

## UN Women Global Initiative “Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls”

Cities working across the globe to increase safety in public spaces

Launched in 2010 in five pilot cities – **Quito (Ecuador), New Delhi (India), Kigali (Rwanda), Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) and Cairo (Egypt)** – the Global Programme “Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls” is generating innovative approaches that could be used for worldwide replication by municipal authorities working in partnership with civil society, women’s and grassroots groups, national and local governments, the UN system, research organizations, private sector and the media.

UN Women’s catalytic role has helped to advance the global movement to make cities safer for women and girls. In 2011, UNICEF joined UN Women and UN Habitat to help expand the Safe Cities effort in the Safe and Sustainable Cities programme in: **Greater Beirut (Lebanon), Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Metro Manila (Philippines), Marrakesh (Morocco), Nairobi (Kenya), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), San José (Costa Rica) and Tegucigalpa (Honduras).**

In 2012, in line with UN Women’s Universal mandate, cities from developed countries are also joining the Safe Cities Global initiative to share their knowledge, and strengthen and expand their programming to prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces.



In cities all over the world, every day, women and girls face sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces as they go about their daily routines—whether on city streets, buses and trains or in their own neighbourhoods. Such daily occurrences of violence infringe upon their rights and freedoms as equal citizens to enjoy and pursue freely opportunities for autonomous mobility, education, work, recreation and participation in political life. Despite affecting millions of women and girls, such forms of violence have long been tolerated, largely neglected by policies and laws.

*The Safe Cities Global Initiative* is working to address this challenge and to make cities safer for women and girls. It builds on earlier efforts undertaken by women’s rights organizations and local governments in cities around the world, and is mobilizing an increasing number of partners at all levels of society.

Initial activities in the local communities revealed that, often for the first time, women and girls are identifying sexual harassment and fear of violence in public spaces as barriers in their lives. The programmes have also demonstrated a high level of community ownership engaging women, men and youth who are working together on solutions. By launching their safe city programme, local governments have committed to develop strategic and effective prevention strategies that other countries and municipalities can learn from, and adapt.

Some “Quick Wins” for cities since the launch of the Global Initiative include:

- In March 2012, Quito adopted an amendment to the city ordinance on eliminating violence against women and girls to also include violence in public spaces.
- The ‘Cartas de Mujeres’ (Letters from Women) public awareness campaign, a successful joint initiative by UN Women, the Municipality of Quito and the German Development Cooperation agency (GIZ), is encouraging women to break their silence and speak out about their experiences. It has gathered 10,000 letters to be submitted to Ecuador’s Executive and Justice authorities.
- In New Delhi, Safe Cities’ models and approaches are being integrated into new government social protection schemes.
- In Kigali, the mayor’s office is planning for safe cities measures to be included in its city plan and budget. It is also advocating for reforms to an existing law on gender-based violence to include measures on sexual harassment and violence in public spaces.
- Port Moresby’s National Capital District is working on expanding its Safe City work into additional areas of the city.
- In Cairo, Women’s Safety Audits — which empower local women to identify safety and security conditions in their neighborhoods and communities and build women’s safety partnerships with local authorities -- are mainstreamed into the planning processes of the Egyptian Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development.

In terms of strengthening local capacity, results have already included the production of path-breaking methodologies, including a **global impact evaluation strategy and training curriculum** to support the scaling up of the programme through 2017 and beyond with the potential to reach millions of city dwellers.

**Specific strategies of the global initiative include:** capacity-development of key actors at the local, city and national levels; policy-oriented advocacy aimed at introducing practical safety measures (e.g. area improvements in such places as transportation hubs, markets and school routes) and comprehensive policy responses; empowering women about their legal and human rights; increasing public awareness and community mobilization; working with the media and engaging men and boys to advance and promote gender equality and ending violence against women and girls; and integrating gender perspectives into socio-economic and urban development plans, including gender-responsive budgeting.

Expected impact level results in the lives of women and girls include:

- reduction in sexual harassment and violence
- reduction of fear in using public spaces
- increased autonomous mobility and comfort by women and girls in accessing and using public spaces

### Global Initiative Time-line

**2011-2016:** Development and implementation in Cairo, Kigali, New Delhi, Port Moresby, Quito; **global upscaling and adaptation of the emerging model approaches to reach at least 35 cities in 5 years** (UN Women Strategic Plan indicative target). The **Scale up of methodologies, tools and approaches** is already underway in **10 cities**.

**2016-2017:** Impact evaluation, continuous global roll-out and advocacy on the safe cities holistic approaches.

### Highlights of 2013 Activities

- Global advocacy to prevent sexual violence in public spaces to be undertaken with partner cities during key international fora: WACAP-8 (World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty) in Dublin, February 20-21, 2013; and Commission on the Status of Women in March in New York, 2013
- Participatory programme design workshops to be completed in each city, with emphasis on ensuring community and local government ownership.
- Creation of gender sensitive public infrastructure and social planning in markets, public transport, etc.
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- Second Stakeholders' Meeting to be held in 2013, following the successful completion of the Inaugural Stakeholders' Planning Meeting in Cairo in 2011—a major capacity development, learning and planning activity for existing and new safe cities initiatives.

- Training workshops, based on the comprehensive Global Training Curriculum.

- Establishment of a Global online Community of Practice: Safe Cities Learning Network.

- Local participatory monitoring mechanisms to be developed and tested by the cities, for capturing and sharing results and lessons learned.

### Benefits in Joining the Global initiative

- ✓ Access to UN Women's Online Community of Practice: Safe Cities Learning Network that provides members with access to rosters of safe cities versatile experts, Technical Guidance and Global Curriculum, good practice compendia, contact information for safe city focal points in each city, etc.
- ✓ Opportunities for partners to promote their model approaches and tools through different media: Global Advocacy fora, Expert Group and Annual Stakeholders' Partners Meetings, online Community of Practice, city- to city exchanges, etc.

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