

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN THE
GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM'
ACTION COALITION TO FIGHT
AGAINST



**GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE**

Countdown 2030 Europe (C2030E) is a consortium of European NGOs advocating to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and family planning (FP) in developing countries through holding European governments to account on their international policy and financial commitments on SRHR. To achieve this mission, amongst other activities, the consortium provides inputs to intergovernmental negotiations and policy processes. **This factsheet aims to inform the Action Coalitions on the interlinkages between SRHR and sexual and gender-based violence.**

The objective of the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) is to build a new momentum to advance gender equality worldwide. To do so, Action Coalitions must avoid silos and must instead explore synergies between them, complement one another and focus on gender-transformative interventions. This series of factsheets done by Countdown 2030 Europe and IPPF EN aims at building bridges between Action Coalitions to bring about an actual change in the lives of women and girls worldwide and to show how access to SRHR is gender-transformative and is essential to achieve gender equality.



WHY

SHOULD SRHR BE INCLUDED ACTION COALITION TO FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

SRHR and gender-based violence (GBV) are closely intertwined and the fight against GBV cannot be effective without the full realisation of women's SRHR. In the Guttmacher-lancet definition of SRHR, GBV is a component of SRHR, and the "prevention, detection, immediate services and referrals for cases of sexual and gender-based violence" is one of the 'Essential package of sexual and reproductive health interventions'. In addition, in humanitarian and conflict settings, integrating SRHR in GBV risk mitigation efforts across sectors can significantly strengthen humanitarian response's ability to prevent and respond to GBV.

Many violations of women's SRHR also constitute forms of GBV and are therefore at the crossroads of the SRHR and the GBV Action Coalitions under the Generation Equality Forum:

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

is both a form of GBV and a violation of SRHR: it violates the right to consensual sexual relations, which is a sexual right, it violates the right to bodily autonomy, and it can violate the reproductive rights of a person (denying her the right to choose to have children or not and with whom);

REPRODUCTIVE COERCION

happens when a person's partner or family member attempts to control their reproductive outcomes, for example preventing a woman from using contraception, damaging contraception methods or coercing someone to become pregnant, to have an abortion, or denying them access to safe abortion care. Reproductive coercion is therefore both a form of gender-based violence against women, possibly of intimate partner violence; and a violation of women's reproductive rights.

At society level, reproductive coercion also constitutes a form of GBV:

- Denial or delay of abortion care and forced continuation of pregnancy have been recognised as a form of gender-based violence against women, ill-treatment, and even torture in some cases, most notably where the pregnancy is the result of sexual violence, and in cases of fatal fetal impairment or where the pregnancy is not viable, by UN bodies¹ or the European Parliament²;
- Depriving women survivors of sexual violence from access to GBV and SRH services has also been recognized as a form of gender-based violence against women, ill-treatment that could amount to torture.

GYNAECOLOGIC AND OBSTETRIC VIOLENCE

are also a form of gender-based violence against women and violations of women's sexual and reproductive rights which take place during gynaecologic/obstetric consultations and during childbirth, including:

- Forced sterilization, forced abortion, denial of abortion, but also more generally mistreatment, abuse, neglect, non-consensual acts, intimidation, humiliation.
- Women from certain groups, as well as transgenders and intersex persons are particularly at risk of being victims of gynaecologic and obstetric violence, due to intersecting discriminations.

Finally,

HARMFUL PRACTICES,

such as child, early and forced marriages (CEFM) and female genital mutilations (FGM) are both a violation of SRHR and an GBV. FGM in particular violates a number of well-established human rights principles, norms and standards, including the right to freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, bodily integrity and the right to life as the procedure can result in death. It affects also the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health as well as the principles of equality, non-violence and non-discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. It is therefore at the crossroads of the SRHR and the GBV Action Coalitions under the Generation Equality Forum.

SRHR, and especially comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), **can nevertheless be a crucial means to prevent and address GBV**. SRHR and CSE should therefore be included in the GBV Action Coalition. Gender-based violence finds its roots in unequal power dynamics, rigid gender norms, women's limited influence over their own lives, including over their sexual and reproductive lives in their relationships. This is particularly true for women from certain groups, due to intersecting discriminations. Challenging harmful gender norms through education is therefore one of the key solutions to fight against GBV. Good quality CSE, which is evidence-based and rights-based, and addresses issues such as gender norms, gender equality, unequal power dynamics in relationships, coercion, violence, respect for one's own and others' boundaries, consent, self-esteem... is key to building children's and young peoples' skills to form equal, nurturing and safe relationships, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. It helps improve gender equality, transform harmful gender norms, and prevent gender-based violence.

HOW SHOULD SRHR BE INCLUDED IN THE ACTION COALITION TO FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

ADDRESS ALL FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Countdown 2030 Europe (C2030E) asks the leaders of the Action Coalition to fight against GBV to ensure that all forms of GBV will be addressed in the Action Coalition's blueprint and recommend in particular to:

- **Definition:** include sexual violence, reproductive coercion and gynaecologic and obstetrical violence in its definition of GBV. This definition could make reference on the widely agreed upon Gutmacher-Lancet definition³ and should include GBV in humanitarian and conflict settings;
- **Norms:** promote approaches that guarantee women health and rights literacy and empower women, especially as leaders and service providers;
- **Law and policy:** support the adoption and implementation of laws prohibiting all forms of GBV, including sexual violence, reproductive coercion and gynaecologic and obstetrical violence;
- **Education:** promote the use of CSE as an important means to prevent all forms of GBV, including sexual violence, reproductive coercion and gynaecologic and obstetrical violence;
- **Service delivery:** improve access to services for GBV survivors, including access to shelters and health and SRH services, in all contexts; promote access to youth-friendly, gender-transformative and respectful SRH services and better train providers to reduce risks of violence and respect patients' rights and dignity, in particular to combat gynaecologic and obstetrical violence; in humanitarian and conflict settings, support sexual and reproductive health services as an entry point to mitigate, respond, and reduce GBV.

ADDRESS HARMFUL PRACTICES

C2030E asks the leaders of the Action Coalition to fight against GBV to address harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and FGM, in the Action Coalition's blueprint and recommend in particular to:

- **Data and accountability:** improve reporting on target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on eliminating all forms of harmful practices;
- **Norms:** focus on community interventions to support local communities' adoption of zero tolerance to FGM and CEFM;
- **Law and policy:** support the adoption and implementation of laws prohibiting harmful practices, such as FGM and CEFM, including for example laws prohibiting marriage before the age of 18;
- **Financing:** increase domestic and international financial resources to maintain girls in school (secondary and tertiary);
- **Education:** promote the use of CSE as a means to prevent GBV, including through improving access to CSE and financing CSE programmes (see below);
- **Service delivery:** improve access to services for GBV and harmful practices survivors, including access to shelters and health and SRH services, in all contexts.

HOW

SHOULD SRHR BE INCLUDED IN THE ACTION COALITION TO FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

INCLUDE CSE AS A SOLUTION TO FIGHT AGAINST GBV

C2030E asks the leaders of the Action Coalition to fight against GBV to include CSE as one of the solutions to fight against GBV and recommend in particular to:

- **Data and accountability:** improve reporting on target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- **Norms:** support media campaigns promoting access to CSE and its role in reducing GBV and gender inequalities and work with local leaders on CSE understanding and acceptance;
- **Law and policy:** support the introduction of compulsory CSE in national curricula;
- **Financing:** increase domestic and international financial resources for CSE programmes delivery;
- **Education:** improve in and out of school access to CSE, including through better financing for CSE programmes, focusing among others on changing harmful gender norms, reducing the tolerance to GBV, informing young people on consent and healthy and safe relationships;
- **Service delivery:** promote the link between CSE programmes and youth-friendly service delivery, especially for young people and GBV survivors.

This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets by Countdown 2030 Europe on the inclusion of SRHR in the various Action Coalition (AC) of the Generation Equality Forum - to ensure an integrated and inclusive approach across the ACs with particular attention to SRHR throughout.

1. <https://undocs.org/en/CEDAW/C/GC/35> - https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CCPR_C_GC_36_8785_E.pdf
2. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0329_EN.html?redirect
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0328_EN.html
3. <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>



Federación de Planificación Familiar Estatal



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