

ADDRESSING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Sexual and gender-based violence includes child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation / cutting. This violence is a violation and abuse of the human rights of women and girls. It is one of the greatest barriers to achieving gender equality worldwide, preventing women and girls from reaching their full potential. Sexual and gender-based violence jeopardizes the health of women and girls, affects their education and limits their ability to contribute to the development of their families, communities and countries.

In 2017-2018, Canada undertook a range of activities to combat sexual and gender-based violence, contributing to both the prevention of, and response, to sexual and gender-based violence. This included:

- supporting integrated health and counselling services, legal aid and economic opportunities for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence;
- promoting positive social norm change to end sexual and gender-based violence and child, early and forced marriage:
 - this promotion was done with community and traditional leaders and through communication campaigns for parents;
- building the capacity of national law enforcement agencies to counter sexual and gender-based violence;
- supporting advocacy efforts to promote the adoption of national strategies and action plans; and
- supporting innovative work on financial incentives to end sexual and gender-based violence.

Canada pays considerable attention to fighting sexual and gender-based violence. For example, in 2017-2018, Canada continued to support Girls Not Brides, an initiative that is committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfill their potential. Canada's support has helped the organization grow to 900 members in over 95 countries. The advocacy efforts of Girls Not Brides' members and partners have helped lead to the adoption of national strategies and action plans to end child marriage in Afghanistan and Ghana. Efforts have also led to significant legal changes to fight sexual and gender-based violence in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Lebanon and Malawi.

Working with partners, the Girls not Brides secretariat helped Parliamentarians for Global Action connect with regional actors to fund and co-organize a forum on child marriage in Latin America and the Caribbean. Parliamentarians for Global Action, an international network of legislators, strives to create a rules-based international order for a safer and more democratic world. The forum came about through the secretariat's collaboration with the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador, United Nations (UN) Women, El Salvador and UNICEF. The forum led

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS: THE STRATEGIC FOCUS OF CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The Feminist International Assistance Policy committed to ensuring that by 2021-2022, at least 95% of Canada's bilateral international development assistance investments will either target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The policy also states that 15% of all bilateral international development assistance investments will specifically target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2021-2022.

Canada is already making important progress toward these commitments. In 2017-2018, 99% of Canada's new bilateral international development assistance programming targeted or integrated gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These new investments raised Global Affairs Canada's overall percentage of gender targeted or integrated bilateral development assistance to 90% (\$2.5 billion) in 2017-2018 towards the 2021-2022 target of 95%.

Salvadoran legislators to move forward long-stalled legislative reform, making marriage under 18 illegal without exceptions.



INNOVATION

In 2017-2018, Canada made important investments to address sexual and gender-based violence and child, early and forced marriage. For example, GrOW is a five-year, \$17.5-million program to aid women's economic empowerment. It is funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in partnership with the U.K.'s Department for International Development and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. One GrOW project, led by research and policy non-profit organization Innovations for Poverty Action, tested an approach in Bangladesh that tackles child marriage through financial incentives. These incentives kept girls in school, created income opportunities and boosted women's empowerment at home and in their communities. The program led to substantial reductions in child marriage and teenage childbearing, and improved the health of girls and women. On average, marriage was delayed by 6.6 years and 3.6 years of additional schooling were completed.



INNOVATION

In Ghana, a Government of Canada project helped the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to plan and implement its National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana 2017-2026. The project team for the Support to Ghana Child Protection Program worked with education services and sexual and reproductive health units. Together,