Kennedy](#) (ABC News, 2020).

⁷⁴ The 2020 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 12.

⁷⁵ Ibid, page 13.

⁷⁶ Ibid, page 20 and 26.

A key resolution achieved during the national summit was the establishment of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence (hereafter referred to as the “Special Parliamentary Committee”). The committee, composed of seven members of the parliament,⁷⁷ was developed to serve as a national mechanism to address violence against women and children in the country.⁷⁸ The Committee’s role was to monitor government operations, identify policies for review and recommend different courses of action to the government.⁷⁹ This marked a significant milestone for the country, introducing a dedicated governmental body aimed at addressing gender-based violence which, in turn, ensured governmental accountability.

Through the support of Spotlight Initiative, the Special Parliamentary Committee held its first inquiry in May 2021.⁸⁰ This consisted of two days of public hearings, during which written submissions from stakeholders detailing the gaps and challenges in properly responding to gender-based violence were considered. The result of the first inquiry was a parliamentary report containing 71 recommendations for action. A second gender-based violence hearing was held in March 2022.⁸¹

“Being part of the public hearing allow[ed] a space for frontliners [to] get up to the mic, report actual cases, [and] talk about the challenges that they were going through. [Establishing a parliamentary committee on GBV] was a big win [that] holds the government accountable in addressing gender-based violence.”

Jacqui Joseph, Civil Society Reference Group Chair

A key win of the Special Parliamentary Committee was the allocation of the first-ever national budget in 2021 (approximately 7.93 million Papua New Guinean Kina or 1.4 million USD) for violence against women and children. Among the initiatives funded by the budget were the implementation of the sorcery accusation-related violence national action plan, the provision of grants to civil society organisations for gender-based violence/sorcery accusation-related violence programmes, and funding for staffing for the National Gender-Based Violence Secretariat under the Department of Community Development and Religion.⁸² Making even greater strides, the government increased the budget for 2023 by 24 percent, amounting to 9.8 million Papua New Guinean Kina (2.63 million USD).⁸³ Spotlight Initiative supported this budget allocation and implementation work through technical assistance to key state agencies⁸⁴ and continued dialogue with civil society to align the budget to sectoral needs.⁸⁵

Finally, after the July 2022 election and during the 11th Parliament, another political landmark was achieved as the parliamentary committee was institutionalised and became the permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. This was seen as a breakthrough not only in Papua New Guinea but also in the Pacific region. This unexpected and positive result was the product of continuous advocacy and awareness raising activities of the Spotlight Initiative programme and public pressure on political leaders.⁸⁶

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication

- **Recognise the power of media coverage to spark collective action and sustain momentum.** In this case, the high-profile cases covered by the media during the pandemic created a movement to end violence against women and children and fueled political leaders to advocate for the protection of women and children. Spotlight Initiative seized this opportunity and kept the momentum going by facilitating key opportunities for state actors to gather, plan and champion their advocacy. Spotlight Initiative facilitated the meetings of the state officials, resulting in the formation of the Coalition of Parliamentarians and the convening of a national summit that paved the way for the institutionalisation of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence.
- **Develop strategies around the existing political infrastructure and harness opportunities in a supportive political climate.** Instead of reinventing the wheel, Spotlight Initiative supported and stimulated the advocacy initiatives of parliamentarians to combat gender-based violence. Strategically establishing a Parliamentary Committee dedicated to gender-based violence utilised the existing governmental structure, eliminating the necessity to introduce a new system or process.
- **Continually work with and engage the civil society sector.** Civil society organisations’ proactiveness and commitment to gender-based violence were instrumental to the successful establishment of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence. The civil society organisations were deeply engaged, available to provide input during the hearing and consistent in their support of the programme.

⁷⁷ A new era for gender-based violence response in PNG (East Asia Forum, September 2021).

⁷⁸ The 2020 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 24.

⁷⁹ Ibid, page 7-8.

⁸⁰ Special Parliamentary GBV Committee tables final report (UNDP Papua New Guinea, April 2022).

⁸¹ Key Activities of the Special Parliamentary Committee on GBV (PNG Parliamentarians to End GBV, April 2022).

⁸² The National GBV secretariat will be the key government division to operationalize the National GBV strategy of Papua New Guinea.

⁸³ The 2022 Papua New Guinea Interim Annual Report, page 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid, page 10.

⁸⁵ The 2021 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 37.

⁸⁶ The 2022 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 26.

Gender-lens training of duty-bearers

2.3 Chiefs Forums in Malawi engage traditional leaders as key allies in ending violence against women and girls

Overview

Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with approximately 46 percent of girls being married before the age of 18, and 9 percent married before they turn 15.⁸⁷ Child marriage is a form of gender-based violence and a human rights violation, compromising girls' health, security and autonomy and preventing them from achieving their full potential.

As custodians of tradition, culture and customs, traditional chiefs in Malawi play a critical role in ending child marriage and harmful practices. However, historically, there has been a significant discrepancy between chiefs' positions on such matters, which highlighted the need for a platform to reach consensus and harmonisation on their role in ending violence against women and girls. To address this, through Spotlight Initiative, UNDP and the Ministry of Local Government, Unity and Culture formed a strategic alliance in 2020 with Paramount Chiefs, the most senior traditional leaders in Malawi, to implement the "Chiefs Forum" to end violence against women and girls and child marriage. Through consultation meetings, Spotlight Initiative was able to engage the Paramount Chiefs to co-develop the Forum strategy, which was key to obtaining their buy-in to the initiative. Following this, broader consultations involving 3,421 community leaders and other stakeholders were held to support the development of a national framework that subsequently guided the establishment of Chiefs Forums at national, district and community levels.

The framework was the first of its kind and defined the roadmap for the implementation and work of the Chiefs Forums to promote gender equality and challenge harmful social norms by contributing to and monitoring the implementation of gender-based violence, child marriage and other harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health and rights by-laws and policies. It also functioned as an accountability mechanism for traditional leaders to their constituents.

Results

In 2020, a National Chiefs Forum was established, along with six District Chiefs Forums across the country. Community level Chiefs Forums then followed, reaching approximately 2,232 chiefs. To strengthen these platforms and enable the chiefs to fulfil their roles effectively, 1,561 members of the Chiefs Forums were trained on gender-based violence, harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health and rights laws, leading to a better understanding of the referral pathways and how to promote safety for women and girls. The training approach also included coordination mechanisms for traditional leaders to work collaboratively and in an harmonised way through the Chiefs Forums at national, district and local levels. These trainings were recognised as an important step for traditional leaders to collectively handle and prevent gender-based violence and child marriage cases and had a transformative impact on some chiefs' awareness and perspectives of gender-based violence and harmful practices, as shared by some of them.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ [The Child Marriage Factsheet](#) (UNICEF Malawi, July 2018).

⁸⁸ [UNDP Spotlight Initiative video](#) (UNDP Malawi, August 2022).

“What makes Spotlight Initiative unique is the approach they taught us. We were trained to work in groups to ensure effectiveness of our efforts to deal with GBV and accountability.”

Paramount Chief Kawinga of Machinga district

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“Spotlight Initiative came in with a lot of training for the Chiefs to know how to work, especially when it comes to issues of GBV. It also helped Chiefs to start coordinating with other structures like the Community Victim Support Unit, the police, the court and various other community groups like mothers groups.”

A traditional chief from Machinga district

“The Spotlight Initiative has empowered us Chiefs. We are able to impart knowledge about the effects of violence against women and girls in our communities. We can see change.”

A traditional chief from Ntchisi district

“Individually, I changed my perspective on issues of GBV and became passionate about helping women and girls. Last year, I took three girls back from child marriages, and I did not need support from anybody else to do it because now I know the power that I have as a Chief.”

A traditional chief from Machinga district

Another effective strategy implemented by the Chiefs Forums was the inclusion of traditional chiefs in gender-based violence patrols, in collaboration with Safe Space mentors, mother groups and child protection workers. (See more in [case study 3.1](#) under Pillar 3.) Together they identified and referred child marriage and harmful practices cases, and defined and applied penalties in accordance with their by-laws. Additionally, to support girls' education, chiefs visited schools to identify absentees and contacted parents to ensure their daughters attended school. Some chiefs went as far as conducting resource mobilisation in their communities to support girls' re-enrollment in schools and supplied educational materials and uniforms. These practices were reinforced through localised by-laws and have achieved significant results. Gender-based violence patrols were able to identify and refer 1,075 gender-based violence cases, of which 44 percent were addressed through mobile and district courts.⁸⁹ They also cancelled 1,222 child marriages (98 percent of registered child marriages within six districts) and then re-enrolled girls in schools, which likely contributed to preventing early pregnancies.⁹⁰ Chiefs also conducted awareness campaigns on gender-based violence in their localities, according to action plans.⁹¹

According to different traditional chiefs, the Forums and associated activities, such as the gender-based violence patrols, have been instrumental in fostering normative and behavioural changes, including significant shifts in attitudes towards gender-based violence, child marriage and girls' education. These changes are occurring in community members and amongst traditional leaders themselves, who are now catalysts of social change and championing their commitment to ending violence against women and girls. The Chiefs Forums are also contributing to strengthening local by-laws, ensuring harmonisation and alignment with the national priority of ending violence against women and girls. The growing support of many traditional leaders through the Chiefs Forums represents successful results that can be replicated and adapted in other contexts.

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication

- **Identify and engage the most influential traditional and religious leaders and community leaders to co-create strategies for greater reach, resonance and impact.** The strategy of involving and ensuring the buy-in of Paramount Chiefs was crucial to reach and engage more local Chiefs in Forums. District and local Chiefs are energised by the Chiefs Forums' approach of working collaboratively and in alignment and are calling on other leaders to join them. Ultimately, this increased the number of people that were reached in communities.
- **Train leaders on gender-based violence issues and offer concrete collaborative and coordination mechanisms to ensure increased effectiveness and coherence across different levels (e.g., national, regional and local levels).** The Spotlight Initiative programme contributed to a strengthened integrated service delivery landscape by ensuring gender-based violence prevention measures were integrated into traditional chiefs' action plans with coordination mechanisms in place. For example, training the local chiefs gave them the necessary skills to address cases, reducing the number of cases that went to Paramount Chiefs and increasing women's and girls' access to justice, resulting in more efficient case resolution.
- **Connect different interventions and existing government, public and community structures to adopt a comprehensive approach and increase impact at individual, community and societal levels.** Strengthening chiefs' collaboration with service providers, community groups and stakeholders from other Spotlight Initiative activities being implemented in the country, such as the Safe Space mentors and mobile courts, led to more effective responses and results across other pillars. (See more in [case study 7.1](#), which details this work across multiple pillars.)



⁸⁹ Ibid, page 10.

⁹⁰ The 2021 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 37.

⁹¹ The 2022 Papua New Guinea Annual Report, page 26.

Gender equitable secondary and higher education

2.4 Revised protocol addressing gender-based violence cases in higher education in Ecuador

Overview

The prevalence of gender-based violence in higher education institutions in Ecuador is significant, with data showing that 19 percent of female teachers and administrative staff, and 31 percent of female students have been assaulted by someone at university.⁹² A national protocol for the prevention of harassment, discrimination and violence based on gender and sexual orientation in higher education⁹³ (hereafter referred to as the “National Protocol”) was issued in 2018 to support universities to implement internal protocols. However, it only offered general information and guidance and lacked strong implementation and accountability mechanisms. As such, acts of violence remained underreported at universities because survivors believed that nothing would happen. Close to half (48 percent) also stated that they were concerned about retaliation from aggressors.⁹⁴

In 2022, through Spotlight Initiative, UN Women and the University of Cuenca collaborated to review the university’s existing protocol to be more actionable, include more prevention mechanisms and reflect the voices and experiences of students and university staff. The goal was also for this revised protocol to inform a recommendation document to update the National Protocol.

Spotlight Initiative, together with its implementation partner Center for Planning and Social Studies and the University of Cuenca, started the review process with an in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing protocol. Several consultation meetings were held with student organisations, the university administration and academic staff who offered valuable recommendations to strengthen the protocol. The next step was the development and conclusion of the final version of the Protocol For Prevention and Action in Cases of Harassment, Discrimination and Violence Based on Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (hereafter referred to as the “Final Protocol”).

Results

The Final Protocol was approved by the University of Cuenca Council in January 2023. One of the main changes implemented was the inclusion of an entire prevention section with action plans and concrete measures to be implemented, such as the inclusion of gender equality and human rights approaches in all career curricula. Another key change was the creation of a specific commission to investigate reported cases of violence and sexual harassment with a concrete timeline for the investigation process.⁹⁵ An important accountability mechanism was also introduced in the investigation process: representatives from the University Women's Association and the employee association gained voice and a vote in the committee based on whether the victim was a student or a staff member.

Student organisations began to raise awareness about the Final Protocol through social media and other channels, such as banners across the university. A student organisation⁹⁶ also trained other students on the Final Protocol, and they, in turn, shared it with others, further increasing awareness. Students were proactive in building their own initiatives. One such innovation was the development of a mobile application where anyone could easily access the protocol and gain information about support services, as well as share their experiences with the student community. The socialisation and sharing process has been important, leading to a wider reach and necessary discussions on gender-based violence and harassment in the university setting and beyond.

The results of the Final Protocol have not yet been evaluated because the implementation is recent. However, some students and teachers have already been held accountable, according to the revised rules. In one instance, a teacher was disciplined under more concrete and explicit definitions of different types of violence defined in the protocol, in this case, under symbolic violence.⁹⁷ Furthermore, according to one student, the fact that the Final Protocol included students' voices and needs was a result in itself.

Building on the successes of the work with the University of Cuenca, Spotlight Initiative supported two more universities in the review and approval of protocols to prevent harassment, discrimination and gender-based violence cases.⁹⁸ Based on

⁹² From Evidence to Prevention: How to Prevent Violence against Women in Ecuadorian Universities (GIZ, June 2023).

⁹³ Protocolo de actuación en casos de acoso, discriminación y violencia basada en género y orientación sexual en las instituciones de educación superior (Secretaría de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación del Ecuador, 2018). (in Spanish)

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ The Special Commission for Attention and Review of Cases of Harassment, Discrimination and Gender-Based Violence. The Special Commission has three days from the day following the complaint to verify compliance with the requirements set out in the protocol, and if met, a process will be installed immediately.

⁹⁶ Named *Red de Cuidado* (translated as “Care Network”).

⁹⁷ Symbolic violence is a term coined by Pierre Bourdieu to refer to a type of non-physical violence manifested in the power differential between social groups or individuals. It is often manifested in an imposition of the norms of the group/individual possessing greater social power on those of the subordinate group.

⁹⁸ Amazonian State University of Pastaza and San Gregorio University of Portoviejo.

this work and lessons learned, Spotlight Initiative led the development of a recommendation document to strengthen the national protocol, which was submitted to the Secretariat of Higher Education in Ecuador. Follow-up activities will be conducted in connection with the second phase of the Spotlight Initiative Ecuador programme.⁹⁹

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication

- **Protocols to prevent gender-based violence and harassment at universities need to be actionable and include means of prevention and accountability mechanisms to be effective.** The case in Ecuador detailed how these specific additions, coupled with student involvement and ownership, led to a stronger policy framework being implemented.
- **Engage in participatory processes that build with and from a diverse set of stakeholders' perspectives and experiences to support more relevant and effective policy design processes.** Involving students in the protocol review process was critical to amplifying their voices and needs, fostering students' ownership of the document, encouraging them to share it widely and to act as advocates, in addition to monitoring its implementation.



⁹⁹ Funded by the European Union, the Italian Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development and USAID, Spotlight Initiative in Ecuador has been granted a second cycle starting in January 2024 and lasting 2 years.