



Ministry of Women & Child Affairs
and Social Development

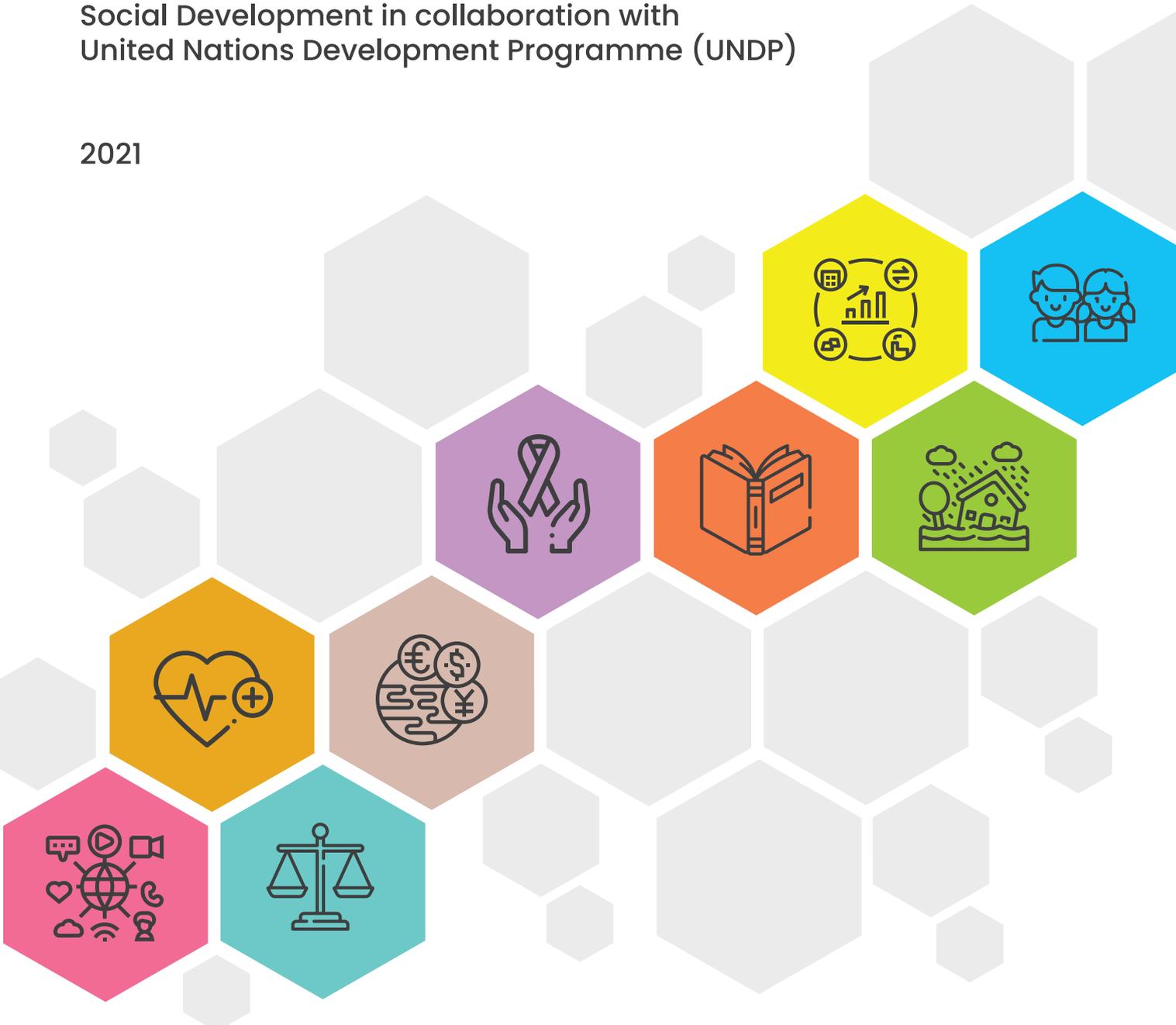


National Action Plan to address Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka (2016-2020)

What have we achieved & what next?

Ministry of Women & Child Affairs and
Social Development in collaboration with
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

2021



What is this NAP?

The National Action Plan (NAP) to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka was formulated in 2016, by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs as the lead Ministry, with fourteen other sectoral ministries¹ and affiliated agencies with technical assistance provided by UNDP. The NAP to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence was ratified by the Cabinet of Ministers on 7th June 2016 without any reservations.

The NAP had the vision of a “Violence-free life for women and children” and was based on a National Policy Framework founded on a set of principles that upheld human rights, gender equity and equality and zero tolerance of SGBV. The NAP adopted a three-dimensional approach: prevention of SGBV, intervention in situations of SGBV and advocacy for policies and laws to address SGBV.

The Plan was implemented by the respective Ministries, utilising State and Donor funds, with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs coordinating and overlooking the process. A few UN agencies, INGOs, CSOs and private sector entities joined in to implement the NAP effectively.

List of sectoral ministries that were involved in the formulation and implementation of the NAP:

Child Affairs Sector:
Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

Disaster Management Sector:
Ministry of Disaster Management

Economic Development and Employment Sector:
Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs with support from the Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, Ministry of Plantation Industries and Department of ‘Divineguma’

Education Sector:
Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission and
Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training

Empowerment and Prevention Sector:
Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

Foreign Employment Sector:
Ministry of Foreign Employment

Health Sector:
Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine and
Family Health Bureau

Justice Sector:
Ministry of Justice

Mass Media Sector:
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Mass Media

This NAP became a landmark plan in that it brought a multi-sectoral & holistic approach to addressing SGBV in Sri Lanka and received acceptance as an exercise that was recognised in granting the GSP+ status for the country. The CEDAW Committee in its deliberations commented: “This activity is a progressive step taken in addressing SGBV by the country”

¹ Please note that the list of ministries and their mandates are changed by 2022

How it came about?

The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs took an informed decision to develop a National Action Plan to address the multitude of issues related to SGBV in the country and led the formulation of the NAP. UNDP as an agency that had implemented several strategic interventions to address SGBV in Sri Lanka, collaborated as a leading technical partner in this endeavour.

The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs as the lead ministry, invited fourteen sector ministries to engage in the process and develop nine sector plans to address SGBV, which were later compiled into one NAP. The sector plans were developed by respective Sectoral Committees that comprised of officials and experts from the sector ministries, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and academia. The overall process was coordinated by a NAP Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs.

The Sectoral Committees had multiple and lengthy discussions in developing sector specific plans, facilitated by two consultants going through a few steps: identifying key issues, analyzing existing policies and programmes, identifying best practices, and finally developing strategies and key activities after exhaustive deliberations. The entire process was highly consultative and was open for input by different actors and CSOs who were actively working to minimize SGBV in the country.

Why did we look back?

It was necessary to look back and reflect on the implementation of the NAP to understand what change was brought about by the effective implementation of the NAP and to assess the challenges that the multiple partners faced in its implementation. The review was done with all sector ministries and with key actors who were part of the implementation.

The objectives of the Review of the Implementation of National Action Plan (NAP) to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence 2016-2020:

1

To understand the level of implementation of the NAP, its impact within each sector and countrywide.

2

To identify new areas of interventions and other emerging challenges and opportunities.

3

To give direction in the formulation of the new NAP to address SGBV (2023 – 2027).

The review findings and suggestions made at the consultations will be invaluable input to the next NAP that will cover the duration 2023-2027.

What we saw

The overall Implementation of activities stipulated in the NAP was 62% and out of the 419 planned key activities, 106 are completed, 154 are ongoing and 159 are not yet implemented.

Implementation under the tri-pronged approach: Prevention, Intervention & Policy Advocacy

Prevention

The implementation of the activities under prevention was 64%, which is more than half of the planned activities. All sectors have carried out activities to prevent SGBV both at primary and at secondary levels which are essential in addressing SGBV. The preventive work was multi-dimensional in nature and was supported by donors, INGOs and UN agencies and supplemented by the State funding. Preventive activities included community awareness and sensitization on issues of SGBV, initiatives that aim at attitudinal and behavior changes, community vigilance, men engagement, empowering and capacitating women and girls to say no to violence, and media campaigns both electronic and print.

Intervention

The progress of sector-wise implementation of interventions was 57%. Most of the interventions to address SGBV were part of the sectoral programmes under the annual sector plans and budgets.

Policy Advocacy

The implementation of the activities under policy advocacy was 67%. Almost all sectors had sector policies that had provisions for addressing SGBV issues relevant to that sector.

Sector Progress and Good Practices



Sector: Child Affairs

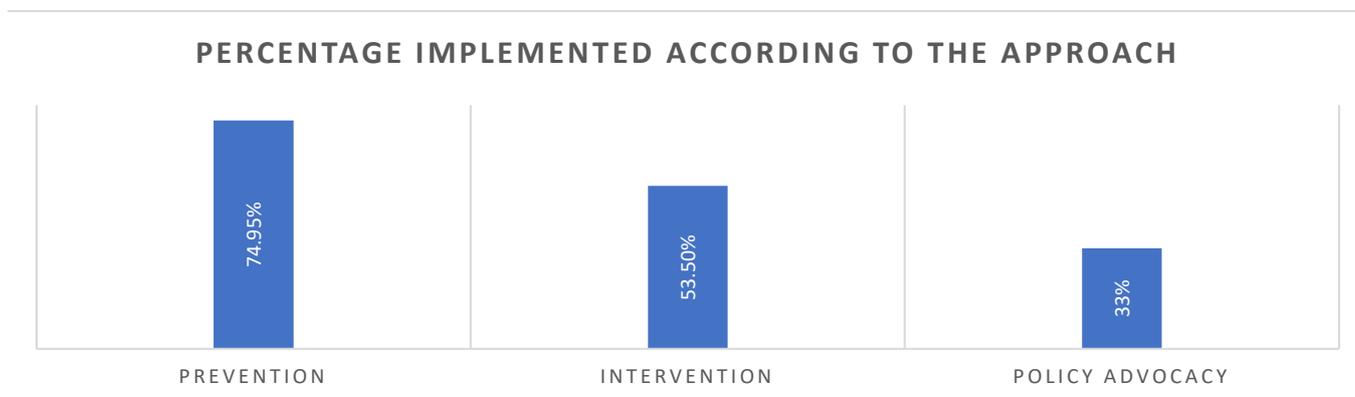
The MWCA is at the apex of governing the child sector affairs and is responsible for the implementation of the provisions in the Child Rights Convention (CRC) through local policy frameworks and laws. Sri Lanka, as a member State of the United Nations, was a signatory to the CRC in the year 1990 and ratified it on 12th July 1991. This was followed by the preparation of a Children's Charter approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Three key institutions are responsible for conducting programmes in the child affairs sector. The Children's Secretariat established in 1979 and functioning under the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MWCA) is the key institution mandated for ECCD. The other two key institutions involved in child protection and child

welfare are the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) and the Department of Probation & Child Care Services (DPCCS).

Performance:

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 58.95%.



Good Practices:

1

Setting up of District Child Development Committees

At the district level, **District Child Development Committees** have been set up to facilitate the monitoring of the advancement of child rights in each district consisting of government officials drawn from different sectors, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious leaders. The committee reports to the District Secretary and is also responsible for referrals.

2

Programme for preventing Teenage Pregnancy

A training module with training tools specifically designed for preventing teenage pregnancy was developed. Two Training of Trainer (ToT) programmes were conducted with officials responsible for securing the rights of children at the District and Divisional levels. 89 ripple effect trainings were conducted by the trainers who participated in the ToT and each WDO/CRPO developed a plan to conduct activities related to the prevention of **Teenage Pregnancy** at district and divisional levels.

Suggestions for Child Affairs sector in the next NAP:

1. Develop priority action to ensure ECCD policy implementation.
2. Activities that are implemented in government schools are to be introduced to private and international schools as well.
3. To take a more child-centric approach in planning the activities as opposed to a disciplinary approach and design activities from the parental point of view.
4. In combating child abuse, promote better mechanisms to link with CSOs and other stakeholders.
5. To set in place a legal framework that goes beyond the child sector and include and coordinate with the Ministry of Justice and Law Reform.

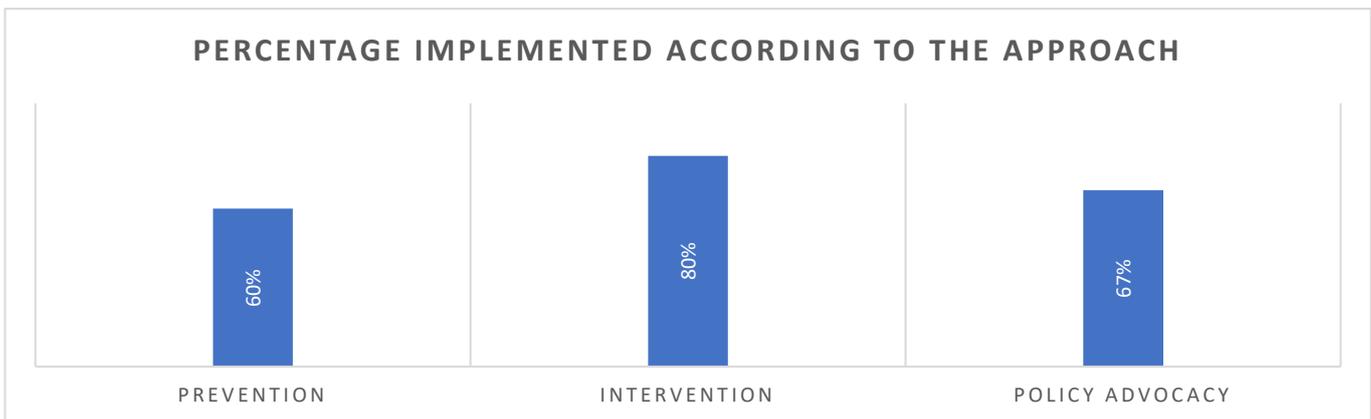


Sector: Disaster Management

Disaster Management is a sector that is of great importance for Sri Lanka, a country plagued with natural, and human-made disasters from time to time. With the tsunami of 2004 being the worst of all, the Government and society had to take up the challenge of providing relief to affected communities and recover from the loss and damage caused by the tidal waves, while rebuilding the country. Since then, various initiatives have been launched such as the enactment of the Disaster Management Act of May 2005, after which the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM), Ministry of Disaster Management and the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) were established for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Act. This was followed by the establishment of the institutional framework to address Disaster Management in the country holistically.

Performance:

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 68.4%



Good Practices:

1

The Disaster Management sector has developed comprehensive guidelines on gender equitable response to disaster management. The guidelines were disseminated at different levels – district and divisional.

2

The National Disaster Management Plan (2020-2025) that was recently developed, integrates sufficient and constructive policies on addressing SGBV and proposed Coordination at the national level to ensure inter-agency support to address SGBV in disasters.

Suggestions for Disaster Management sector in the next NAP:

1. Establishment of a database on SGBV during disasters and formulate a policy to maintain records of SGBV incidents in disaster/post-disasters.
2. Establishment of a mechanism to link survivors with support services, especially with health sector care services: Mithuru Piyasa/Natpu Nilayam.

3. Strengthening the professional counselling services to respond to survivors in the event of a disaster/ post disaster.

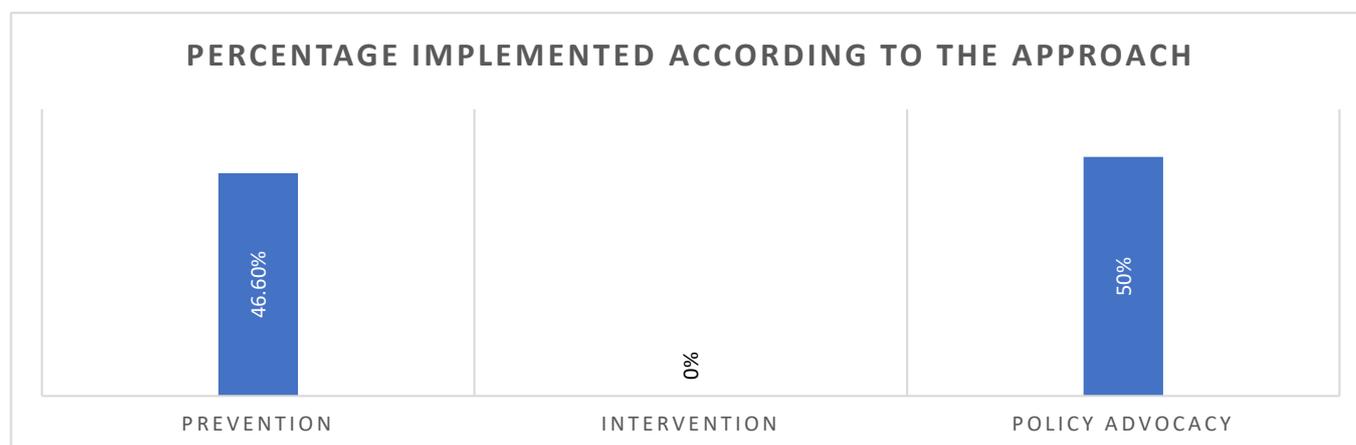


Sector: Economic Development and Employment
Mercantile Sub sector Lead Ministry:
Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations

The Ministry of Labour & Trade Union has the vision of “A satisfied productive labour force” and the mission is to “Contribute towards the socio-economic development through the promotion of industrial peace and harmony, social protection rights at work and productivity”. The Department of Labour (DoL), under a Labor Commissioner, carries out activities pertaining to the security and welfare of labour.

Performance:

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 46.25%



Good Practices:

1. A GBV care point “Mithuru Piyasa/Natpu Nilayam” has been established at the Medical Officer of Health Office within the Katunayake export processing zone in collaboration with the MoH as a service point of the Mithuru Piyasa network and is functioning well.
2. Action research on Domestic Workers in Sri Lanka is conducted by CENWOR, for which the Department of Labour has contributed through the facilitation of dialogues and forums. Accordingly, cabinet approval has been obtained to include domestic workers into the existing labour legislation.

Suggestions for Economic Development and Employment Sector in the next NAP:

1. Complaints can currently only be handled under ‘industrial disputes’ due to the lack of awareness amongst labour officers about the 2016 Circular on setting up Anti-Sexual Harassment Committees etc. Therefore, the anti-sexual harassment policy needs to specify a mechanism for complaint handling as well.

2. The National Institute of Occupational Safety, Health and National Institute of Labour Studies and the Employers Federation of Ceylon to be included in the discussion and determining of responsibility to implement activities.
3. Guidelines for standardization of hostels to be developed in collaboration with the BOI.



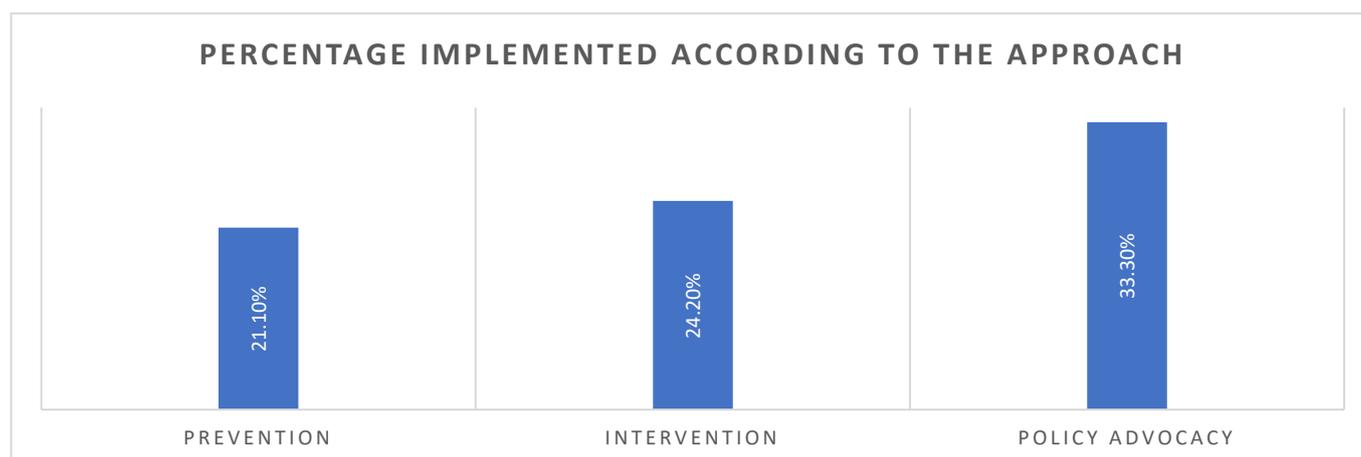
Sector: Education

Education has long been a high priority in Sri Lanka. Policymakers and public administrators have accepted that improved education is a facilitator of economic growth, improved health indicators and a necessity for all areas of development and progress of the country, Chapter VI – of the Constitution of Sri Lanka directs that the State Policy should ensure: “*Complete eradication of illiteracy and the assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels*”.² In the context of the education system practiced in Sri Lanka, general education refers to formal education offered at primary and secondary levels by government schools, private schools and other educational institutions. In addition, the NAP included the Higher Education Sub Sector and Vocational and Technical Education Sub Sector.

Sub Sector: General Education

Performance:

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented by the Education sector is 24.93%



Good Practices:

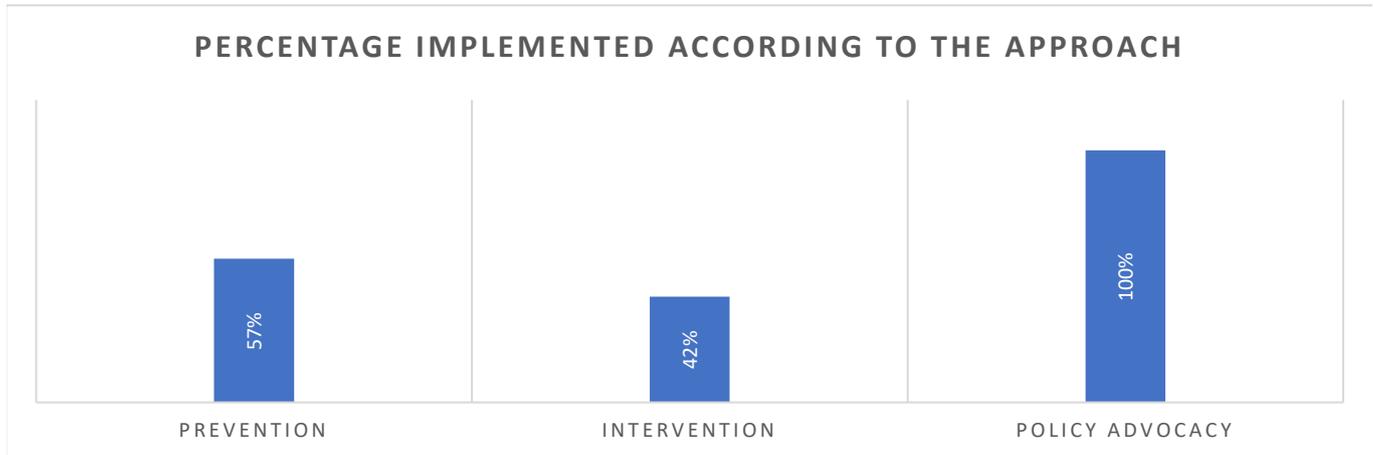
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Trainings conducted in collaboration with SLCERT, ICTA for 10 master schoolteachers from 99 education zones on cyber safety and security (990 teachers in total). Zonal Training modules were developed and about half of teachers in schools where ICT is taught had been trained. Training of Principals of schools in Western province is completed.

Sub Sector: Higher Education

Performance:

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 66%



Good Practices:

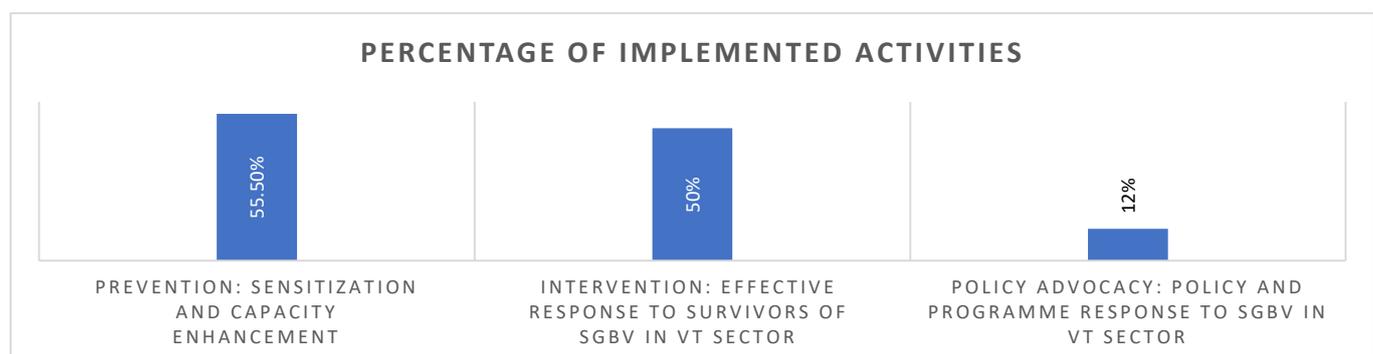
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The Centre for Gender Equity/Equality (CGEE) is the implementation arm of the UGC Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality. The Standing Committee is the standard setter, policy maker, regulator, and arbitrator of UGC policy on gender equity/equality in Sri Lankan Universities. The Centre for Gender Equity/Equality is headed by a director and administrative staff who reports back to the Standing Committee. Comm. Circular No. 12/2019: Strategies/Actions to be implemented to combat Ragging & Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in State Universities and Higher Educational Institutes and Circular No. 04/2020: Complaints on Ragging and Sexual and Gender based violence (SGBV) made by student and staff members to the Universities/ Campuses/Institutes outlines the mechanisms to be set up in universities to combat SGBV and ragging.

Sub Sector: Vocational and Technical Education

Performance:

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 42%



Good Practices:

1

A special quota for female students has been assigned in most courses especially those usually considered as “male jobs” such as automobile and IT sectors.

Suggestions for Education sector in the next NAP:

1. A well-developed reproductive health booklet to update the knowledge of students is available but is not used in schools. The next plan should have mechanisms incorporated to overcome such barriers. Comprehensive education on reproductive health to adolescent students is to be made compulsory.
2. Improvement of counseling services, appointment of psychologists/counsellors at school levels are identified as imminent needs.
3. Ensure an agency wide approach to addressing SGBV in the skill development sector and initiate dialogue with all TVET providers led by the State Ministry of Skill Development, Vocational Education, Research, and Innovations.
4. It is suggestive to link the existing referral system on SGBV with the TVET sector as well and capacitate the counselling divisions in the TVET service agencies to access the referral system.

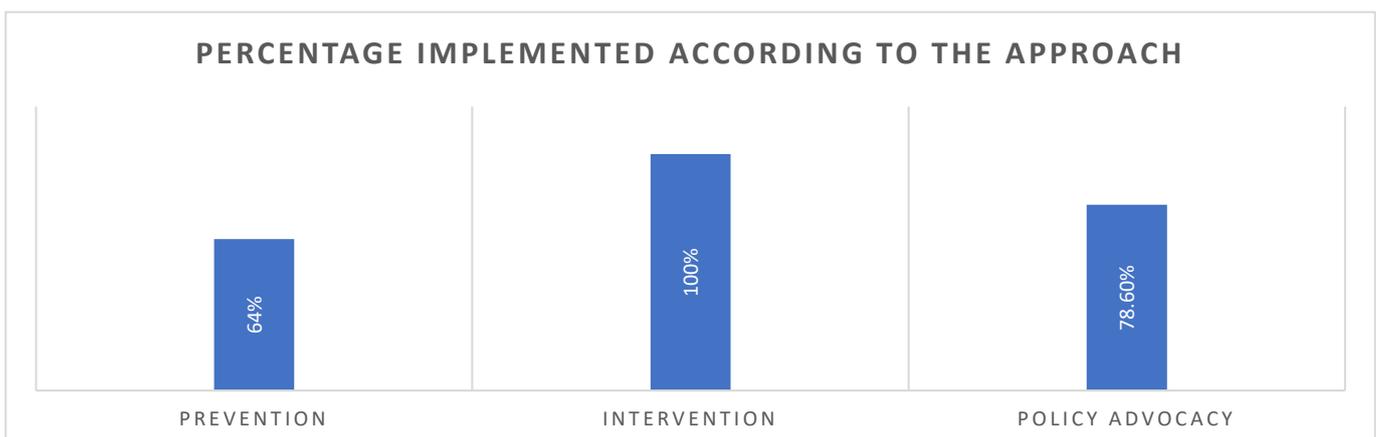


Sector: Empowerment and Prevention

The empowerment & prevention sector plan was developed under the full participation and direction by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (MWCA). The other statutory institutions affiliated to this Ministry are the Sri Lanka Women’s Bureau, National Committee on Women, Department of Probation and Child Care Services, National Child Protection Authority and Children’s Secretariat.

Performance

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 77.3%



Good Practices:

1

Allocations were released to construct new Policewomen & Children Bureau desks in 42 police stations (North Central -5, Uva-4, Eastern-7, Northern-7, Northwestern-7, Central-4, Western -1, Sabaragamuwa-3, Southern -4) and provided equipment for 45 police stations.

2

Two capacity building programmes were conducted for the officers of the Police Child and Women Bureau on responding to SGBV in Mannar & Hambantota.

3

Under the focus area of transitional justice of affected communities, the approach was more aligned to the prevention of SGBV by empowering women economically. It was a conscious decision made to provide livelihood assistance for the affected women as part of this plan in view of the lack of income of the women, especially the FHHs in the affected communities.

Suggestions for Empowerment and Prevention sector in the next NAP:

1. Provide necessary equipment to the 13 Counselling Centers established islandwide. It is suitable to supply eye-catching objects such as toys, wall hangings, framed pictures, and paintings to create an appealing environment for children who come to the counselling centers.
2. Cover all districts in setting up vigilant committees and frequently update knowledge of the vigilant committee members.
3. It is necessary to formulate a family-centered programme and offer counselling assistance to couples/families who need support. Where needed the health staff, Police and other relevant official support can be organized as part of this family support programme.
4. Initiate action to prevent existing delays in enforcing laws on rape cases in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Law Reform.

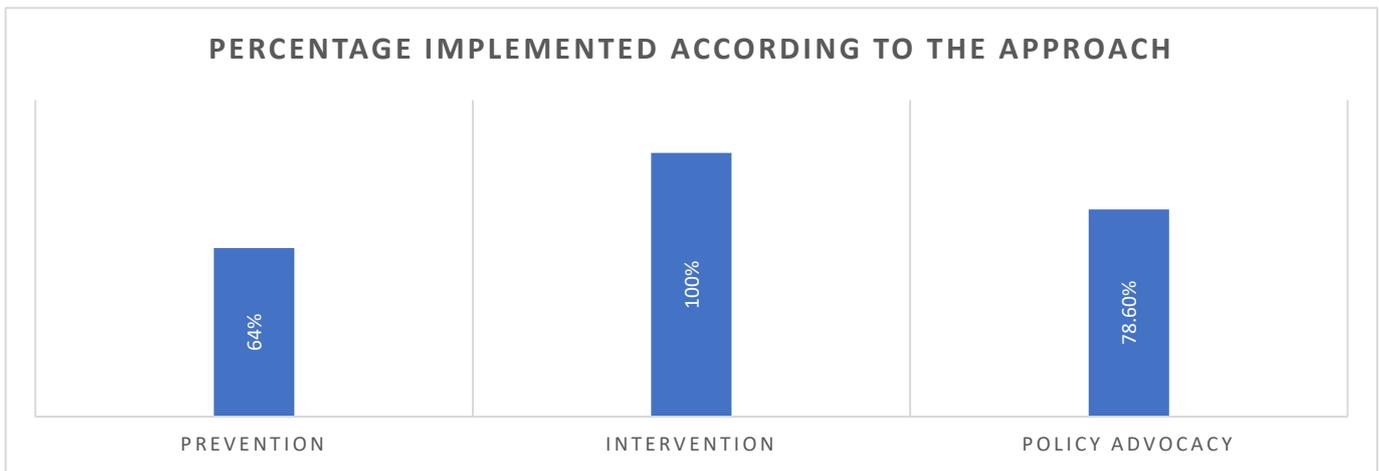


Sector: Foreign Employment

Sri Lanka's labour migration sector makes a considerable contribution to the growth and development of the country. It continues to be an important and essential sector that reduces domestic employment pressures.

Performance

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 70.8%



Good Practices:

- 1** Family care plans are prepared which includes psycho-social support to the victims of SGBV among the returnees and family members. Action was also taken to link up with the regular referral system for services.
- 2** Public opinion on female workers needs to be changed and more positive attitudes and behaviours must be promoted. The SLBFE has done considerable work to build such positive outlooks and carried out activities to published paper articles on positive contributions of migrant workers, conduct Radio/ TV discussions, and produce a documentary/ drama on the positive contribution of migrant workers.
- 3** Capacity development activities were carried out with 448 Development Officers, staff of Sahana Piyasa & The Airport, and all newly appointed mission staff. A standard module was developed for the capacity building programme with support from UN women. Manual of procedures for diplomatic officers in labour divisions was scanned for gender sensitivity and a section on SGBV redress strategies was incorporated. This manual guides the mission officers in their support to the SGBV survivors among migrant workers.
- 4** The diplomatic missions maintain a list of lawyers who are referred when legal aid is needed by migrant workers during overseas employment.

Suggestions for Foreign Employment sector in the next NAP:

1. Better coordination among Ministry of Foreign Employment and SLBFE in implementation of the sector plan to address SGBV.
2. Enhancement of economic benefits to returnees.
3. Suggest a national strategy to engage with banks to address the gap in financial assistance to migrant workers who wish to start enterprises.



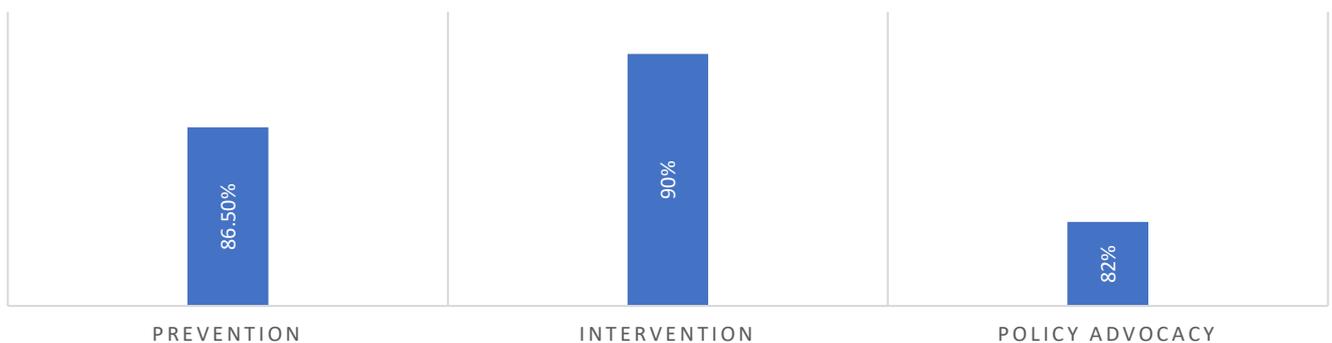
Sector: Health

The Health Sector has a long established operational structure and a delivery system which has two distinct but inter-linked domains: preventive and curative. The Family Health Bureau (FHB) is the Directorate of the Ministry of Health (MoH) entrusted with the responsibility of addressing GBV and Gender issues. Its' Gender and Women's Health Unit established for this purpose is headed by Programme Director, a Community Health Physician who gives leadership in implementation of the Policy Framework and the NAP.

Performance

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 86.3%

PERCENTAGE IMPLEMENTED ACCORDING TO THE APPROACH



Good Practices:

1

Standard Operative Procedures (SOPs) to address GBV targeting preventive health (PH) staff have been developed with translation into Sinhala and Tamil being completed. ToT programmes on these SOPs have been completed for all Consultant & Community Physicians in all provinces (100%), all Medical Officers Maternity and Child Health (100%). ToT for Public Health supervisory staff, training completed in Western (province 100%) & North Central Province. (100%). Grassroot-level public health worker (Public Health Midwives) and public health Inspector training programmes in the Western Province was completed (with MoH and UNDP funds).

2

Establishment of GBV Care Centers: MithuruPiyasa/Natpu Nilayam, within the state hospitals utilizing the human resources available within the health system. At the time the NAP came in to effect, only 32 new Centers were in place. By way of implementing the National Action Plan, a further 47 new Centers have been made operational in 79 hospitals, providing dedicated services to survivors of GBV.

3

Establishment of a 24/7 hotline through MithuruPiyasa/Natpu Nilayam with the financial support of UNFPA with 15 experienced medical officers who had served in Mithurupiyasa /Natpu Nilayam centers providing services in all three languages with island-wide coverage. Hotline 0702 611 111

Suggestions for Health Sector in the next NAP:

1. The new plan should include activities for popularizing MithuruPiyasa/NatpuNilayam network and improve the collaboration with other relevant sectors including state agencies so that these service points are maximally utilized.
2. Regularize collaboration activities through official circulars directed from relevant ministries to the heads of institutions of such staff.
3. Review of the pilot on Implementing the Sexual Harassment policy



Sector: Justice & Law Reform

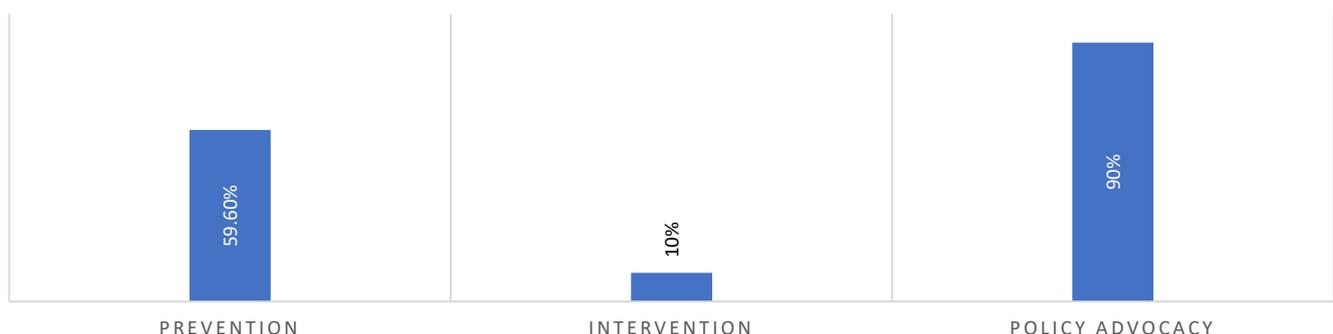
Equal access to justice is enshrined in core international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers highlighted the shortcomings of the justice sector in 2016, including delays in the administration of justice, and lack of transparency of the justice sector. Similar observations were also made in the Universal Period Review of Sri Lanka in 2017. Sri Lanka's justice system faces a myriad challenges with respect to effectiveness and efficiency. The United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services Package (ESP) for women and girls subjected to violence was launched in 2018 in Sri Lanka, which outlines a detailed package of interventions in the police and justice sectors as well as four other sectors.

Performance

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 69.6%

PERCENTAGE IMPLEMENTED ACCORDING TO THE APPROACH



Good Practices:

1

Ministry of Justice is in progress of amending the Code of Criminal Procedure Act, No.15 of 1979- to introduce pre-trial procedures and to have day-trials in High Courts.

2

According to a recent assessment undertaken by UNDP Sri Lanka and the State Ministry of Women and Child Development (2021), calls to the main SGBV support helplines 1938 (women's helpline), 1929 (child helpline), WIN 24 helpline, Mithuru Piyasa (hospital desks & hotline in Panadura), 1926 (Mental helpline) increased during the COVID-19 lockdown period in 2020, and shows a marked difference than calls received in the previous year.

3

Under Article 136 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court commenced digital hearings including the electronic filing of applications, motions, appeals and other documents. The Court of Appeal too commenced the virtual hearing of criminal appeals with the appellant's attendance secured through remote/digital means from prison.

4

Awareness Programme for Protection of women's rights conducted by the Legal Aid Commission: Programme for Seethawaka Free Trade Zone Staff, Programme for School Children- Anula Vidyalyaya Nugegoda, Programme for Seethawaka Free Trade Zone

Suggestions for Justice and Law Reform Sector in the next NAP:

1. Follow up and expedite: Committee appointed to review family laws, amendment to the civil procedure code in draft stage, minimum age of marriage etc.
2. Under the digitalization process of data, recording of SGBV incidents will be included in a limited form - a dialogue is further needed in this regard.

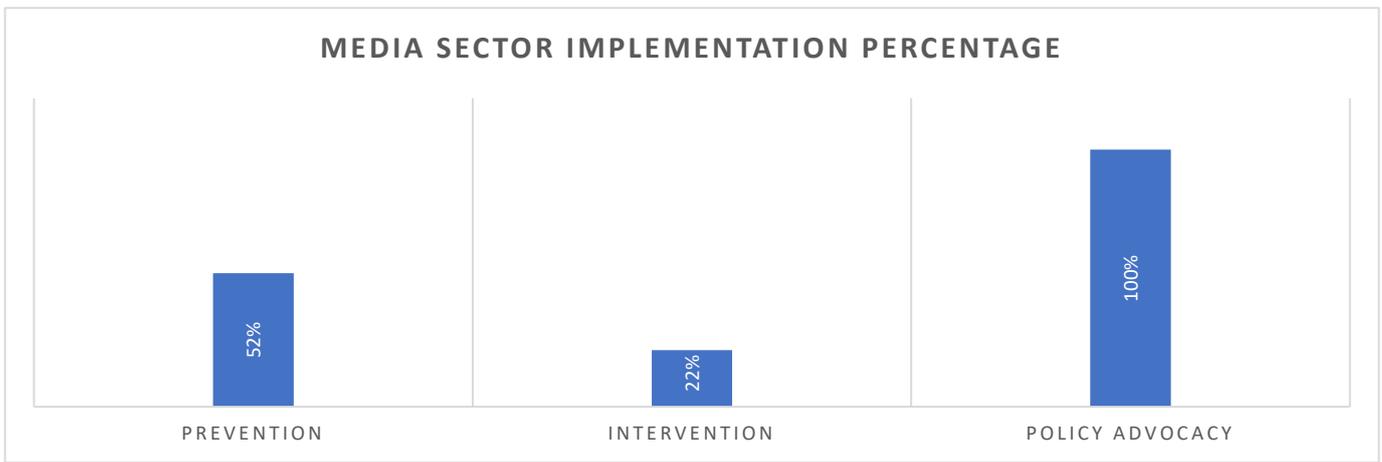


Sector: Media

Media plays a vital role in combating SGBV. Media can create broad-based awareness on the incidence and prevention of SGBV. Media includes electronic media, print media, social media, and investigative journalism.

Performance

Mean Value on the % of activities implemented is 58%



Good Practices:

- 1** An Act is being drafted to regularize the issuing of media licenses - a unit is to be established to review and monitor conditions under the license - a code of ethics will also be drafted under the provisions of the Act. Being sensitive to women and children's issues is a condition under licensing.
- 2** Formulation of an editor's code of practice is in the pipeline. Complaint mechanism is in place for print media. Monitoring of ethical reporting, use of sensitive language, gender sensitive reporting is captured under 'ethical reporting'. Sensational reporting is discouraged.
- 3** Short-term gender training for 100 media personnel was completed and the content covered was: gender-sensitive storytelling, social sensitive reporting, gender-sensitive reporting, gender sensitivity in digital storytelling, online and offline spaces for gender-sensitive stories and media advocacy on gender sensitive media, social sensitive journalist digital tool kit, and promoting gender-sensitive entrepreneurship through media spaces.

Suggestions for Media Sector in the next NAP:

1. A subcommittee on women and children to be appointed in the media sector.
2. Consult all groups engaged in print, social, electronic media as part of the consultative process for NAP formulation.

Overall Recommendations for the formulation of the next NAP to Address SGBV 2023-2027

No.	Recommendation / Suggestion
1	<p>Ensure horizontal Policy Congruence:</p> <p>It is necessary to do a detailed analysis of sectoral policies to identify the policy provisions that are relevant to address SGBV in the respective sector. This will give a strong foundation for lobby, coordinated and multi sectoral strategizing to address SGBV in the country.</p>
2	<p>Ensure whole of Government and Whole of Society approach to the formulation and implementation of the National Action Plan.</p> <p>NAP implementation at different levels of Governance structure and engagement of women, men and other gender identities in the formulation and implementation of the NAP is essential in ensuring zero tolerance and violence free society in Sri Lanka.</p>
3	<p>The review report on the 2016-2020 NAP implementation and the DCS Women Wellbeing Study 2019 is to be utilized as the baseline in the formulation of the next NAP to address SGBV.</p>
4	<p>SDG 2030 Agenda: SDG Goal 5 and cross-cutting targets are to be referred to in the next NAP format.</p>
5	<p>Broader consultation: Expand the consultation to include provincial, district and divisional level stakeholders.</p>
6	<p>Include strategies to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/ manifestations related to SGBV: ethnic, racial, HIV, conflict, LGBT, disability, sex work, migration, refugee, pandemic, and conflict situations etc.</p>
7	<p>Budget Allocation: There must be a budget line dedicated for the implementation of sectoral plans to address SGBV under each line Ministry.</p>
8	<p>Each sector needs to formulate a resource mobilization strategy to implement the next NAP.</p>
9	<p>Establish a comprehensive, well-coordinated and multi-sectoral monitoring mechanism to track the implementation of the NAP and for trouble shooting.</p>