

TRANSLATING WOMEN'S VOICES INTO ACTION IN MONGOLIA

ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Tsolmon Begzsuren and Veronica Mendizabal Joffre

NO. 14

October 2018

ADB EAST ASIA
WORKING PAPER SERIES

East Asia Working Paper Series

Translating Women's Voices into Action in Mongolia: Addressing Gender-Based Violence through Investments in Infrastructure

Tsolmon Begzsuren and
Veronica Mendizabal Joffre

No. 14 | October 2018

Tsolmon Begzsuren is a social development officer (gender), Mongolia Resident Mission, East Asia Department at the Asian Development Bank, and Veronica Mendizabal Joffre is a social development specialist (gender and development), East Asia Department at the Asian Development Bank.



Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO license (CC BY 3.0 IGO)

© 2018 Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, 1550 Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel +63 2 632 4444; Fax +63 2 636 2444
www.adb.org

Some rights reserved. Published in 2018.

Publication Stock No. WPS189587-2
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/WPS189587-2>

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or its Board of Governors or the governments they represent.

ADB does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication and accepts no responsibility for any consequence of their use. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by ADB in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

By making any designation of or reference to a particular territory or geographic area, or by using the term “country” in this document, ADB does not intend to make any judgments as to the legal or other status of any territory or area.

This work is available under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO license (CC BY 3.0 IGO) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/>. By using the content of this publication, you agree to be bound by the terms of this license. For attribution, translations, adaptations, and permissions, please read the provisions and terms of use at <https://www.adb.org/terms-use#openaccess>.

This CC license does not apply to non-ADB copyright materials in this publication. If the material is attributed to another source, please contact the copyright owner or publisher of that source for permission to reproduce it. ADB cannot be held liable for any claims that arise as a result of your use of the material.

Please contact pubsmarketing@adb.org if you have questions or comments with respect to content, or if you wish to obtain copyright permission for your intended use that does not fall within these terms, or for permission to use the ADB logo.

Notes:

In this publication, “\$” refers to United States dollars.

Corrigenda to ADB publications may be found at <http://www.adb.org/publications/corrigenda>.

The ADB East Asia Working Paper Series is a forum for stimulating discussion and eliciting feedback on ongoing and recently completed research and policy studies undertaken by the East Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) staff, consultants, or resource persons. The series deals with key economic and development problems, as well as conceptual, analytical, or methodological issues relating to project/program economic analysis, and statistical data and measurement. The series aims to enhance the knowledge on Asia’s development and policy challenges; strengthen analytical rigor and quality of ADB’s country partnership strategies, and its subregional and country operations; and improve the quality and availability of statistical data and development indicators for monitoring development effectiveness.

The ADB East Asia Working Paper Series is a quick-disseminating, informal publication whose titles could subsequently be revised for publication as articles in professional journals or chapters in books. The series is maintained by the East Asia Department.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABBREVIATIONS	vi
GLOSSARY	vii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. COUNTRY CONTEXT	3
A. Overview: Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in Mongolia	3
B. Legal and Policy Environment	4
III. RAPID ASSESSMENT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN URBAN GER AREA COMMUNITIES IN ULAANBAATAR	5
A. The Situation in the <i>Ger</i> Area and ADB's Urban Program	5
B. Complementary Study on Gender-Based Violence in the <i>Ger</i> Areas of Ulaanbaatar: Methodology and Process	6
C. Key Findings	7
D. Recommendations	11
IV. PROGRAM DESIGN FEATURES TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	13
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	14

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are grateful to Arnaud Heckmann, principal urban development specialist, Urban and Social Sectors Division, East Asia Department (EARD) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for promoting the use of a complementary study as part of due diligence to address gender-based violence in the multitranche financing facility, Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and *Ger* Areas Development Investment Program—Tranche 2. The authors acknowledge extensive guidance provided by EARD Deputy Director General M. Teresa Kho, Mongolia Resident Mission Country Director Yolanda Fernandez Lommen, and Senior Country Economist Declan Magee. The authors are grateful for the comments provided by peer reviewers Imrana Jalal, former senior social development specialist (gender and development) in the Thematic Advisory Service Cluster of the ADB Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department; and Gohar Tadevosyan, social development specialist (safeguards), Urban and Social Sectors Division, EARD. The paper is based on a qualitative assessment of gender-based and domestic violence conducted in Ulaanbaatar in 2016 by consultants Batkishig Adilbish and Tumennast Gelenkhoo under Regional Technical Assistance (RETA 8797) for Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (Phase 2).

ABSTRACT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been actively working toward addressing women's and girls' safety in the projects it finances, and preventing and mitigating the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. This working paper describes ADB's experience in Mongolia of going beyond risk mitigation and toward directly responding to the need for prevention and protection against gender-based violence through infrastructure and services. Specifically, the paper presents the use of complementary studies as part of due diligence during program preparation as a best practice when sensitive social issues are difficult to tackle in standard social and poverty assessments, such as gender-based violence incidence and potential effects in program sites. The paper further provides lessons on the process of translating the results from such studies into the design of an ADB infrastructure program in urban *ger* areas of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The aim of the paper is to contribute to the discussion on the role of multilateral financing in directly addressing gender-based violence; specifically, the ways in which infrastructure investments can contribute to this aim, and more broadly, toward the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality, and SDG 11 on universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces.

Keywords: gender-based violence, domestic violence, public space safety

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
BCC	-	behavior change communication
CCTV	-	closed-circuit television
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
FGD	-	focus group discussion
GAP	-	gender action plan
GBV	-	gender-based violence
GDP	-	gross domestic product
LCDV	-	Law on Combating Domestic Violence (Mongolia)
MDT	-	multidisciplinary team
MFF	-	multitranches financing facility
NGO	-	nongovernment organization
WHO	-	World Health Organization

GLOSSARY

- Gender-based violence – an umbrella term that highlights the gendered elements of all forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls, including sexual and domestic violence
- Ger* – traditional dwelling of Mongolians
- Kheseg* – smallest administrative subdivision
- Khoroo* – administrative subdivision below a district
- Multidisciplinary team – mandated under the Law on Combating Domestic Violence, Law on Child Rights, Law on Child Protection, and the Law on Management of Administrative Units. Comprises governor, social worker, local police officer, family doctor, local *kheseg* leader, and school social worker, who work at the primary administrative unit to prevent and protect family and children from domestic violence; and provide moral support, medical, and legal services to the survivors of domestic violence.
- Soum* – secondary subdivision outside Ulaanbaatar city
- Violence against women – any act of violence that results in or is likely to result in harm or suffering to women, including threats of acts such as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Its dimensions include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and economic violence occurring in the family and general community or such violence perpetrated or condoned by the state.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Mongolia, gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be an important concern despite the headway made in women empowerment and gender equality. Women make up an important part of Mongolia's economy, constituting over 50% of Mongolia's population and comprising 55% of its workforce. Women in Mongolia are highly educated, with high rates of women's enrollment in secondary and tertiary education (86% and 80% respectively), and high representation in professional and technical positions (63% compared with 37% men).¹ Despite the strong gender equality, violence in both public and private spaces remains a substantial safety concern for women. Among ever-partnered women, 57.9% have experienced physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence; while nonpartner violence is prevalent among young people, with over 17% of women experiencing nonpartner violence since age 15.²

Gender-based violence is a global problem.³ Women and girls around the world are subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in varying degrees; cutting across income, class, and culture.⁴ The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over a third (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or nonpartner sexual violence in their lifetime.⁵ Gender-based violence can permeate all aspects of a woman's life, including access to services that are taken for granted—such as transportation—which are vital for accessing jobs and expanding economic and social opportunities.

This working paper makes the argument that infrastructure projects can support national efforts to address GBV and help countries meet their commitments toward Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality; and SDG 11 on universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces.⁶ In this regard, the Mongolia Resident Mission of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) implemented a regional technical assistance (RETA) subproject in 2016 to conduct a complementary qualitative research, “Rapid Assessment of Gender-Based Violence in Urban Ger Area Communities,” financed by the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund.⁷ This paper describes how this infrastructure program in Mongolia is contributing to national efforts toward GBV prevention by investing in the safe access to public service infrastructure for women and girls, particularly transport, and also by taking bold steps toward recognizing the need to directly invest in response service infrastructure, such as shelters for victims of GBV. The paper argues that ADB is well placed to take a lead role in this area, specifically given its large infrastructure portfolio in the country, and more broadly the influence it holds in infrastructure. This is reaffirmed by ADB's Strategy 2030 which identifies “accelerating progress in gender equality” as a key operational area. The issues and recommendations raised in this working paper contribute to the country literature on gender equity, GBV, and public space safety, and provide momentum for achieving

¹ World Economic Forum. 2017. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*. Geneva.

² National Statistical Office and UN Population Fund. 2018. *Breaking the Silence for Equality: 2017 National Study on Gender-based Violence in Mongolia*. Ulaanbaatar.

³ CEDAW. 2017. General Recommendation 35. CEDAW/C/GC/35. Geneva: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

⁴ United Nations General Assembly. 1993. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. New York. A/RES/48/104.

⁵ World Health Organization. 2014. *Violence against Women: Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women*. Geneva.

⁶ Sustainable Development Goal 5 target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. SDG 11 target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

⁷ ADB. 2012. *Regional Technical Assistance (RETA 8797) for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (Phase 2)*. Manila. Following the recommendation of the World Health Organization, the actual research title was rephrased for public disclosure purposes as “Social Concerns the Communities Face in the Ger Areas.”

one of the sustainable social development objectives set forth in Mongolia's Sustainable Development Vision, 2030 to ensure gender equality and a healthy and safe living environment for citizens.⁸

Why is there a need to address GBV in the context of socioeconomic development?

The social and economic costs of GBV are significant and long-lasting for individuals, families, and society. Survivors of violence may suffer not only loss of working days and the consequent loss of income, lack of participation in regular activities, and limited ability to care for themselves and family members, but also psychological distress (footnote 5). Direct costs include those associated with the police; hospital and other health services; legal costs; and housing, social, and support services. Indirect costs include those related to reduced employment and productivity and the diminished value of a life lived with violence.⁹ Estimates from a number of countries suggest that lost productivity resulting from domestic violence ranges between 1% and 2% of gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁰ For example, the costs associated with total productivity losses and potential productivity costs of domestic violence represent as much as 3% of Viet Nam's GDP.¹¹

While GBV is a generalized problem, individuals living in poverty might be at higher risk of violence because the environments in which they live tend to be more dangerous, unstable, and uncertain. Women's poverty is closely linked to the unequal power relations between women and men. Violence against women—defined as any act of violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of acts such as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life—aggravates gender-based inequalities, with widespread consequences for well-being and empowerment (footnote 3). As such, the cycle of poverty and violence is often self-reinforcing.

ADB has been actively engaging with the National Committee on Gender Equality in Mongolia since 2009, and has supported the design and adoption of the Law on Promotion of Gender Equality, and the development of an enforcement mechanism for gender equality legislation. ADB is also supporting the implementation of the National Program on Gender Equality, 2017–2021 to develop comprehensive and systematic preventive and care services aimed at tackling gender-based violence and discrimination.

This paper comprises four sections. Section 2 provides an overview of Mongolia's regulatory framework to combat GBV and existing data on prevalence and availability of support services. Section 3 presents the process and lessons obtained from using complementary studies to identify issues and operational solutions to GBV in *ger* areas in Mongolia. Section 4 presents recommendations from participants in the complementary qualitative research "Rapid Assessment of Gender-Based Violence in Urban *Ger* Area Communities," which were adopted in the Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and *Ger* Areas Development Investment Program—Tranche 2 to prevent and respond to the issue of GBV and domestic violence. Section 5 concludes and presents recommendations to replicate the experience of incorporating complementary studies on GBV in other settings.

⁸ Government of Mongolia. 2016. *Mongolia's Sustainable Development Vision, 2030*. Ulaanbaatar.

⁹ United Nations Women. 2015. *State of the World's Women 2015*. New York.

¹⁰ S. Kiplesund and M. Morton. 2014. *Gender-Based Violence Prevention: Lessons from World Bank Impact Evaluations*. Washington, DC.

¹¹ UN Women and Australian Aid. 2013. *The Costs of Violence: Understanding the Costs of Violence against Women and Girls and its Response: Selected Findings and Lessons Learned from Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok.

II. COUNTRY CONTEXT

A. Overview: Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in Mongolia

Gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence, remains one of the most serious and life-threatening human rights violations in Mongolia. Among ever-partnered women, 57.9% have experienced one or more of the following types of violence in their lifetime: physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence, and controlling behaviors; and 31.2% have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Nonpartner violence is prevalent among young people. Since age 15, over 17% of women have experienced nonpartner physical violence during their lifetime and 4.5% experienced it during the last 12 months.¹²

In 2017, police records showed 1,286 reported domestic violence-related crimes nationwide, which included 1,089 injuries; 56 cases of rape, and 12 deaths.¹³ However, official statistics underrepresent the true extent of GBV in Mongolia as many incidents go unreported.¹⁴ Of the reported incidents, 91% of domestic violence survivors were women. Over half (58%) of domestic violence incidents occurred in the capital Ulaanbaatar, while 42% occurred in rural areas. An estimated 80% of the Mongolian population views domestic violence as a serious problem.¹⁵ The Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council provided 150 recommendations to Mongolia on human rights, health, and education. Of those recommendations, 49 were related to gender inequality and 22 were on GBV and domestic violence.¹⁶

Violence against women has widespread consequences for well-being and empowerment.¹⁷ Poor and disadvantaged women and children, including those with disabilities are the most vulnerable, as it is estimated that over 80% of domestic violence survivors live below the poverty line.¹⁸ The 2015 United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights assessment of Mongolia reaffirmed that GBV, and particularly domestic violence against women and children, is prevalent and widespread.¹⁹

Rigorous research and evaluation on the effects of violence on individual women, and their access to education and economic opportunities, are lacking. Empirical studies in places as disparate as India and the United States, for example, suggest that not only direct violence but also women's perceptions of GBV risk and danger, in private and public spaces, affect critical decisions, including those related with

¹² National Statistical Office and UN Population Fund. 2018. *Breaking the Silence for Equality: 2017 National Study on Gender-based Violence in Mongolia*. Ulaanbaatar.

¹³ General Police Authority. 2018. *Police Administrative Records 2017*. Ulaanbaatar.

¹⁴ Freedom House. 2014. *Freedom in the World 2014*. New York.

¹⁵ Center for Insights in Survey Research and International Republican Institute. 2016. *Mongolian Public Opinion: Parliament after 100 days*. Ulaanbaatar.

¹⁶ United Nations Human Rights Council. 2015. *Universal Periodic Review: Mongolia's Responses to Recommendations*. http://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/mongolia/session_22_-_may_2015/recommendations_and_pledges_mongolia_2015.pdf.

¹⁷ Violence against women includes domestic violence; child marriage; forced pregnancy; "honor" crimes; female genital mutilation; femicide, sexual and other violence; sexual harassment (in the workplace, other institutions, and in public spaces); trafficking in women; and violence in conflict situations (United Nations Women. 2015. *World's Women Report 2015*. New York).

¹⁸ National Center Against Violence Non-governmental Organization. 2016. *Administrative Records 2016*. Ulaanbaatar.

¹⁹ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 2015. *Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of Mongolia*. New York.

pursuing educational opportunities, accessing the labor market, or running for political office.²⁰ More specifically, some studies suggest that in some contexts the cost of being sexually harassed is implicitly associated by women with the cost of traveling to work.²¹

In 1995, Mongolia initiated the establishment of shelters for victims of domestic and/or sexual violence. Currently, there are 11 shelters nationwide run by government agencies and nongovernment organizations (NGOs), offering accommodation for up to 30 days along with other multidisciplinary services to survivors, such as health, psychological, legal, social, and protection services. The capacity of shelters remains limited to 106 beds that could host up to 1,000 women and children per year, which is below the current need. Six additional one-stop service centers provide 24-hour safety protection; social welfare; and psychological, legal, health, child protection, and referral services for survivors of domestic or sexual violence. These are run by hospitals, government agencies, and NGOs. In 2016, almost 60% of reported domestic violence incidents occurred in Ulaanbaatar, which is home to 47% (about 1.5 million) of the country's population. The city has three shelters and three one-stop service centers. The National Center Against Violence, the lead NGO providing services to survivors in Ulaanbaatar, received more than 1,000 survivors per year in the past 3 years since 2015, not including repeat cases. Women and children constituted 53% and 47% of the survivors in Ulaanbaatar, respectively. All of them had experienced psychological violence, over 7% physical and economic violence, and 40% sexual violence.

B. Legal and Policy Environment

Mongolia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which recognizes GBV as constituting discrimination against women and a critical obstacle to achieving substantive equality between women and men.²² As such, Mongolia is obliged to prevent, punish, and provide reparation, given that states are responsible for violence that results from their own actions and omissions. Mongolia is acting on this commitment and has established a comprehensive gender legislative framework.²³

Mongolia passed the Law to Combat Domestic Violence (LCDV) in 2004. Although considered an important first step in addressing the long-ignored issue of domestic violence, the lack of adequate budgetary support, and misalignment with existing laws, limited its implementation. Consequently, the LCDV was revised and became effective in February 2017. The revision was groundbreaking, and Mongolia now criminalizes acts of domestic violence. The law further specifies measures to protect survivors and witnesses, defines intersectoral roles, and accredits NGOs as training service providers and to run shelters. In addition to these legislative initiatives, the President of Mongolia signed the UN COMMIT card in March 2015, a pledge that declares domestic violence a crime and calls on the government to hold perpetrators accountable.

²⁰ Pauline Garcia-Reid. 2007. Examining Social Capital as a Mechanism for Improving School Engagement among Low Income Hispanic Girls. *Youth & Society*. 39 (2). pp. 164–181; L. Iyer, A. Mani, P. Mishra, and P. Topalova. 2012. The Power of Political Voice: Women's Political Representation and Crime in India. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. 4 (4). pp. 165–93.

²¹ T. Chakraborty, A. Mukherjee, S. Reddy Rachapalli, and S. Saha. 2017. Stigma of Sexual Violence and Women's Decision to Work. *Discussion Paper Series*. Bonn: IZA Institute of Labor Economics.

²² Mongolia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1981 and its optional Protocol in 2002.

²³ Including the Law on Promotion of Gender Equality, the Family Law, Labor Law, Child Protection Law, Child Rights Law, Childcare Service Law, and Joint Pension Law.

Prior to the passage of the amended LCDV in 2016, domestic violence was largely viewed as a “domestic matter” by the courts. Without formal classification as a criminal offense, it was exceedingly difficult to effectively punish perpetrators and protect victims. Domestic violence that would not result in serious injury or death was only punished by a restraining order under the previous law. To strengthen the enabling environment and support the LCDV, six other laws were amended.²⁴ Under the new Law on Law Enforcement, police are required to treat domestic violence calls as a top priority. The law grants police the authority to enter a home immediately if a victim’s life or health is believed to be in danger, and to remove children who are in danger of harm. The 2016 Law on Administrative Violations requires every citizen to report child abuse and encourages citizens to report domestic violence between adults. Those who do not report child abuse can face fines. Ideally, every locality, *soum* (secondary subdivision outside Ulaanbaatar city), and province will have a community council that will work with law enforcement to identify local problems and develop solutions tailored to the community.

While Mongolia has taken critical steps to combat GBV and/or domestic violence, challenges remain. Government actors mandated to respond to domestic violence including prosecutors, judges, police, social workers, psychologists, health-care workers, and governors have only limited understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and of their mandates for addressing domestic violence following the revised Law.²⁵ The provision of multidisciplinary services, a mechanism under the LCDV, remains inconsistent and underfunded, resulting in inadequate prevention and response to domestic violence at the grassroots level, and limiting the practical implementation of GBV-related laws and policies. This is reflected in the small number of cases prosecuted under the LCDV, low public and institutional awareness of LCDV, and inadequate facilities and services to meet the needs of GBV survivors (footnote 25).

III. RAPID ASSESSMENT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN URBAN GER AREA COMMUNITIES IN ULAANBAATAR

A. The Situation in the Ger Area and ADB’s Urban Program

The *ger* area of Ulaanbaatar is home to about 850,000 residents, or over 60% of the city’s population. This peri-urban area is characterized by plots of land unconnected to services, inadequate and mostly unpaved road networks, and a severe lack of social and economic facilities and basic infrastructure. While that large majority of local road users are pedestrians, the road network within the *ger* area is mostly unpaved with no sidewalks or lighting. Safety, particularly at night, is an important concern, especially for women, and this extends to safety and security at bus stops. In 2012, the poverty incidence in the *ger* area was about 20%, and the average monthly household income was MNT335,231 (\$230), below the minimum standard of living of MNT506,000 (\$350).

The Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and Ger Areas Development Investment Program—Tranche 2 funded by ADB aimed to establish a network of livable, competitive, and inclusive subcenters in Ulaanbaatar’s *ger* areas by improving the living conditions of *ger* inhabitants.²⁶ During the preparation of its first tranche,

²⁴ Criminal Code, Law on Law Enforcement, Law on Administrative Violations, Law on Criminal Procedure, Law on Marshals Service, and the Law on Victim and Witness Protection.

²⁵ Advocates for Human Rights Minneapolis and National Center Against Violence. 2014. *A Human Rights Report on Implementation of Mongolia’s Domestic Violence Legislation*. Ulaanbaatar.

²⁶ ADB. 2013. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Multitranchise Financing Facility for Mongolia: Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and Ger Areas Development Investment Program*. Manila.

the program identified domestic violence as a factor negatively affecting the living conditions in target *ger* districts. However, methodological and technical support was not available to tackle this sensitive aspect. This changed during the preparation of the second tranche, where funds and technical expertise were secured to conduct qualitative studies that would inform the provision of social facilities to directly address gender-based and domestic violence.

B. Complementary Study on Gender-Based Violence in the *Ger* Areas of Ulaanbaatar: Methodology and Process

The qualitative study in *ger* areas aimed to (i) identify the perception and attitudes of women and men including the youth toward GBV in public and private spaces, (ii) assess the different priorities and needs of urban *ger* area communities to ensure public and private space safety and security, and (iii) develop a set of recommendations to integrate findings in the scope of the service delivery and infrastructure program.

The sample was composed of 144 individuals (72 men and 72 women) from selected *khoroos* (administrative subdivisions below a district) of Chingeltei and Sukhbaatar districts, which took part in 12 focus group discussions (FGDs). The group discussions were organized in women-only and men-only groups. This qualitative research design intended to mitigate potential researcher bias, to increase the comfort of participants, and to better obtain gender-differentiated perspectives. Additionally, 14 key informants from the target *khoroos* of Chingeltei, Sukhbaatar, and Songinokhairkhan districts were interviewed.

For the FGDs sampling, the collaboration with key informants—e.g., primary administrative unit officials including *khoroos* governor, social worker, family group practitioner, police officer, *kheseg* (smallest administrative subdivision) leader, and school social worker—proved essential to ensure a diversity of participants. On the basis of findings obtained from key informants, female victims of domestic violence or considered at risk were approached for their consent to take part in the study. Consequently, two groups were sampled: (i) men and women not necessarily at risk of GBV from the selected *khoroos*; and (ii) people at risk of GBV, both more likely to be the perpetrators and those more likely to be victims. The at-risk groups included those addicted to alcohol, individuals living in areas where alcohol users gather in large numbers, those residing in remote places with poor infrastructure (e.g., insufficient street lighting), those from informal, poorly planned settlements or living on steep hillsides or gorges, and unemployed persons.

The selection of participants aimed at ensuring a mix between young and middle-aged people, people with different levels of education, employed and unemployed people, poor and nonpoor participants, and people from different locations of residence (i.e., a mix between those that lived closer to subcenters and those that lived in more remote parts of the *khoroos*).

The study used the WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women, which states that the issues of safety, confidentiality of interviewees, and the skills and training of researchers and interviewers are more important than in other types of research.²⁷ Following WHO recommendations, the research topic was introduced to the community as a study on “Social

²⁷ World Health Organization. 2001. *Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence against Women*. Geneva.

Concerns the Communities Face in the *Ger* Areas.” The researchers paid close attention to adhering to research ethics, including respecting respondents’ reputation, interests, and safety.

1. *Limitations*

The study does not undertake separate FGDs organized around income level, employment status, education, age, and location. Future studies may consider organizing FGDs based on these demographics as these could correlate with domestic violence and/or GBV, and enable a more thorough exploration of the impacts of socioeconomic, sociodemographic, and geographic areas of GBV and/or domestic violence.

2. *Analysis*

Studying public perceptions and attitudes toward men’s and women’s status in society and within the household is the first step in understanding the nature and causes of GBV. The qualitative research assessed the following dimensions (i) the nature and extent of GBV incidents, and women’s and girls’ public space safety in urban *ger* areas; (ii) risk and preventive factors of domestic violence; (iii) public perceptions and attitudes toward men’s and women’s status in society and within the household; (iv) potential actions to prevent and respond to common types of violence incidents at home and in public spaces; and (v) the potential role and scope of behavior change communication (BCC). Table 1 presents the key research questions that guided the study.

Table 1: Key Research Questions from the Complementary Study, Rapid Assessment of Gender-Based Violence in Urban *Ger* Area Communities

How do residents of urban *ger* areas view the current situation of gender-based violence (GBV), domestic violence, and the safety of girls and women in private and public spaces?

Guiding Questions:

- i. How does the public perceive the nature and extent of GBV in urban *ger* areas?
 - ii. What does the public believe are the causes of GBV?
 - iii. What is local community’s impression of GBV prevention and response measures in urban *ger* areas?
 - iv. What strategies should be taken in urban *ger* areas to prevent and address GBV in public and private spaces?
 - v. What steps should be taken for effective behavior change communication?
-

Source: ADB. 2012. *Regional Technical Assistance (RETA 8797) for Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (Phase 2)*. Manila.

C. **Key Findings**

1. *Perceptions Regarding the Role of Men and Women in the Family*

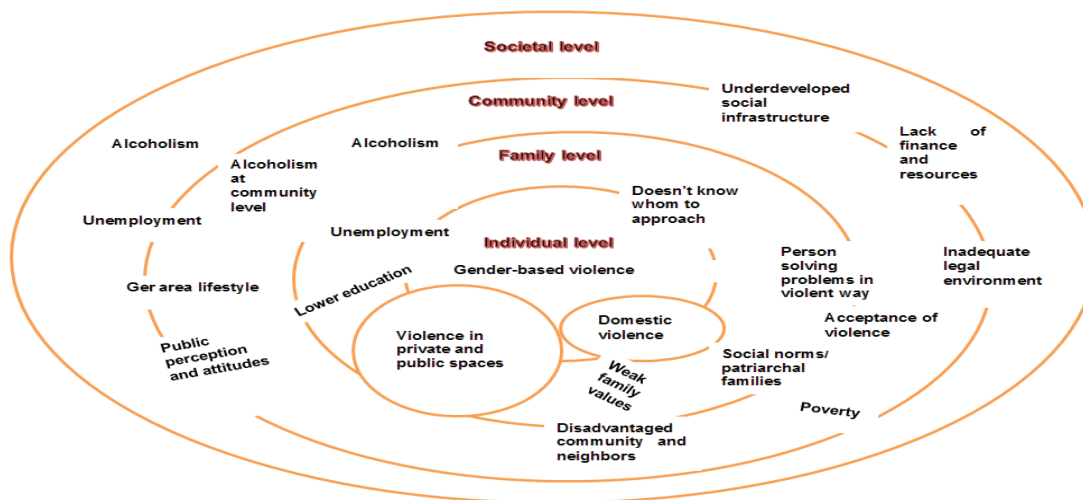
The qualitative study revealed a high regard for patriarchal customs and stereotypical gender roles among participating *ger* residents. The statement “*Men should be the backbone and breadwinner of the family*” was considered correct by the majority of men and women respondents. The discussion surrounding this statement also revealed that participants perceived a tension between traditional and patriarchal expectations (men as main breadwinner) and a new socioeconomic reality—deepened during the period of economic difficulties experienced in the country in the 1990s and again since 2015—that

includes high levels of male unemployment and growing numbers of women entering the labor market. Participants believed that this contradiction imposes social and psychological stress on both men and women, negatively affecting their relationship. On the one hand, participants perceived that progress made by women in accessing the labor market and consequent increased economic empowerment have led to power struggles and the contest for authority between partners within the household, contributing in turn to the risk of GBV across *ger* area communities, both in public and private spaces. However, male and female respondents also noted that GBV is more pronounced in situations of economic stress, and income generation opportunities for men and women in the household could act as a factor to prevent GBV, domestic violence in particular. Also, rather than challenging traditional patriarchal attitudes, participants believed that improving men's status and roles in support of the tradition would help address violence against women. This is a critical finding that points out to the need for a better understanding of the links between women economic empowerment, labor market participation and GBV, as well as the need to engage men and boys when addressing GBV. In particular, as existing patriarchal expectations are not confronted directly, they continue to be passed on from generation to generation.

2. Gender-Based Violence: Risk Factors

Respondents associated the risks and causes of GBV at various levels (see Figure 1). At the macro level, in general, both men and women considered that unemployment, poverty, alcoholism, social disorder, labor exploitation, and institutional discrimination (including gender discrimination) create environments that intensify the risk of violence against women. At an intermediate level, inadequate social infrastructure, limited access to legal and social protection services, and lack of public awareness further increase the risks of violence and lead to impunity. In the specific case in *ger* areas, risk factors include insufficient budget for *khoro* multidisciplinary teams (MDTs), which are supposed to be first responders in cases of domestic violence and GBV more broadly, as well as limited and inconsistent understanding of GBV among MDT members. Finally, lack of understanding on the short- and long-term consequences of violence on individuals and communities comprise the micro level.

Figure 1: Findings Mapped at Societal, Community, Family, and Individual Levels



Source: ADB. 2012. *Regional Technical Assistance (RETA 8797) for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (Phase 2)*. Manila.

For most respondents, unemployment remains a key risk factor at the individual and family levels. Most respondent men and women believed there to be widespread discrimination and exploitation in the labor market. Instances included employers discriminating based on age, gender, and appearance, and employers asking employees to work unpaid during probation periods, which resulted in increased unemployment, income deprivation, and poverty among *ger* area residents. In turn, this contributed to excessive alcoholism and violence in the home and in the community. Over 35% of the sample of 72 male respondents indicated that alcoholism increased the propensity to commit domestic violence, and all indicated that alcoholism has increased due to unemployment. Women also considered unemployment and alcoholism as key drivers of domestic violence, although some indicated that drinking due to unemployment was only an excuse. Younger and middle-aged women discussed how alcoholism was related to individual morals and educational levels, while elderly women were more likely to discuss alcoholism as a widespread social problem that was badly affecting their families and children's lives.

Participants considered that to address these GBV risk factors, job creation, law enforcement, stronger regulations, and institutional mechanisms were critical. Meanwhile, the focus groups and interviews with informants revealed that gender stereotypes are generalized, including among law enforcement officials and authorities. Income generation opportunities, institutional capacity building for law enforcement, and public awareness including BCC campaigns should then be considered to address GBV, as well as the engagement of government, NGOs, and civil society at large.

3. *Gender-Based Violence: Preventive Factors*

The respondents identified key preventive factors of GBV, including knowledge about nonviolent problem-solving methods, family role models, level of education, social communication skills, effective protection and intervention services at local levels, an aware and trained police force and social services, and good policies and laws. At the societal level, the respondents proposed different ways to address GBV, such as the creation of job opportunities; regulation and enforcement of labor laws; no discrimination or labor exploitation; addressing alcoholism; and reducing poverty.

It was commonly raised that learned behavior becomes habitual, including behaviors that influence one's ability to inflict violence. For some respondents, these factors were seen in a wider context and associated with social issues, social change, disorder, and organizational services. Others saw these factors as directly related to personal and family problems, family role models, education, upbringing, and culture. The variety of explanations confirms that GBV is a complex and multifaceted social issue, requiring responses at various levels.

Practical community-level actions mentioned included several efforts currently ongoing in the *ger* areas, such as community patrols, alcoholic anonymous groups, neighborhood activities, and business incubation centers. The main purpose of these initiatives is to prevent crime and violence, and to increase community mobilization. For instance, community patrols greatly contribute to protecting the safety of girls and women in public spaces, and there are several business incubation centers promoting women's business initiatives and economic empowerment of women. Nonetheless, due to the lack of financial resources, and the limited scope of possible actions, community interventions cannot fully mitigate all serious GBV risks in urban *ger* areas. Respondents considered that a coordinated response is necessary from the government-led MDTs mandated under the LCDV, Law on Child Rights, Law on Child Protection, and the Law on Management of Administrative Units. This process relies on effective cooperation between *khoroо* governors, social workers, family doctors, and frontline practitioners like *kheseg* leaders and police officers who have direct engagement with communities. The multidisciplinary

service providers also need to have strong knowledge and the right attitudes to address cases of domestic violence.

4. *Public Space Safety Concerns for Women and Girls*

Abuse and violence against women and girls in public spaces and public transport is a matter of concern for urban *ger* residents. Harassment and violence in public transport might be associated not only with stereotypes and social attitudes toward girls and women, but also with the absence of special clauses on protection in the Transport Law of Mongolia.²⁸ The respondents emphasized that issues such as inadequate sanitation conditions and hygiene facilities and weak urban planning, negatively affect girls and women traveling in urban *ger* areas. Some risks could be eliminated through the redevelopment of streets within *ger* areas. In particular, redevelopment should promote measures for resident-friendly environments such as creating additional exits, expanding narrow streets, installing street lighting, use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) in critical areas, and improving household sanitation infrastructure and practices.

The research results show that *ger* area girls and women are often exposed to harassment that in some cases result in sexual abuse when walking in *ger* areas, using public spaces within their neighborhood, and when traveling on public transportation. The respondents, for instance, cited the instances where men of different age groups were staring at them, pushing, touching, and following them from the bus stops. The respondents stressed numerous risks and unsafe locations for girls and women, such as two large food markets (Chingeltei District), gathering points of drunk people near bus stops (Dambadarjaa in Sukhbaatar District), areas surrounding shops that sell alcohol, and narrow and remote streets along gorges.

5. *Current Government-Led Actions to Address Gender-Based Violence in Urban Ger Areas*

The *khoroos* in the sample are trying to address GBV in the communities through patrols and by installing street lighting and CCTV. A protocol is in place to receive domestic violence distress calls through a police helpline, which is followed by a risk assessment by police officers. In case of high risk, referral is done to either hospitals or shelters through MDT. Some of the local governments collaborate with NGOs to reduce alcoholism and domestic violence. However, these initiatives cannot fully prevent GBV occurrence in public and private spaces. The respondents viewed current efforts to respond to domestic violence at the *khoroos* level as inadequate, not reaching the community as a whole to make lasting change and have an impact. They would want to see more professional, GBV-trained practitioners across the spectrum of service providers (including social workers, medical doctors, police officers, and psychologists) at primary social work services, health organizations, and police units.

Given the limited number of shelters and one-stop service centers run by the government and NGOs in Ulaanbaatar city, there is a need for more physical infrastructure that responds to domestic violence. Considering this, the research findings reaffirmed the need for infrastructure to protect GBV and domestic violence victims, as well as attendant social and support services. Existing protection of domestic violence victims is inadequate and the risks were revealed in instances when victims had no other option but to return home to live with the perpetrators after staying in a shelter. Both FGDs and individual interviews revealed that GBV survivors are in need of adequate legal protection and access to victim-friendly intervention and protection services, such as shelters and longer-term transitional

²⁸ Government of Mongolia. 1999. *Transport Law of Mongolia*. Ulaanbaatar.

houses. The revised Law of Mongolia on Social Welfare²⁹ and the revised LCDV provide a legal framework for outsourcing the management of state-funded shelters to NGOs accredited in the provision of quality professional services for GBV survivors, to run the shelter through the state budget, covering particularly the variable costs. Accordingly, newly adopted regulations for shelter and associated services stipulate that services to be provided in the shelter shall be covered by central and local budgets.³⁰ The existing standard for shelter and services also states that services shall be free of charge.³¹ In regard to transitional houses, there is no regulatory framework in place.

D. Recommendations

The following recommendations to address GBV in urban *ger* areas were developed based on the findings from the study.

1. *Improving Intersectoral Institutional Coordination*

Intersectoral coordination among actors mandated to prevent and address GBV is needed and could be improved through the following:

- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the grassroots and municipal level officials who supervise MDTs;
- preparing precise terms of reference for MDT members;
- enhancing coordination among line sectors providing MDTs with supervisory and methodological guidance;
- including MDTs in the sectoral plans and reports of the justice, social protection and welfare, health, and education sectors to ensure MDT services are integral to those sectors' operations; and
- dedicated training to police officers to handle cases of GBV.

2. *Use of Behavior Change Communication*

BCC is an effective tool. Children need to be taught about personal space safety. Parents, guardians, teachers, and social workers can help to create an environment where children learn about and respect the differences between people. Mobilizing civil servants (i.e., *khoroо* police officers, social workers, and family doctors) to pursue canvassing techniques at a grassroots level either verbally or by handing out leaflets could be an effective way of disseminating information in urban *ger* settings, particularly as perpetrators tend to take control of family members' access to information.

The content of BCC campaigns that sensitize the public on GBV should be easy to understand and should be appropriate for the community or target audience. Outreach should be done in interactive and interesting ways, allowing participants to experiment with new behaviors, attitudes, and understanding,

²⁹ The law stipulates that victims of violence and children in high-risk conditions shall receive community-based welfare services, which can be outsourced to citizens, business entities, and NGOs. Province, district, and municipal social welfare agencies shall be in charge of selecting those citizens, business entities, and NGOs (Government of Mongolia. 2012. *The Law on Social Welfare*. Ulaanbaatar. Article 18; provisions 18.1, 18.2, 18.2.2-18.2.4, 18.5, 18.6).

³⁰ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. 2017. Regulations for Shelter and Associated Services. *Labor and Social Protection Ministerial Order (A/116)*. Ulaanbaatar.

³¹ The Standardization and Measurement Authority. 2009. *National Standards for Shelter and Services*. Ulaanbaatar (MNS6040:2009).

while facilitating peer learning. Having a social, cultural, and legal environment that encourages positive attitudes and behaviors and condemns negative attitudes and behaviors is imperative for effective BCC.

The BCC activities should be carefully designed with clear content and message. Methods should provide participants with an opportunity to practice learned behavior. Activities should reach out to all groups of society, especially those who are isolated, discriminated against, abused, or exploited. These activities are not one-off, but rather extended and frequent so that attitudes and behaviors can be influenced. Impact assessments of BCC can help in fine-tuning and adapting messages and methods.

3. *Service Provision*

Given the multidimensional nature of GBV and domestic violence, it is critical to ensure cross-sectoral coordination and synergy for service provision. Key recommendations include the following:

- Improve emergency reporting mechanisms and immediate police intervention to respond to incidents of violence in urban *ger* communities especially in places identified as unsafe for women and girls. Consider emergency public phones directly connected to central police information systems, making immediate intervention possible, and explore the use of new mobile technologies to enable rapid reporting of risk and danger through mobile applications.
- Improve the capacity of MDT personnel working at the primary administrative units to deal with and respond to victims of GBV, from emergency and first response, to counseling stages.
- Enhance the capacity of shelters to receive victims.
- Invest in rehabilitation services and infrastructure, such as transitional houses for victims to restore livelihoods during or after divorce proceedings. Besides safety assurance, such accommodations could serve for skills building activities for GBV survivors.
- Consider programs to facilitate entrepreneurship and income generation opportunities to improve livelihood of victims through financial assistance or other mechanisms such as soft loans.

4. *Community Engagement*

To support community development, good neighborhood initiatives, and zero tolerance attitudes toward GBV, the following are recommended:

- Increase public awareness on the different forms of GBV, and related legal and regulatory frameworks.
- Promote community action in protecting women's and girls' safety in public spaces and public transport.
- Establish informal support systems for disadvantaged individuals in isolated areas. These can be through interpersonal communication, connectivity, and cooperation among *ger* area residents, which can provide disadvantaged groups with the opportunity to socialize with neighbors.
- Provide support for men in households exposed to or at risk of domestic violence at *khoro* and *kheseg* levels; namely, by providing individual or group counselling, conducting trainings and discussions on nonviolent problem-solving methods, and hosting opportunities to share experiences. Initiatives could include mobilizing young and jobless men for community patrolling, which will not only increase community safety but also create jobs among men, potentially reducing alcohol abuse.

- Undertake holistic approaches to establish a social, cultural, and legal environment that supports GBV elimination, victim protection, and intolerance toward violence.

5. *Ensuring Public Space Safety for Women and Girls*

Safe, affordable, accessible, and reliable public transportation is crucial to enabling girls' independent movement and access to education, health, and other important services.³² Experiences from other countries show that ensuring passengers' safety through legislation and policy measures, and adopting regulations that prevent psychological and sexual harassment on public transportation, considerably improves safety and security for girls and women.

To ensure girls' and women's safety in urban *ger* areas public spaces and on public transportation, the following prevention and intervention measures are recommended:

- good urban planning (e.g., establishment of adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, and redevelopment of streets within *ger* areas by promoting a resident-friendly environment, creating additional entrances and exits, expanding narrow streets, installing more lighting and CCTV, and improving household sanitation infrastructure and practices);
- technical and financial assistance to conduct in-depth analysis on social and gender dimensions of public space safety;
- professional staffing and effective maintenance of new social service infrastructure (i.e., shelter, transitional house to be built under local redevelopment planning initiatives);
- infrastructural changes, such as installing CCTV, lighting, and emergency telephones in all dim areas, including in buses, bus stations, bus stops, and parking areas;³³
- investigation of high-risk places that pose threats of sexual harassment, violence, and exploitation;
- improved mobilization of community organizations and community members in the protection of citizens;
- awareness raising on public space safety particularly of women and girls;
- policy dialogue on legal reform to ensure safe public transportation conditions; and
- training and sensitization on GBV prevention for personnel who work in the transport sector, as well as for commuters.

IV. PROGRAM DESIGN FEATURES TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The recommendations provided by participants in the complementary study on “Rapid Assessment of Gender-Based Violence in Urban *Ger* Area Communities” were translated into practical actions through the program, Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and *Ger* Areas Development Investment Program—Tranche 2. Specifically, the design of the program was transformed and improved to accommodate a number of elements to prevent and respond to the issue of GBV and domestic violence. By doing this, the program increased its development potential from a traditional urban infrastructure project, into one that responds to the voices of women in *ger* areas. The program included the following actions responding to the findings of the qualitative study:

³² Plan International Australia and Our Watch. 2016. *A Right to the Night: Australian Girls on Their Safety in Public Places*. Melbourne.

³³ L. Levaque. 2016. *How to Integrate Violence against Women Prevention, Response in Urban Development*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.

- (i) **Enhance mobility, safety, and security of women and girls in public spaces** through (i) lighting installed along the improved roads; (ii) 25 cameras installed in streets of program sites; (iii) peer educators (female and male) trained on public space safety for girls and women at each school in the subcenters; (iv) trainings conducted on violence against women and girls targeting adolescent girls at the schools in each subcenter; and (v) trainings for construction workers on gender equity in labor relations including labor exploitation.
- (ii) **Improve response to GBV** through (i) establishment of a transitional house for domestic violence survivor women in Denjiin subcenter with the capacity to accommodate 20 women and children for a year; (ii) establishment of skills-building or business development programs in the business incubators for victims of domestic violence; (iii) training of MDTs on prevention and response to domestic violence against women and children; (iv) awareness-raising programs for adolescent girls and boys on public and private space safety, including BCC campaigns in schools; (v) a multipurpose community development service center; and (vi) four new kindergartens with capacity for 100 children each.
- (iii) **Stronger institutional capacity**, for officials of different administrative levels on effective prevention and response to public and private space safety including GBV. More importantly, the program plans to provide recommendations for the preparation of a regulatory framework including standards for transitional houses for domestic violence survivor women. Community consultations in the preparation of subcenter plans and redevelopment processes, promoting gender parity in participation is at the core of the program. Following the practice established in Tranche 1 of the program, quotas for women's participation have been set for the community development councils, and small and medium-sized enterprise development councils.

Other recommendations resulting from the study and not included in the scope of the program, such as direct support to improve the capacity of shelters, capacity building for intersectoral coordination, policy training, and direct livelihood alternatives for survivor women have been taken up by the Government of Mongolia and are being considered under upcoming interventions with ADB support.³⁴

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusive and sustainable development cannot be achieved in a context where an estimated 1 in 3 women worldwide are still victims of GBV in its various representations.³⁵ This working paper has presented the pioneering experience of using complementary studies on GBV and public space safety for women and girls as part of the preparation of the ADB multitranchise financing facility, Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and *Ger* Areas Development Investment Program—Tranche 2 (footnote 26). Based on experiences from the study, this paper offers insights and recommendations to improve responses to GBV through physical investment, as well as through institutional responses to domestic violence, and suggests that bottom-up approaches and meaningful consultations can fundamentally impact the program scope enabling the voices of women to be translated into practical actions. Most importantly, the paper has described an experience in incorporating the complementary study results in the infrastructure program design that could be replicated in other ADB operations.

The paper provided insights into the factors affecting GBV in the urban *ger* areas in Ulaanbaatar. Compared to other parts of the city, *ger* areas experience a number of social issues such as poverty,

³⁴ ADB. n. d. *Proposed Grant on Combating Domestic Violence against Women and Children*. Manila (subject for approval by Management in October 2018).

³⁵ WHO, UNDP, and UNODC. 2014. *Global Status Report On Violence Prevention 2014*. Luxembourg.

male unemployment, and alcoholism. The research suggests that unemployment may be a fundamental factor, whereas alcoholism is one of the social consequences of unemployment. The findings suggest that GBV, domestic violence, and alcoholism are associated with men's frustration over not being able to provide livelihoods for their families in line with social norms that dictate male dominance in this sphere. The research identified two primary GBV protective factors at family and individual levels: education, and open, positive, respectful communication between family members. There were disappointingly few zero tolerance attitudes towards domestic violence among the participants. The most common forms of GBV in urban *ger* areas were found to be psychological abuse followed by physical violence. The study also found that girls and women are often exposed to psychological abuse and sexual harassment in public spaces and on transportation within urban *ger* areas.

To address GBV, it is essential to holistically address social problems such as unemployment, labor exploitation, organizational discrimination and alcoholism through the appropriate policies, and a legal framework combined with effective implementation. Physical infrastructure plays also an important role, by making public spaces safe and accessible to all citizens. Physical enhancements such as sidewalks, street lighting, the design and placement of bus stops, information technology systems for first response, and information and communication can reduce the risk of violence against women. The risk of domestic violence can also be reduced for individuals, by investing in shelters and transition houses, and longer-term support services including livelihood and economic opportunity programs.

It is critical to address common stereotypes and negative attitudes in society regarding age and gender discrimination, dispute resolution among couples, acceptance and justification of GBV, and blaming GBV and domestic violence survivors. BCC could be an appropriate tool to target a large number of people with dedicated messages. Informal support systems for helping those exposed to violence need to be strengthened at individual and family levels. Information needs to be targeted at women and men and boys on acknowledging abusive behavior and environments, and understanding the impact of domestic violence on communities and individuals.

The focus community consultations reaffirmed the global lessons from many development initiatives that the key to sustainability is usually not the initial capital investment, but rather how well the investments respond to real needs of end users. This paper underlined the value of using this approach to incorporate gender design features into infrastructure operations with the objective of addressing multifaceted problems, such as GBV. This approach could be replicable in ADB operations in other sectors such as transport, health, education, and urban development across the region.

Following are recommendations on how to incorporate data on GBV into infrastructure operations.

1. Evidence-based participatory planning

- To assess the community needs and priorities, (i) take a bottom-up approach through meaningful community consultations, and (ii) ensure equal participation of women and adolescent girls, as well as men and adolescent boys in the identification of priority safety issues in public and private spaces.
- Ensure women and girls are provided with adequate and appropriate channels during due diligence to voice their specific concerns, needs, and priorities.
- For sensitive aspects, such as GBV and domestic violence, it is important to complement poverty and social analysis at due diligence with a separate complementary qualitative study to examine in depth the nature and magnitude of concerns.
- Evidence-based planning requires thorough qualitative research and analysis.

2. *Studying sensitive aspects such as GBV and domestic violence as part of due diligence and program and/or project design*

- Qualitative research on sensitive aspects requires specific and tailored instruments including a specific methodology.
- Unlike other studies, GBV and domestic violence studies require high ethical standards and confidentiality during and after the research; standards provided by WHO should be used.
- Tailored training program for researchers is crucial to ensure accurate practical application of methodology, and to ensure that high ethical standards are followed, and confidentiality is respected.
- Preparation of public space and transport services program/projects should consider assessment of the safe physical environment during due diligence.

3. *Possible actions to prevent and respond to GBV and/or domestic violence in urban development interventions*

- Conduct in-depth assessment involving men and women on their needs, roles, and experiences in urban spaces.
- Engage men and boys to change social norms about the roles of women and men.
- Challenge attitudes and practices that drive or condone GBV; in particular, address victim-blaming.
- Develop gender-sensitive safety criteria for integration in urban planning and design standards, and/or guidelines for creating safe and women-friendly cities and neighborhoods (footnote 32).
- Make facilities safe for women and girls living with physical disabilities.
- Promote the development and enforcement of public safety policies for public transportation and their use by operators to ensure a public transportation network and related spaces free of sexual harassment.
- Conduct regular passenger satisfaction surveys and personal safety audits.
- Pilot women's economic empowerment programs as part of livelihood improvement strategies.

Translating Women’s Voices into Action in Mongolia

Addressing Gender-Based Violence through Investments in Infrastructure

The paper highlights the results of a study on public and private space safety of women and girls in urban *ger* areas in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. By examining how a study on sensitive issues, such as gender-based violence and domestic violence, informed the program design, the paper showcases the successful experience of incorporating gender design features into infrastructure operations in urban *ger* areas in Ulaanbaatar, home to about 60% of the city’s population. A core message of the paper is that similar opportunities could be identified and replicated in different ADB sector operations, such as transport, health, education, and urban development.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

