

How is GBV Perpetuated at Different Levels?

Time: 2 hours

Activity Objective:

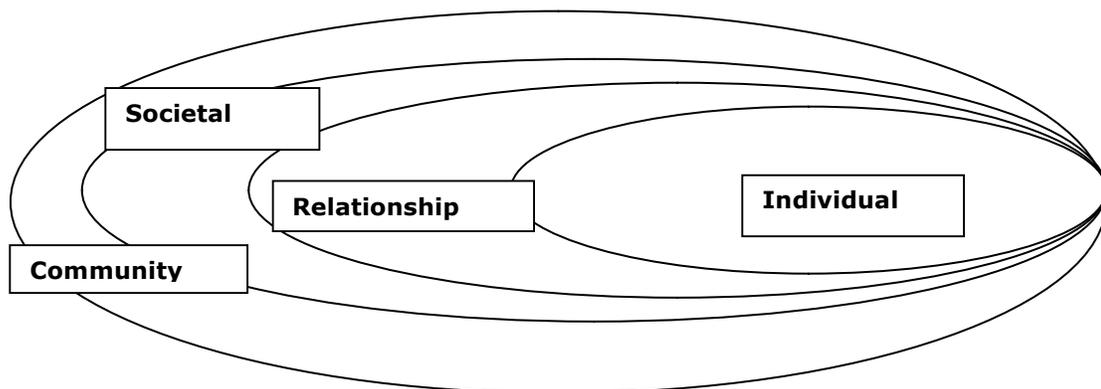
Use the ecological model to explain how gender norms and relations at multiple levels—from intimate partnerships to policy and laws—can either perpetuate or help to eliminate gender-based violence.

Materials:

- Printed flipcharts:
 - Ecological Model and Definitions for Ecological Model
 - Group Work Instructions for Ecological Model
- Handout of Ecological Model
- Character statements (photocopied, cut into strips so each participant can read one)

Activity:

1. Explain that, as we learned in earlier activities (especially defining gender-based violence and violence across the lifecycle), gender-based violence can be perpetrated by any number of actors—partners, family, community, and the state. These individuals can also play a role in perpetuating as well as preventing gender-based violence. In fact, all individuals in the community can play a role.
2. Then refer participants to a flipchart with the Ecological Model drawn on it. Ask participants how many have seen the model before? Ask how many have used it. Referring to the fact that many people use the model to better understand GBV and identify how to respond to it, present the details of the model. (Adapted from Heise, L. 1998. "Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework." *Violence Against Women* 4(3): 262–290.) Explain that researchers developed this model to conceptualize the varying factors at each level—individual, relationship, community, and societal—that cause and allow gender-based violence to take place.



Define each level in the model as follows, referring to pre-printed flipcharts with each of the following definitions at the top of each flipchart:

Individual level: biological and personal history factors among both victims and perpetrators

Relationship level: proximal social relationships, most importantly those between intimate partners and within families.

Community level: the community context in which social relationships are embedded, including peer groups, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

Societal level: larger societal factors that “create an acceptable climate for violence, reduce inhibitions against violence.”

3. Ask participants for examples of what they think are factors in perpetuating violence at each level and list them next to the corresponding circle on the flip chart. (See handout on the ecological model for examples, but do not distribute handout until the end of the exercise.) Facilitate a brief discussion on how the factors and each level are linked with one another, recognizing that each level influences the other. Emphasize that understanding gender-based violence requires drawing on each of the levels of influence.

***Facilitator Note:** The ecological model can sometimes elicit debates over how each factor is categorized, and what should be considered a factor or not. If so, you may emphasize to participants that the model is not necessarily perfect, but is intended to conceptualize the various influences on GBV and thus help design interventions that prevent violence.*

4. Go on to explain that in this next part of this exercise we will explore how the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of others create community norms and how these norms influence change in the community. Norms are unwritten rules in a society that guide how people behave. Norms can and do change over time.

5. Randomly distribute character statements—one to each participant. (If there are less than 30 participants, eliminate statements so that the number of statements matches the number of participants. Be sure that Kebede’s and Almas’ statements remain in the pile. And be sure that there is a roughly equal number of statements from each of the categories of the characters: I/R—individual/relationships; C1—community with weaker institutional affiliation; C2—clear institutional affiliation; and S—society.)

6. Share the flipchart instructions:

- Find others with your level (with I/R, C1, C2, or S).
- Read your character statements out loud to each other.
- Discuss and record your responses to the following (on one flipchart each):
- How might your character perpetuate violence, according to the statement?
- How could the character instead play a supportive role?

- Please label your flipchart with your group’s “level” at the top, and choose a presenter.

7. Before having people break into their groups, explain that because all of the characters are linked in some way to two individuals who are at the heart of the story—Alma and Kedebe—we would like them each to read their statements first. Ask the persons with Alma’s and Kebede’s statements to raise their hands, and have each character read their statement two times.

Then ask participants (including Alma and Kebede) to get into their groups, explaining that they will have 30 minutes for their work together.

8. After 30 minutes, bring the groups back together. First, thank the participants for having played the different characters in their groups. Welcoming them back to their roles as participants in the workshop, ask each group to report out. After each group reports out, ask the others if they have any clarifying questions.

9. After all the groups have presented, ask the larger group for comments and questions.

- How was this exercise for you?
- What struck you most about the exercise?
- Was it hard or easy to identify the ways in which the characters may have perpetuated violence? Why or why not?
- Was it hard or easy to identify opportunities for change? Why or why not?
- What are the most difficult factors to address when preventing GBV? Why?
- What factor is the most important to address if one wants to prevent GBV? Why?
- Did this activity give you ideas about interventions that you can incorporate into your own work?

10. Wrap up the activity by reflecting on how inter-dependent social and cultural norms are for perpetuating violence—but also, because of this interdependence, how successful changes can also have an add-on effect (if done with the proper supports—i.e., to avoid backlash) across multiple levels.