UN Women Safe Cities Evaluation

Final Report

Social Research Center (SRC),

American University in Cairo (AUC)

December 2022

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Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **AUC**  | American University in Cairo |
| **CAPMAS** | Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics |
| **CDB** | Cairo Center for Development Benchmarking |
| **CEDAW** | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| **CSO**  | Civil Society Organization |
| **CEWLA** | Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance  |
| **DiD** | Difference in Differences |
| **EDHS** | Egypt Demographic and Health Survey |
| **EVAW**  | Ending Violence Against Women |
| **EIPR** | Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights  |
| **FGD** | Focus Group Discussion |
| **GBV**  | Gender-based Violence |
| **GCR**  | Greater Cairo Region |
| **GERAAS** | Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System |
| **GOPP** | General Organization for Physical Planning |
| **HRBA** | Human Rights Based Approach |
| **IRB** | Institutional Review Board |
| **ISDF** | Informal Settlements Development Facility |
| **MoHP**  | Ministry of Health and Population |
| **MoJ**  | Ministry of Justice |
| **MoSS**  | Ministry of Social Solidarity |
| **NCW**  | National Council for Women |
| **NSEEW** | National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women |
| **OECD-DAC** | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development -Development Assistance Committee |
| **PPE** | Personal Protective Equipment |
| **RES** | Regional Evaluation Specialist |
| **SCGP**  | Safe Cities Global Program |
| **SES** | Socio-economic Status |
| **SH/SA** | Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault |
| **SRC**  | Social Research Center |
| **SV** | Sexual Violence  |
| **SVAWG** | Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls |
| **ToC**  | Theory of Change |
| **UNDP**  | United Nations Development Program |
| **UNEG** | United Nations Evaluation Group  |
| **UNFPA**  | United Nations Population Fund |
| **UNODC**  | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| **VAWG**  | Violence Against Women & Girls |

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team is grateful to the more than 150 stakeholders including the beneficiaries of the Safe Cities Programme, government counterparts, development partners, private sector partners, civil society representatives and to the UN Women Egypt Country Office who participated in the evaluation process in person, over video calls, online sessions and communication exchanges. We appreciate their willingness to engage during uncertain times and the rich quality of their contributions.

We are especially indebted to Chaitali Chattopadhyay, UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist, Arab States, Christine Arab, UN Women Egypt Country Representative, and Gielan El Messiri, UN Women Egypt Deputy Country Representative, for the time they dedicated to supporting the evaluation and facilitating the engagement of partners and stakeholders. We also thank the entire UN Women Egypt Country Office team for their engagement during this process.

Executive summary

**The Safe Cities Global Program (SCGP) in Egypt**

Safe Cities Cairo was a UN Women flagship program to promote an integrated community-based approach to address issues and forms of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in public spaces. Program activities began in Egypt in 2012 as one of the global pilot initiatives and continued to operate for eight years at both the community and national levels. The programwas the first program of its scale and longitude, inspired by prior UN-Women projects mainly in Latin America, which showcased empirically the feasibility of crafting models for safe public spaces for women and the potential for scalability. The programme Goal was to produce, test, and ultimately offer wide application models for preventing and reducing violence, particularly sexual violence, against women and girls in public spaces in cities, enabling them (women and girls) to move more freely and safely, and to increase their ability to exercise their right to enjoy such spaces.

**Evaluation Purpose, Objective, Scope and Use**

The purpose of the end-term evaluation of the Safe Cities program was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender responsiveness, impact, and sustainability of its interventions primarily on the community level as well as to document the diverse set of actions and interventions that fell under the Safe Cities label. The evaluation also aimed to generate an evidence base to inform any potential possible future scaling-up of the Safe Cities interventions and to gauge limitations and improvement for future iterations of the program. In this regard, it was primarily a summative evaluation but also had a formative component built into it.

The primary users of this evaluation were UN Women Egypt Country Office, UN Women head quarter based technical team responsible for this program, national partners, and program donors.

The evaluation covered the period from 2011-2019, focusing primarily on the three intervention areas selected in 2011 for the Safe Cities interventions, Ezbet El Haggannah, Mansheyyet Nasser, and Imbaba. To measure the impact, the evaluation also covered the three control sites- Al-Salam al Sharkeya, El Ebagaya, and Boulak El Dakrour.

The evaluation also covered programme interventions that took place at the national level. In this regard, it covered all the interventions undertaken by the Safe Cities Programme.

**Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluation was a utilization-focused, participatory, gender-responsive evaluation that used feminist approaches and adopted a mixed-method approach that went beyond the old “hat” of quantitative/qualitative and engaged with changes at multiple levels to ensure that the complex gender issues were well captured and analyzed. The evaluation adopted a mix of theory-based and quasi-experimental design and adopted a human rights-based approach (HRBA).

It presented quantifiable evidence of impact through quantitative survey analysis using the quasi-experimental Difference in Difference (DiD) design. The qualitative impact analysis was underpinned by the approach to impact assessment of Qualitative Impact Assessment protocols (QuIP).

**Conclusions**

**Conclusions 1:** Safe Cities was a unique, well-funded, relevant, broadly supported, and effective long-term programme that had been an element in Egypt’s changing landscape and ecology on recognizing, preventing, and addressing gender-based violence, with a specific attention to safety in the public space. The programme theory of change had relevance at the national level as combating sexual violence had gained traction over the past decade. The theory of change focused on essential pillars of societal change; local ownership, national policies, urban development, and social norms, to reduce the risks of gender-based violence and lead to women’s empowerment. Focusing on such composition of issues in one program was unprecedented and much needed, as stated by different stakeholders, national partners and most importantly, the beneficiaries. However, the relevance of the theory of change to local communities was less obvious. The assumptions implicit in the theory of change concerning diffusion and the dynamics of change limited its use as a modelling, analytical and evaluative framework. The path dependence of these dynamics was not explained but was assumed. They therefore were difficult to measure, verify or describe.

**Conclusion 2:** The programme established national partnerships, collaboration with UN agencies, and a network of partner NGOs to realize sustained change. It was evident that the program had taken significant steps with regards to enhancing the capacity of duty bearers through advocacy and technical support for a more equitable legal system and accessible service provision, enhancing the awareness of program participants, especially youth volunteers, women, and children, through various innovative interventions. It also managed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the volunteers and community committee members, women and children to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces. Involvement of men specially by including the tuk-tuk drivers contributed towards increasing their awareness and knowledge and changing some of their attitudes towards women’s rights. However, the misfit between the scope of activities and the scale of the challenge, inadequate response to the growing addiction issues, inadequate engagement with male and inaccessibility of schools posed obstacles to the full realization. Programme monitoring system was also limited in capturing actual change in behavior and attitude as it was predominantly focused on monitoring process rather than actual change. The monitoring systems also did not measure social norms change. The programme had a lot of reporting but little analysis, synthesis or grounded research that narrated the intervention from the point of view of locals and community members. The investment in reporting and monitoring should have been matched with an investment in research that documents the processes of change and challenge enacted by the programme.

**Conclusion 3:** Improving small parts of the infrastructure in Imbaba, Ezbet El Haggannah, and Zenin provided more safety for target communities.However, coordination between these many partners was weak at times, thus challenging the realization of the full potential of interventions. In addition, the programme intervention needed a multi-partner coordinating mechanism to take the intervention out of the ‘project’ mode and mainstream its message through networking and alliance building. For example, the infrastructure interventions required better partnerships with Ministry of Interior/ Ministry of Education/Cairo governorate/municipalities to facilitate upgraded facilities’ maintenance, administration, and management. Further, the market was physically upgraded but its potential to enable women’s economic empowerment was modest. More planning on the economic viability of the market was needed as the main planning/goal was to make the Market safe.

**Conclusion 4:** Safe cities programme did influence the way Cairenes perceived harassment and gender rights. It positively impacted the capabilities of women and girls by contributing to their access to work, education, social networks, dignity, security and to leisure. The newly acquired knowledge about self-defense, protection services and life skills were also valued by the women and men beneficiaries. It also had a positive unintended impact on the lives of its beneficiaries in terms of their later life choices such as education and career paths. The programme also managed to reach the non- beneficiaries. However, it underestimated the challenges posed by a complex urban landscape. The theory of change lacked a holistic approach that connected public and private risks of violence, economic empowerment, decent work, and the engagement of men. The programme did not recognize the deeply rooted patriarchal norms that were entrenched in households starting at a very young age, as activities focused primarily on the capacity building of women, girls, and boys to recognize violence against women in public spaces. Awareness sessions conducted by national NGOs such as SAFE addressed issues of violence and of domestic and child abuse. But the focus of activities remained in the realm of the public and skirted issues of private transgressions and of power inequalities within the home. The Continuum of violence was recognized in some training and awareness activities, but actual support and services were slow to follow. The action was taken in public media campaigns and in some policy and advocacy work that addressed violence and harassment in mass transport and on university campuses. But the ways in which patriarchal norms and private arrangements exacerbate risks of violence and disabled women’s autonomy were not directly addressed at the community level. The approach/narrative used to engage men also relied on paternalistic guardianship principles and patriarchal norms, to a large extent reinforcing the gender stereotypes. Work within communities that sought to engage men required more in-depth engagement with increasing problems of drug use and insecurity. The theory of change did not consider, and the programme also did not address how gender norms changed or in what ways the change was at risk. Overall, it was found to be gender responsive and to some extent gender transformative in terms of the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale GRES developed by UNDP.

**Conclusion 5:** The programme had some sustainable effects at the national, community and personal level. Changes in laws and the introduction of formal services that protect women and criminalize abuses were achieved. It also nurtured multiple networks of intermediaries. The knowledge and skills gained by the direct beneficiaries of the programme also had a potential to sustain but the diffusion of equitable gender norms and safety for women in public spaces required continued and substantial investment far beyond the existing interventions.Lack of an infrastructure that mainstreamed anti-harassment work and provided services, structural weaknesses of implementing NGOs including lack of support for community-based civil society organizations that did not have the resources and expertise to sustain work beyond donor funding as well as contextual factors such as multiple emerging challenges to safety and security had accentuated risks in public spaces for both women and men and had impacted the sustainable change. The program’s exit strategy was also mentioned as a risk to sustainability as it was unforeseen by participating NGOs and had an adverse effect on their and the volunteer’s morale.

**Recommendations**

1. Give active civil society organizations long term support to enable sustained action and enable NGOs committed to gender equality.
2. Coordinate the work of gender equality with other UN agencies so as to achieve effective national partnerships at the level of ministries, governorates, and municipalities relevant to the planned program activities and in particular when high-cost projects such as urban upgrading are concerned.
3. UN Women should continue to support the NCW as a national partner to coordinate the allocation of funds and interventions through formation of a structured committee of monitoring and evaluation.
4. Consult with local NGOs throughout program stages to ensure timely and clear communication and adaptation to changing context and conditions in which NGOs operate.
5. UN Women & donors should standardize monitoring tools, if applicable, and regularly triangulate/ validate data.
6. Engage men as from the onset. Male engagement is imperative to eliminating violence against women. Projects and programs design, implementation plans, and budgets need to engage men from the beginning of the program. Projects and programs also need to articulate public and private spheres of influence while refraining from narratives of guardianship or patriarchy.
7. Change is slow and monitoring or evaluating the impact of interventions on social norms and behavior is complex. UN Women should acknowledge structural and contextual problems that challenge interventions and influence the theory of change and accordingly incorporate this ecology into program design. It should focus on and invest in measuring social norms change.
8. Engage with digital spheres, as a space for violence against women but also as an opportunity for intervention, in their own terms and not as proxies of the real world.
9. Transcend small project cycles and build up programs to match expectations of impact to scale of intervention and ensure that time is factored in. Scale is an essential ingredient of success. Interventions that seek to inform social behavior in dense, dynamic, and deprived urban contexts can only realize broad change if their scale is appropriately large and extensive.
10. Develop an approach to economic empowerment that aims to engage women in decent/dignified and/or protected work and avoid investing in unsustainable and unprotected work.
11. Continue to invest in legal protection for women and in enabling gender responsive services but audit the quality and accessibility of these services and make funding contingent on basic standards of quality

# The Egyptian Context

Sexual violence is a recognized outcome of gendered power imbalances. The practice is entrenched in daily life in Egypt and enabled by widely accepted patriarchal norms and persistent levels of bodily and personal violations in both public and private spheres. Egyptian girls identify sexual harassment as the most serious risk they face on the streetwith 43 per cent of women and girls (13-29 years) reporting having been subjected to sexual harassment[[1]](#footnote-1). Far from being a personal matter, safety, security, and bodily autonomy are aspects of human rights and of development that have far reaching significance. The UNFPA’s study on the economic cost of violence in Egypt conducted in 2015 estimated the total cost of violence against women in Egypt 6.5 billion annually, with more than 500 million lost annually on Violence Against Women and Girls in public spaces.[[2]](#footnote-2) Socially and politically, violence is an aberration that limits the capabilities of survivors as it curtails mobility, opportunity, participation, voice and agency.

The state of denial that pervaded public discourses and which framed sexual violence as a private, rare and a negligible development burden was dented by the activism of feminist civil society in Egypt over the past two decades. Efforts to combat manifestations of gendered injustice were also bolstered by Egypt’s commitment to global gender and development conventions. Egypt is a signatory to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); The Beijing Platform for Action; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and to The Conventions on the Rights of the Child. These global commitments frame national policies on development and on gender equality and have been clearly translated in national regulatory frameworks including Egypt Vision 2030[[3]](#footnote-3) and the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030[[4]](#footnote-4).

This readiness for change was the context in which Safe Cities work began in Egypt. However, these activities also coincided with dramatic political, economic, and social transformations affecting the country as a whole (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 political, economic, and social/cultural transformations in Egypt

After January 2011, Egypt faced turbulent new realities, but these structural political schisms enabled a stronger voice for civil society, witnessed new leadership and a reinvigorated public and civil society that accepted the challenge of ending sexual and gender-based violence.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Mob sexual assaults and gang rapes were widely reported, mainly in areas bordering street protests and sit-ins. As a result of these violent and public attacks, several anti-harassment groups and organizations were formed. They include Tahrir Bodyguards- Opanitsh- Harassmap- Shoft Taharoush – Basma and other groups who patrolled dangerous areas, reported on incidents, and documented violations. Other (mostly already established) civil society organizations provided services such as legal aid, shelter, and support to victims of violence. They also lobbied for legal change and the creation of women-friendly policing services. Nazra, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), El Nadeem, and the Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance (CEWLA) are some of the most prominent actors in this field.

Since 2011, women’s bodily integrity had become an issue on the national agenda. In May 2013, the Ministry of Interior established a committee to combat violence against women and respond to sexual violence cases[[6]](#footnote-6). A national hotline was established to receive complaints, and Sexual violence-complaints-focused offices were opened, mainly in Cairo and Giza-based police stations.[[7]](#footnote-7) These units adopted a woman-friendly environment in which complaints could be investigated. The units also provided psychological support and some resources for survivors of gender-based violence.

In January 2014, as a culmination of feminist activism and the work of the National Council for Women (NCW), the Egyptian constitution was amended to include combating violence against women in article (11).[[8]](#footnote-8) In June of the same year, the state amended article (306)[[9]](#footnote-9) of the penal code to include and define sexual harassment as a misdemeanor. This article was further amended in 2021 to make sexual assault a felony with associated harsh penalties. Moreover, the anonymity of both victims and witnesses of incidences of sexual violence was guaranteed. According to article 177 approved in 2020, the identities of survivors of sexual crimes cannot be publicly disclosed and can only be revealed to a court or defendants upon request. The law came in response to women’s tendency to refrain from reporting such crimes in fear of harming their reputation, or of their families, or suffering stigma in this conservative society. Additionally, a special unit inside the Egyptian forensic department in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) adopted a protocol on investigating violence against women.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In 2014, Cairo university established the first committee to combat sexual harassment inside Egyptian universities, which inspired other universities to follow suit[[11]](#footnote-11). A year later, the Egyptian cabinet passed the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (NSVAW).[[12]](#footnote-12) In 2018, the Egyptian Parliament amended the law (30)[[13]](#footnote-13) regulating the work of the National Council for Women by expanding its mandate. Another promising development was the approval of the National Strategy for Women Empowerment (NSWE) in 2017 by the Egyptian government.[[14]](#footnote-14)

These changes allowed for more vocal feminist activism leveraging social media. UN Women, along with partners and especially the National Council of Women were involved in raising awareness and engaging other stakeholders to mobilize against Gender Based Violence by enjoining celebrities, feminists, and youth in a wide range of activities that were well covered by the national media.

Crowd-mapping campaigns that documented incidences of violence and alerted women on safety through interactive maps were introduced through civil society organizations, such as the work of HarassMap.[[15]](#footnote-15) Other social media groups such as *Girls Revolution*, *Femihub*, and *Safe Haven* also emerged as alternative ‘safe’ spaces for women.[[16]](#footnote-16) Furthermore, hashtag activism and the establishment of anonymous platforms also encouraged women to share testimonies without fearing social stigma, blame, or violence. Individual feminists created online platforms like *Assault Police and Cat Calls of Cairo* that not only raised awareness of women and girls on sexual violence, but also aided women and survivors in seeking and finding help. Such digital movements/practices created online spaces that enable “contained empowerment” as they voiced the anger and resistance of Egyptian girls and women. However, such online presence was not reflected in offline activity and action[[17]](#footnote-17).

Women-targeted cyber violence, which is ubiquitous, also remained a concern - with blackmail being the most common form experienced by women. Perpetrators took advantage of social stigma and familial pressures to blackmail women and seek revenge for a break-up, rejection, or in return for sexual favors. Throughout the decade, feminists and civil society actors worked to raise awareness of violence as a social problem that required constant and consistent legal, social, and psychological interventions and support. These political, cultural, and social efforts were a necessary backdrop to any interpretation of changes associated with the Safe Cities program.

# The Safe Cities Global Program (SCGP) in Egypt

The Safe Cities Global Programwas the first program of its scale and longitude, inspired by prior UN-Women projects mainly in Latin America[[18]](#footnote-18), which showcased empirically the feasibility of crafting models for safe public spaces for women and the potential for scalability. The program adopted a human rights-centered, participatory, feminist approach to achieve its goals and outcomes. A central tenet of the program was that violence against women and girls in public spaces acted as a barrier to women’s education, recreation, and full participation in political, social, cultural, and economic life. Women and girls all over the world reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence at some point of their lives[[19]](#footnote-19); despite which, sexual violence continues to be normalized by millions as a natural or acceptable aspect of being a woman.

The programme Goal was to produce, test, and ultimately offer wide application models for preventing and reducing violence, particularly sexual violence, against women and girls in public spaces in cities, enabling them (women and girls) to move more freely and safely, and to increase their ability to exercise their right to enjoy such spaces.

The model(s) was expected to be capable of adaptation and up-scaling, thereby having the potential to make cities around the world safer through the global program’s Theory of Change (ToC): ​​

*If (1) gender-responsive, locally relevant and owned interventions are identified on creating safe public spaces (SPS);*

*if (2) comprehensive policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are developed and implemented;*

*if (3) investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces are effective and accessible to all; and*

*if (4) social norms related to women’s and girls’ rights to enjoy public spaces free from SVAWG are improved;*

*then (5) women and girls are socially, economically and politically empowered in public spaces.*

The Safe Cities Program intended outcomes were:

1) Enhanced capacity of duty bearers, in the implementation areas, to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces.

2) Enhanced capacity of rights holders in the intervention areas to respond to and prevent, VAWG in public spaces.

3) The general public (focusing on individuals residing in intervention areas) is sensitized to be more responsive to and prevent VAWG in public spaces; and

4) Improved local infrastructure that incorporates physical implementation to address women and girls’ safety.

Safe Cities programme was envisioned as a multi-sectoral cooperative design and implementation initiative that included UN partners, civil society organisations (CSOs), research and training partners, and governmental partners.

The overall vision of the initiative was to improve the quality of life of Egyptians through establishing safe neighborhoods and communities free from violence against women and girls. To realize this overall objective, the program adopted a dual track to its activities. On the one hand, the program sought to enhance the awareness and capacity of central, national, and regional official bodies so as to enable fair, equitable, effective, and resolute responses to sexual and violence against women and girls. On the other hand, the program adopted a community-based approach that sought to eliminate the acts of transgression by investing in physical, economic, cultural, and social structures and programs that contributed to the creation of safe public and domestic spaces.

The initial evaluation and assessment of Cairo as a pilot for implementation and the capacity of the local office to execute it was performed by a team of international experts in coordination with Ministry of Social Security (MoSS), Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), civil society partners, and the UN Women Egypt office.

Three areas were selected for piloting and implementation: Ezbet El Haggannah, Mansheyyet Nasser, and Imbaba, while Al-Salam al Sharkeya, El Ebagaya, and Boulak El Dakrour were selected as comparable controls[[20]](#footnote-20) to be used during the quantitative impact assessment baseline and end-line surveys. The neighborhoods were selected according to the criteria set by the Egyptian government and the global program supplemented by a 2007 study conducted by the Social Research Center (SRC) and UN-HABITAT that identified all these areas as being in deprived neighborhoods[[21]](#footnote-21). A deprivation index was constructed for most of these sites. The index was constructed based on the physical and social structure of the sites using GIS data available from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). The interventions sites were mostly in the lower to middle regions of the index. Comparison sites were chosen in such a way that they had as close as possible background resemblance in terms of socioeconomic and socio-physical structure to the selected areas while focusing on their comparability from the perspective of safety of women in the public space. They also had a comparable geographical location that could permit comparison of the results chain.

The programs donors were USAID, the European Union, the Spanish Government, and the Government of the Netherlands with a total budget of $5,341,583.

Safe Cities involved a myriad of stakeholders including UN agencies, international organizations, civil society, government bodies, donors, and beneficiaries. The evaluation team mapped out the list of main stakeholders involved in Safe Cities since its inception. (Annex 2)

The figure below (figure 2) summarizes the timeline for the implementation of the programme

Figure 2: timeline for the implementation of the Safe Cities programme



# The Safe Cities Programme Evaluation

### 3.1 Purpose, Objective and Use**:**

The purpose of the end-term evaluation of the Safe Cities program was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender responsiveness, impact, and sustainability of its interventions primarily on the community level as well as to document the diverse set of actions and interventions that fell under the Safe Cities label. The evaluation also aimed to generate an evidence base to inform any potential possible future scaling-up of the Safe Cities interventions and to gauge limitations and improvement for future iterations of the program. In this regard, it was primarily a summative evaluation but also had a formative component built into it.

The Specific evaluation objectives were to:

1. Assess the relevance of the Safe City program and the extent to which the model responded to the needs of the beneficiaries/agents of change primarily, and also supported the needs identified by the government focused on ending violence against women and girls;
2. Assess and comment on the extent to which the program was implemented in the most efficient manner;
3. Identify effective strategies, barriers and challenges to progress and propose lessons learned and recommendations for improvement and opportunities to explore for sustainability, future programming and its scale up;
4. Document the extent to which the program implemented a human rights and gender responsive approach in the design and implementation;
5. Measure the impact of the program in relation to the strategies, outcomes, outputs and processes which led to that impact, thereby testing the Theory of Change and the validity of the logic model on which the Safe Cities programme was based; and
6. Document lessons learned, best practices, success stories reaching differently positioned women and girls, as well as possible weaknesses and challenges to inform future work of UN Women in programming on ending violence against women in cities, and beyond and to inform scale up models and ensure evidence-based programming.

The primary users of this evaluation were UN Women Egypt Country Office, UN Women head quarter based technical team responsible for this program, national partners, and program donors.

### **3.2** Evaluation Scope, limitations, Risks and mitigation**:**

The evaluation covered the period from 2011-2019, focusing primarily on the three intervention areas selected in 2011 for the Safe Cities interventions, Ezbet El Haggannah, Mansheyyet Nasser, and Imbaba. To measure the impact, the evaluation also covered the three control sites- Al-Salam al Sharkeya, El Ebagaya, and Boulak El Dakrour.

The evaluation also covered programme interventions that took place at the national level. In this regard, it covered all the interventions undertaken by the Safe Cities Programme.

The data collection and consultations for the evaluation took place during rising and falling waves of COVID-19 infections. The public health crisis undoubtedly influenced the evaluation as a whole. COVID-19 had been a fact of life for almost a year when the evaluation research was happening. By then millions of people had lost their livelihoods and thousands had lost their lives (Annex 11).Disease conditions mandated a set of precautionary measures for the data collection. Household visits for the survey had to be conducted in an efficient and timely manner and under strict social distancing and face covering procedures. The qualitative data collection was undertaken in open and well-ventilated NGO premises so as to avoid researchers sitting with groups in congested or closed areas. These precautions most certainly had an effect on who was interviewed (not everyone was familiar with or found it possible to visit NGO premises. Moreover, the site of data collection may have led to a positive bias whereby interviewed persons spoke well of NGOs or remembered activities in which they had participated. The Researchers did their best to account for these effects and to mitigate the potential biases.

Community-level factors also posed a challenge to the evaluation. Cairo is a dynamic and fast changing city. The decade that began the Safe Cities work witnessed multiple changes to the intervention sites. Levels of crime for example had dropped and risen in some sites. Unemployment had increased at the national level and youth employment in the intervention areas reflected this employment challenge. Perhaps, associated with this problem, drug dealing had increased in some areas according to locals and to NGO workers. On the other hand, Ezbet El Haggannah had a new police station and possibly increased/improved policing. There were multiple demolitions, relocations, re-zonings, and dense buildings introduced to Mansheyyet Nasser and Ezbet El Haggannah rendering the urban landscape more complex and decimating old communities while encouraging new residents to move in. These changing community settings may have influenced the ways in which locals perceived impact and sustainability of the programme. These changing contexts had an impact on the evaluation itself as the dynamic changes at the community level may have clouded memories and as new challenges displaced previously resolved problems. The evaluation took due note of these factors and in the findings reflected the contextualities to the extent possible.

The melding of Safe Cities and other Ending Violence Against Women programmes carried out by the UN Women Egypt Country Office was another limitation. Since 2015, the Safe Cities and Ending Violence Against Women initiatives were combined in a single programme funded by USAID, which made it difficult to isolate and gauge impact for the Safe Cities component. These were noted in the report where appropriate.

Inaccessibility to some of the relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries due to relocations and long-time lapse was another limitation. The evaluation team worked closely with programme team and the NGOs to contact the most relevant program participants taking any limitation into account.

### **3.3** Methodology**:**

The Evaluation activities were guided by the OECD-DAC guidelines and aimed to provide commentary and knowledge on the below listed parameters:

* **Relevance**: was the intervention doing the right thing? The extent to which the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries’,global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and will continue to do so if circumstances change.
* **Effectiveness**: was the intervention meeting its objectives? The extent to which the intervention achieved, or was expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
* **Efficiency**: How well were resources being used? The extent to which the intervention delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.
* **Impact**: What difference had the intervention made? The extent to which the intervention generated or was expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects.
* **Sustainability**: Were the intervention benefits likely to last? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continued or were likely to continue.
* **Gender and Human Rights:** to what extent the program implemented a human rights and gender responsive approach in the design and implementation?

The evaluation was guided by this broad set of questions:

1. Has the program influenced observable outcomes? And what role did interventions play in enabling these results?
2. What external and internal factors and conditions enabled the success or mitigated the influence of these interventions?
3. Was it reasonable to conclude that the program had made a difference to the lives of women and girls in intervention areas?
4. What was a plausible pathway of change that linked interventions to outcomes?

Refer to Annex 1 for the evaluation matrix for detailed evaluation questions

The evaluation was a utilization-focused, participatory, gender-responsive evaluation that used feminist approaches and adopted a mixed-method approach that went beyond the old “hat” of quantitative/qualitative and engaged with changes at multiple levels to ensure that the complex gender issues were well captured and analyzed. The evaluation adopted a mix of theory-based and quasi-experimental design and adopted a human rights-based approach (HRBA) that privileged the principles of Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Equality, Empowerment and Legality (The National Human Rights Institutions - NHRIs).[[22]](#footnote-22)

Analysis of gender in this evaluation relied on the concept of Capabilities and used the work of feminist scholars, Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen’s “capabilities approach” that frames development as a process of realizing and restoring capabilities as freedom.[[23]](#footnote-23) The focus being on ‘functionings’ and on how development enables women and men to do things and realize their potential. The evaluation also adopted the women’s empowerment approach of Naila Kabeer, which posits women’s empowerment as the process that restores to women who have been denied strategic life choices and rights [[24]](#footnote-24). The evaluation used the lens of “functioning” and “access to previously denied rights, spaces, opportunities, and resources” to analyse the Safe Cities intervention. The evaluation also used the Gender Results Evaluation Scale (GRES) to identify the levels of gender impact that range from neutral to transformative[[25]](#footnote-25).

It also employed a participatory approach wherein local communities and civil society intermediaries were enjoined in a mix of evaluation activities not only as evaluation subjects but also as evaluation partners. It created “invited spaces” for participants whereby their knowledge and feedback were accessed and probed through structured and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and surveys. The evaluation also employed open methods whereby spaces, people, processes, and events were factored in through observation, walk-about, photography and informal discussions.

The Safe Cities evaluation presented quantifiable evidence of impact through quantitative survey analysis using the quasi-experimental Difference in Difference (DiD) design wherein DiD and regression analysis were used to compare baseline to end-line and model change by analyzing intervention and control group responses. The qualitative impact analysis was underpinned by the approach to impact assessment of Qualitative Impact Assessment protocols (QuIP) whereby “narrative causal statements” collected from stakeholders and project beneficiaries were analyzed using contribution analysis. Respondents were asked to use their own experiences to establish impact, causality, and contribution; thus, “QuIP’s approach placed project beneficiaries’ voices at the center of the evaluation, enabling them to share and feedback their experiences.”[[26]](#footnote-26) Stories of change were selected, narrated, edited, and analyzed by interviewees, and beneficiaries themselves. Furthermore, while reporting these stories, evaluators also reflected on why they were told and repeated while providing a context and conceptual reasoning for the impact claims.

For the Difference in Difference the significance of the Difference in difference was tested using t–test or an analysis of variance. In addition, double difference impact was estimated using ordinary least squares regression. This approach was applied to the same matched data, including a program or policy dummy variable on the right-hand side of the regression equation. Variables that captured other confounding factors were also included on the right-hand side to eliminate the remaining effect of any discrepancies in these variables between treatment and comparison areas on the outcomes.

The Evaluation design and data collection activities included (Figure 3):

1. A series of individual semi-structured online and open interviews with stakeholders (donors, service providers, UN agencies, national partners) that elicited their experiences and perceptions of the intervention as informed by the specificities of the sector, institutional role or field of action or expertise.
2. Focus groups discussions and interviews with beneficiaries and NGO staff
3. Workshops with the activists and gender consultants to develop research tools (quantitative and qualitative) to triangulate the findings and decide an analytical plan. Gender consultants also reviewed report drafts and recommendations.
4. Desk research on the history of feminist activities in the field of public safety and anti-harassment since 2011 and documentation of digital feminist and anti-harassment initiatives since 2011 beside other documentation of the context in which Safe Cities was implemented.
5. Desk research on the available cadastral, census, administrative, and social data on the intervention areas was undertaken to provide an updated and documented description of the areas of intervention to produce **community profiles** that contextualize and situate the evaluation data against the backdrop of country-wide and community-specific trends in structural and cultural characteristics and qualities. This contextualization enabled an account of the tapestry of complex variables that interacted with and influenced – whether directly or indirectly – the efforts made under the Safe Cities umbrella- see Annex 4.
6. An **end-line survey** with a sample of households in the three intervention and three control areas.
7. Site visits, discussions with residents in intervention areas and service providers and users of physical upgrade interventions.

Figure 3: Mixed methods for the evaluation



# 3.4Data collection tool and sampling

### Qualitative Data Collection Tool and Sampling:The qualitative data collection relied on purposive sampling techniques. The first step was listing all partners, activities, engagements, and roles in the Safe Cities community-based work. It also involved community-based visits. From this listing, categories of beneficiaries were identified and the selection of beneficiaries and volunteers for focus groups and interviews was confirmed with reference to NGO and program records. To make sure that the purposive sample included minority groups, the local NGOs were consulted on religious minorities and people with disabilities involved in Safe Cities. However, none of the local NGOs had available contacts of beneficiaries with disabilities and two of the NGOs where meetings and interviews were taking place had no disability access therefore no persons with disability were included in evaluation. Religious diversity was taken into consideration by the evaluation and Coptic beneficiaries were purposefully included in the sample. The sample of national and international stakeholders and implementing partners were based on the contact information provided by UN Women and CARE Egypt, UN Women’s key implementing partner for the programme. Refer to table 1 for data collection tools and sample covered:

**Table 1: Qualitative Data Collection Tool and Sampling**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Data Collection Tool** |  **Details** |
| Key informant interviews with service providers, UN agencies, national partners and donors | **30 interviews** Conducted with Safe Cities stakeholders mentioned in the stakeholder mapping for which contact information was provided by UN Women and CARE. Those stakeholders included UN agencies, national partners and donors mostly as reflected in the stakeholders mapping[[27]](#footnote-27) beside relevant consultants.[[28]](#footnote-28) |
| Beneficiaries and local stakeholders’ interview and focus group discussion (breakdown in table 2, table 3, figure 4, figure 5) | **47 interviews and 16 focus groups discussions** covering:127 beneficiaries who participated in the Safe Cities activities (e.g., attending awareness sessions, volunteering, attending art therapy, psychodrama, interactive theatre sessions, etc); and51 community members and local NGO staff who was involved in the implementation, design, or coordination of Safe Cities in the three intervention areas. |
| Field visits and observations | **Field visits and informal discussions in the 3 interventions areas** in addition to Zenin Market. |
| Desk research | Based on **over 90 project documents** provided by UN Women and implementing stakeholders.[[29]](#footnote-29) |
| Context pieces | **2 pieces** prepared by consultant on the Egyptian context of feminism and Gender Based Violence in addition to digital activism. |
| Community and NGO profiles | **3 community and 3 NGO profiles** to contextualize evaluation findings. |

**Table 2: Breakdown of participants in the 3 intervention areas**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Beneficiaries** | **Volunteers[[30]](#footnote-30) and Community****Committee** | **NGO Staff** | **NGO grassroot Partner organisations** |
| 127 | 34 | 11 | 6 |

**Table 3: Gender disaggregation of qualitative data in the intervention areas**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Males** | **Females** |
| Imbaba | 23 | 35 |
| Mansheyyet Nasser | 20 | 42 |
| Ezbet El Haggannah | 22 | 36 |
| Total | 65 | 113 |
| % | 36.5 | 63.5% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Figure 4: Age of beneficiaries, volunteers, and NGO staff  | Figure 5: Beneficiaries’ occupations  |
| Chart, pie chart  Description automatically generated | A picture containing chart  Description automatically generated |

**Quantitative Data Collection tool and sampling:** Three intervention sites and three corresponding comparison ones were selected. The same sampling design and sample size of the baseline were used in the end line survey. The sample size was determined to have a statistically reliable estimate of the indicators at 95 per cent confidence level and 5 per cent allowable error. This gave a size of around 385 households in each intervention and comparison group.

Based on the results of Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS), 32 per cent of households have never-married females aged 15-45 and 52 per cent have males 15-45.[[31]](#footnote-31) An *oversampling* (of about 30 per cent) was performed in each site to increase the sample of the latter two groups. The total sample size was **3,144 households** distributed as given in table 4.

A systematic random sampling approach was used in selecting households. Interviewers first collected data on the household, then used the household roster to select the following for individual interviews:

1. Eligible ever-married female 15-60.
2. Eligible never-married female 15-45.
3. Eligible male 15-30.

One ever-married (15-60), one never-married woman or girl (15-45), and one male (15-30) were selected from each household whenever applicable. In cases where the household had more than one woman eligible for the ever-married interviews, interviewers were asked to select only one woman for each interview using a Kish table for random selection. The same procedure was applied to the selection of never married and male respondents whenever there was more than one eligible respondent in the household.

The quantitative sample in the end line survey was distributed as follows in the intervention and control sites:

**Table 4: Quantitative sample**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **No. of households****N** | **Sample size** **(households) n** |
| **Ezbet El Haggannah** | 2,250 | 659 |
| Al-Salam Al-Sharkeyah | 2,950 | 532 |
| **Mansheyyet Nasser** | 1,800 | 550 |
| Al-Ebageyah | 1,400 | 404\* |
| **Imbaba** | 1,700 | 490 |
| Boulak Al-Dakrour | 3,800 | 509 |
| Total | 13,900 | **3,144** |

Approx. 13 per cent of participants in the three intervention areas participated one way or another in Safe Cities activities, the rest were non-direct beneficiaries. Therefore, quantitative results can be used as “non-beneficiary” results to assess spill over to the community.

**Triangulation-** Secondary and primary data was collected in a series of evaluation activities undertaken in parallel following a design, data collection and analysis that enabled continuous triangulation of findings and assessment of scope and context which provided grounded, empirical, and holistic conclusions on Safe Cities findings.

# 3.5 Evaluation Ethics

The Evaluation team was comprised of independent experts in their respective fields with no conflicts of interest that would impair their activities or findings. The team complied with ethical codes of social research and committed to highest possible standards of subject protection. The team for example ensured that sensitive information could not be traced to its source so that the relevant individuals are protected from reprisals. To guarantee comprehensive ethical compliance the evaluation was subject to multiple levels of oversight listed as follows:

* National Oversight:The field and survey activities took place under the auspices and oversight of CAPMAS. The National Council for Women was also fully informed of the evaluation and data collection at the household level.
* UN Women Oversight: UN Women evaluation procedures were followed as per the gender responsive evaluation handbook. United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines, Norms and Standards were followed. In addition, WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women [[32]](#footnote-32)was followed throughout all evaluation and analysis steps.
* American University Cairo Oversight: The research was conducted by an academic research center that is subject to the stringent ethical standards of the University. The American University in Cairo mandates an Internal Review Board (IRB) procedure for all research undertaken by a member of the university body. The IRB is an anonymized peer review process that follows the standards and guidelines of academic ethical guidelines. All evaluation activities were conducted after IRB approval of all research tools and activities.
* Project Ethical Provisions:
* Informed consent was obtained for all data collection activities.
* In including individuals or groups in the evaluation, evaluators ensured:
* Right to Self-Determination: Prospective participants were treated as autonomous agents and given the time and information to decide whether they wish to participate or not and to be able to make an independent decision without any pressure or fear of penalty for not participating.
* Fair Representation was assured as participants have been fairly selected in relation to the aims of the evaluation, not simply because of their availability, or because it was relatively easy to secure their participation. Care was taken to ensure that relatively powerless, “hidden”, or otherwise excluded groups were represented.
* All researchers and enumerators received ethical training
* All interviews and households were provided with contact information of a designated third party in case they had questions or complaints
* All data was kept on a password protected drive and only SRC research team members could access to field data
* All data was anonymized and files that identify data files to names were password protected and accessible only to core evaluation team members

For data storage and protection details, refer to annex 12.

# Evaluation Findings

# 4.1 Relevance

Finding 1: Safe Cities programme was relevant to local and national developments and dynamics. It was well aligned with the Egyptian national strategies as well as the international commitments towards ending violence against women. Close consultation and partnerships with a range of relevant national partners throughout the program phases helped it to remain relevant and contributed towards building national ownership of the program.

According to the stakeholders consulted, the Safe Cities programme was relevant to local and national developments and dynamics. The program was in alignment with the increased awareness of gendered violence that became apparent since the 2011 January event and with the National Ending Violence against Women Strategy (NEVWS) and the National Women Empowerment Strategy 2030. It also involved close consultations with national partners, most importantly with National Council for Women (NCW) since its inception. Annual meetings with the national partners were convened to endorse all annual program plans.

The programme was found to be aligned with the international commitments of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); The Beijing Platform for Action; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and to The Conventions on the Rights of the Child. It was also relevant and aligned with Egypt's United Nations Partnership Development Framework (UNPDF) 2018-2022[[33]](#footnote-33), Outcome area 4: Women’s Empowerment, (*By 2022, women are fully contributing to Egypt’s development and all women and girl’s rights set forth in the 2014 Constitution, are respected, protected and responded to with no discrimination*.), and its predecessor, United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Egypt (2013 – 2017)[[34]](#footnote-34), Outcome 3.1 (*National and local capacities and systems are enhanced for decentralized, inclusive and gender sensitive planning, budgeting, monitoring & evaluation*)

The programme forged partnerships with other government partners throughout the program which facilitated its alignment and relevance to the government priorities. For instance, the Deputy Governor of Giza adopted the program’s intervention to establish the first women-friendly space in Imbaba/Giza, followed by the acquisition of the necessary permits for Future Eve local CSO to manage the space, while also upgrading Zenin Market. The Governorate of Cairo was involved with the upgrading of the football field in Salah El-Din School in Ezbet El Haggannah, in coordination with Al Shehab.

Under the legal pillar, the programme established partnerships with the Ministry of Justice and the Public prosecutor’s Office through the partnership with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the NCW. It also partnered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) in the upgrading of the shelters in Daqahleya, Minya, Giza and Alexandria and subsequently worked closely with MoSS on the services offered by shelters and on updating the by-laws that govern their operations. Its engagement with the municipalities helped to keep the programme relevant to the local realities and supported in coordination of the activities at the community level. These vital synergies throughout the program phases were key to the development of national ownership over the program.

**Data source and credibility**: Based on secondary data, stakeholder interviews and national documents.

Finding 2: The program activities were relatable to the everyday lives and challenges of beneficiaries as they employed engaging and innovative methods to facilitate beneficiary participation. Moreover, local needs were integrated in the design and implementation of the program, making the activities relevant to community contexts.

The Safe Cities program was locally relevant in both its design and implementation. The flexibility ingrained in program design and the primacy given to local perspectives and knowledge ensured the relevance of activities to local communities and contexts. Locals were involved in conceptualization and implementation of activities. The program relied on local leadership in the three intervention areas and was mostly designed with a participatory approach. For instance, the social audits and needs assessments conducted at the community level were helpful to ensure relevance. The programme carried out local level consultations on the safety issues and needs assessment of the community at the initial stages of the program. A safety audit mandated by UN Women head quarter was carried out by UN-Habitat to inspect the safety (such as open manholes) and security issues (such as risk of violence due to absence of lighting). The safety audit methodology was later modified and used to conduct community needs assessments to understand the issues at a deeper level. This exercise enabled the identification of opportunities for urban upgrading and understanding the contextual hurdles in each community. These consultations together with the baseline study conducted in 2014, helped to identify problems that needed to be addressed, such as addiction, as well as the importance of engaging men and boys in ending violence against women.

Interviewed beneficiaries expressed that the programme was very relevant to their and community needs. According to them, the urban upgrading interventions in Imbaba/Giza and Ezbet El Haggannah/Cairo responded to their safety concerns, and they corresponded to the needs identified by the safety audit and needs assessment. When asked about the turnout at the beginning versus towards the end of the programme, one NGO staff commented, “literally, the numbers increased by a 100 per cent.” Active engagement in activities such as the interactive theatre was clear evidence that the topics and methodology interested the audience. Participation in staged events was high and personal involvement of both actors and audiences was well noted in interviews and in group discussions. The activities addressing topics such as Sexual Health, Female Genital Mutilation, child abuse and violence in general showed a “thirst” in the communities for addressing these topics. Issues of sexual health had never been addressed through collective activities before the programme.

A stakeholder consulted [[35]](#footnote-35), commented, “Safe Cities was the space to be creative”. Tools of engagement such as theatre, art, self-defense, and sports were a fresh break from traditional training, communication and awareness raising work and were highly successful according to beneficiaries. This approach was later adopted by other community-based NGOs in their other work because of their evident appeal and effectiveness. Activities encouraged emotional expression and appealed to diverse audiences. For example, men who had been reluctant to participate were encouraged when offered sports activities.

Further, the programme facilitated local leadership which enabled the creation of cohorts of trained and dedicated young volunteers and a representative elected Community Committee in the three intervention areas, which acted as a link to the communities to sustain the smooth running of activities. As a result, NGOs allocated three (or fewer) staff for coordination and management and relied on youth volunteers (30-60 per intervention area) and around 30 members in the Community Committee from different backgrounds to take a leading role in carrying out activities and identifying the needs of the communities. This structure helped expand the outreach and enhance the credibility of the program. A local NGO staff described the cohort of volunteers as “the children of the community” which enabled to address sensitive topics such as Gender Based Violence, sexual harassment and gender equality.

UN Women and its implementing partner, CARE established regular channels of communication with the three local NGOs during the implementation. Frequent meetings helped the development of plans for new activities and to assess program direction and effects. The meetings continued between UN Women and local NGOs, after their agreements with CARE expired. The sustained engagement and partnership that UN Women had established with local partners went beyond financial commitment. One NGO staff explained that those regular meetings made them feel like “there was no barrier in communication”, and the interviews and NGO reports showed that suggestions and concerns were regularly discussed and mostly responded to.

**Data source and credibility**: As per stakeholder, NGO and beneficiary interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and program documents, activities were relatable and responsive to the everyday needs and challenges of beneficiaries.

# 4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

This evaluation outlines on the effectiveness of the programme against its planned outcomes as stated in Safe Cities’ project document of 2013 as well as the unplanned outcomes.

**Expected outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of duty bearers, in the implementation areas, to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces.**

Finding 3: Safe Cities programme supported normative changes and enhanced the capacity of duty bearers in the implementation areas, to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces. However, challenges were present mostly due to political instability and changes within the National Council for Women during the initial years of implementation (2013-2014) which affected the delivery of legal services in the three intervention communities.

The evaluation noted that the programme contributed towards developing a supportive legal ecology whereby gender-based violence could be identified and prosecuted fairly and without gender bias. The most prominent one noted by the evaluation was the 2014 penal code amendment to articles 306a and 306b. The amendment defined sexual harassment for the first time and outlined a penalty of imprisonment and a fine. The continued work of the program resulted in a further amendment in 2021, strengthening punishment for all forms of sexual harassment and reclassifying the offense as a felony.[[36]](#footnote-36)The stakeholders consulted acknowledged the role played by the Safe cities Programme for this achievement. UN Women along with UNODC, carried out a legislative review in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and the CSOs working on Violence Against Women legislations. These aimed at reviewing existing legislation on Violence Against Women and produced a draft of an amendment to the penal code on sexual harassment. The programme facilitated discussion on challenges faced by different actors responsible for addressing Violence Against Women (police, public prosecutors, forensic experts, judiciary, councilors, and shelter providers) and discussed the financial, human resource, and administrative challenges and constraints that needed to be addressed to prevent and address Violence Against Women and Girls. Follow up consultations were also conducted with CSOs and Ministry of Justice to discuss future amendments such as a comprehensive stand-alone Violence Against Women law. The workshops carried out in line with the efforts of national partners and feminist civil society organizations eventually culminated in the 2014 penal code amendment to articles 306a and 306b.[[37]](#footnote-37)

At the policy realm, in coordination with UNFPA and UNDP, the programme provided technical support to the National Council for Women to develop the National Strategy of Combating Violence Against Women (NSVAW), 2015-2020.[[38]](#footnote-38) The Strategy included pillars on prevention, protection, intervention, and legal procedures[[39]](#footnote-39). The programme supported the National Council for Women by recruiting two technical staff, based at the NCW, to provide technical support on the implementation of the strategy.

The stakeholders appreciated Safe Cities programme’s contribution to providing responses and services to survivors of violence such as through enhancing the capacity of the NCW Complaints Office, supporting the establishment of an Observatory on the Status of Women at the NCW and supporting the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) to provide shelters for women and children in need of protection[[40]](#footnote-40). According to them, the programme also identified the MoSS shelters that needed physical upgrading and supported the shelters in Mansoura, Minya, Giza and Alexandria to undergo a physical upgrade involving major improvements in infrastructure and design, allowing the shelters to expand their services. According to the program report, between 2019 and 2021, 8000 women benefited from various services offered at the shelters ranging from psychosocial and family counselling to medical, legal, and financial assistance, while over 1000 women and their children were hosted at the shelters. By-laws and guidelines were developed as part of the upgrading to guarantee women’s safety and confidentiality.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The programme support towards the provision of legal services in the targeted communities in partnership with NCW was also acknowledged but with a caveat that during the initial phase of the program (2013-2014), before the restructuring of the national gender machinery, there were some challenges related to this service. the programme in partnership with NCW offered legal awareness sessions, consultation and pro-bono services including filing court cases, on behalf of plaintiffs in each of the three intervention areas. According to an NCW report, from 2013 to 2015, the number of complaints received by the lawyers from Ezbet El Haggannah, Mansheyyet Nasser and Imbaba respectively were: 533, 80, 109.[[42]](#footnote-42) The highest numbers of cases were related to the social pension and the need to issue official documentation. Reports, however, did not indicate the status of those cases, i.e., if they were filed or whether they were resolved. The Complaints Office also helped women, who did not have any identification papers, issue IDs- 536 were issued from 2013-2015.

In addition, the programme in partnership with NCW held monthly awareness sessions in the NGOs which included topics on Female Genital Mutation, early marriage, domestic violence, divorce, sexual harassment and reporting, the sexual harassment law, and the Complaints Office hotline. The speakers included lawyers and police officers. A few sessions also targeted men to raise their awareness on the importance of women’s access to rights. However, there were some challenges. The respondents from the NGOs reported irregular attendance of NCW Complaints Office lawyers at their premises during the initial phase of the program (2013-2014) before the restructuring of the national gender machinery. This led to a loss of credibility in the legal services provided. The lack of accessible reporting on the services made it difficult for the evaluation team to confirm or deny this claim. Another respondent explained that the lawyer assigned was negligent and there was lack of follow-up on some cases which resulted in the NGO withdrawing the cases from the Complaints Office and having a lawyer from the NGO take over. They also added that there was a two-case limit per woman and that some cases, especially divorce, required filing more than two cases (including ones on claiming assets, financial support for wife, financial support for kids, etc.). As a result, women had to resort to external lawyers to file the other cases outside of the Complaints Office, which turned out to be financially burdensome. Due to these issues, the Complaints Office was restructured in 2018 under the Ending Violence Against Women program.

The progrmme’s engagement with the religious leaders was also acknowledged by the stakeholders consulted indicating the importance oof engaging with them to address the issue concerned. According to them, awareness sessions for religious leaders were given by an independent consultant to incorporate messaging on EVAW on Friday and Sunday sermons. Later under the EVAW program, religious leaders were targeted at a national level to capitalizing on their wide outreach amongst Muslim men. The awareness sessions to religious leaders and judges covered themes around the nature of addiction and means of support that can be incorporated in religious sermons (for religious leaders) and legal text (for judges).

The evaluation noted that the political instability during the beginning of Safe Cities programme challenged its work with police departments. In particular, the donor restrictions prevented this partnership, which also led to the limited work with police officers and police stations despite the earlier establishment of the women police corps and the training provided to women police officers for investigating violent crimes against women. Therefore, no substantial activities or training directly linked to police officers or the assumed VAW units in police stations took place.

The programme also contributed towards enhancing the research capacity and expertise in gender and Violence Against Women. Faculty in Cairo University School of Humanities had lobbied for and established an anti-harassment unit on campus despite much opposition. The program supported these efforts by availing resources to this unit and by adopting the model and sponsoring the creation of similar models in other public universities. UN Women later partnered with Cairo University by supporting the establishment of a professional Masters programme (launched in 2016) and short courses in gender and development through collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the UK.

**Source of data and Credibility:**

Some findings can be directly contributed to the intervention and are objectively observable effects such as the changed in legal ecology, the NCW Strategy to End Violence Against Women and the established and upgraded services. This report does not have the data sources to evaluate the effect directly and singularly attributable to the program. The intended outcome of enhanced capabilities is a reasonable expectation of the interventions, but it is a likely influence as it is confounded by contextual factors addressed below. The observations on gaps in outcome 1 are based on first person testimonies of stakeholders, local community NGOs and service providers.

**Outcome 2: Enhanced capacity of rights holders in the intervention areas to respond to and prevent VAWG in public spaces**

**Finding 4:** The knowledge and understanding of the volunteers and community committee members were enhanced through numerous awareness sessions and Training of Trainers (ToTs), which resulted in trained locals becoming trainers. Moreover, awareness was raised among women and children through varied activities. Men were engaged in some interventions, including the tuk-tuk drivers by increasing their knowledge and changing some of their attitudes towards women’s rights. However, the misfit between the scope of activities and the scale of the challenge, inadequate response to the growing addiction issues, inadequate engagement with male and inaccessibility of schools posed obstacles to the full realization of outcome 2.

The activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of rights holders fell under three pillars: a) Building youth volunteer cohorts and community committees, b) awareness for women and children, and c) engaging men. A snapshot of the key interventions is presented in the Box below:

**Box 1: A snapshot of the key interventions to enhance capacity of rights holders to respond to and prevent VAWG in public spaces**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Training sessions for the youth volunteers*** Sexual harassment and campaigning methods by **Imprint**.
* Facilitating sports events for development by **Aspire**.
* Understanding and performing interactive theatre and art for development and linking them to awareness on gender equality and GBV by independent consultants.
* Sexual education awareness sessions conducted by NGOs and experts.
* ToT by **Safe Kids** on conducting sessions sexual harassment and abuse sessions with kids, parents, and teachers.
* Awareness sessions on addiction and providing support for addicts and understanding their life skills guidebook by **Freedom Foundation**, 140 volunteers were reached according to Freedom Foundation from 2013-2015.
* Training on safety audits, monitoring and fund-raising by **CARE.**
* **Al Hayat** psychological support sessions.
* Attending **NCW** legal awareness sessions.
 | **Interventions for women** * Sports activities conducted by **Aspire**.
* Interactive theatre on GBV.
* **Safe Kids** awareness sessions for parents on child and domestic abuse.
* Legal awareness sessions carried out by the **NCW** Complaints Office (planned monthly sessions).
* NCW Complaints office lawyers legal support (planned weekly attendance).
* Psychological support sessions conducted by **Al Hayat** (12 sessions, 1 every week).
* **Freedom Foundation** addiction services for understanding addiction and violence as well as referral services and special sessions for families living with an addict. Special one-on-one sessions were also offered based on need. Freedom Foundation claimed to have reached 1,396 women through awareness sessions between 2013-2015. The foundation also supported drug rehabilitation. According to their report, 20 females received rehabilitation opportunities.
* Door knock campaigns by **community volunteers** and home visits.
* Self-defense lessons through “**Egmady**” training.
 | **Interventions for male inclusion** * Supporting the creation of cohorts of male youth volunteers.
* Awareness activities for tuk-tuk drivers on VAW to make them advocates for women’s rights and active agents of change against sexual harassment in their communities. Done through art therapy aimed at discovering the self and receiving awareness on gender and stereotypes and changing perspectives on VAW. A sticker that they put in the tuk-tuk said “my tuk-tuk is safe, free from harassment and addiction”, the art they prepared was also showcased in exhibitions prepared by the NGOs.
* Tackling addiction and violence through providing training to 52 male volunteers and offering rehabilitation services to 198 males according to Freedom Foundation from 2013-2015.
* Awareness campaigns in street coffee shops in the intervention areas (where men spend a big portion of their time) on gender equality, GBV and Sexual Health.
* Religious leaders given awareness (as discussed) as they have the ability to reach large number of men in their Friday and Sunday sermons.
* Door-knocking campaigns aimed at men.
 |
| **Interventions for Children included:*** **Safe Kids** (2012-2014) sessions on sexual violence, awareness, boundaries and raising self-confidence to kids. Sessions also given to their teachers and parents to raise their awareness and provide support and protection for their students/children.
* Sports activities with awareness messages on sexual violence and boundaries.
* Development through art and art therapy aimed at discovering the self, building confidence, establishing teamwork and a safe space for expression, leadership, responsibility and standing up against sexual abuse.
* For Parents – child 1-day camp conducted by **CARE** aiming at building and understanding relationships, trust, boundaries, child abuse and child protection through games and sessions. 667 mothers, 109 fathers and 78 children were included according to a UN Women progress report.[[43]](#footnote-43)
 |

One of the most positive results of the programme was the formation of youth cohorts of volunteers and Community Committees. These groups of men and women (15-25 years old) were the focus of training activities provided by national implementing stakeholders- see box above for training sessions. Trained volunteers reported that they were able to capitalize on most of the training received through various activities (except for activities of Freedom Foundation and Al Hayat) later in the program. ToTs were meant to be one of the main sustainability mechanisms for the program after its completion. Volunteer cohorts were meant to be one of the main sustainability mechanisms for the program and activities associated with them started since the start of the program in the three target areas. Regular meetings with volunteers were held to discuss activities, feedback, and upcoming plans for implementation. They also met with the NCW to discuss safety problems in their communities.

Another innovative approach that was piloted by the program was the engagement of men and boys who were engaged in multiple but somewhat sporadic activities. The programme's approach to engaging men did not engage with structural aspects of patriarchy, nor did it develop an indicator or theoretical model for what ‘engaged men’ would be like or how the programme will gauge their engagement other than through process indicators of attendance and participation. The work with tuk-tuk drivers was more intentional and geared towards their own priorities such as making their vehicles more popular or changing their own perceptions and projections of masculinity (through for example popular songs). A methodology was later documented by CARE in 2018 to engage men, mostly inspired by the experience with the tuk-tuk drivers, which will be further discussed under the “impact” section. According to interviews, there was agreement among NGO workers and volunteers that men’s involvement and engagement with activities (aside from volunteers) was insufficient. This could be attributed to the difficulty in attracting men as they needed more financial incentives to compensate for their time. For example, a Freedom Foundation session for men was cancelled because they were not offering monetary incentives. It was also difficult to change the views of men, including religious leaders who mostly blamed women for sexual harassment. A deeper more systematic intervention and perhaps more funding were needed for more effectiveness of this theme. Moreover, an approach to masculinity that is contextual and that engaged with structural factors that inform male attitudes towards GBV was needed.

The evaluation noted that the approach to address the addiction challenge was inadequate. Addiction was identified as a main challenge to women’s safety in public and to security and bodily integrity in private spaces. Community-based audits and consultations confirmed the centrality of drugs to violence. Addiction was identified by the community needs assessments that were carried out in the inception phase as a significant challenge and as a serious problem in the three communities in relation to Violence Against Women. This link between addiction and violence was confirmed by evaluation data. The addiction intervention was mentioned by all NGO staff as the least effective intervention due to its limited scope vis-à-vis the scale of the problem in the three areas. The absence of globally recognized addiction related programs such as clean syringe distribution or open reception centers for addicts hindered the possible progress on addiction. Female addicts mentioned in reports from local NGOs that they faced a double burden of stigmatization for being women and being addicts and were grossly underserved within communities. A doctor involved in the programme explained that the inadequate funding support for addiction activities posed a moral problem as well as an operational one. Further, the rehabilitation numbers reported by some NGOs did not report drop out or relapse cases. For instance, in an Ezbet El Haggannah report in 2015, the NGO reported that one of the partner organizations took 18 cases of rehabilitation out of which 12 did not continue for more than a few days and later relapsed indicating a serious problem. Further, the ToTs provided to the volunteers (in Mansheyyet Nasser) was described as inadequate by NGO staff as this training did not equip volunteers with enough skills to carry out addiction awareness campaigns. The other two intervention sites did not carry out any addiction awareness campaigns. One of the Ezbet El Haggannah NGO staff recalled an incident involving a 22-year-old female addict who was turned away because she was not heterosexual to protect the reputation of the organisation.

Further, any work within schools required government permits from the Ministry of Education. These permits were difficult to obtain therefore prevented multiple activities to be implemented within schools with children and teachers. The program partners managed to overcome this challenge by bringing children and teachers to the NGOs where they attended awareness raising sessions. However, the reach and permanence of schools makes them ideal centers for awareness raising and service provision. The effect on teachers could have been magnified if activities were held in situ as the teachers trained in NGOs were only those willing to take the sessions.

Further, the intended outcome of enhanced capabilities was a reasonable expectation of the interventions, but available data showed successful processes and not actual change. The programme monitoring system only captured completion of training or awareness sessions but did not capture data or evidence on their suitability to the scale of problems/needs or to the actual change in the behavior of the targeted population. It is clear that Safe Cities was a dynamic program that encompassed multiple activities but the effectiveness of this approach to programming remained untested.

**Data Source and Credibility:** This finding is based on progress reports, budget, annual reports, and interviews with stakeholders. Some findings can be directly contributed to the intervention and are objectively observable effects such as actual participation of women and men in served communities. The reported anecdotes have been verified through triangulation in FGD and through desk research. The inferences on why the gaps exist are analytical ones.

**Outcome 3: The general public (focusing on individuals residing in intervention areas) is sensitized to be more responsive to and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces.**

**Finding 5:** The program had a high national outreach through its four awareness media campaigns on social media, TV, radio, and billboards besides its collaboration with ENACTUS that spread awareness across 16 governorates. The quantitative figures illustrated a positive effect on the safety narratives and knowledge about the laws and procedures (that punishes harassers) of the direct beneficiaries. However, the impact of outreach and of street campaigns was short-term to establish changes in gender norms. Safe Cities’ support to Cairo University’s Anti-Harassment Unit helped enhance its visibility and credibility while widening their outreach to other universities. The messaging needed some attention towards economic empowerment as an important enabler to end violence against women. Some corporate procurement rules hindered social media outreach.

Outreach and communication work of Safe Cities had a cascading effect on the awareness of men and women in the intervention communities and beyond. Name recognition of Safe Cities was high in the intervention communities although with the passage of time, residents got a bit blurry on the details. For a full statistical picture of the effect of interventions on residents in the three communities refer to Annex 5. Tables give the estimated numbers for those who were familiar with the project activities and whether they participated or not. Given the lapse of time, these were reasonable numbers. [[44]](#footnote-44)

The programme used a range of tools and approaches to spread awareness of the issues:

1) **Door- Knock and Street Campaigns** were organized by the three NGOs’ volunteers and by tuk-tuk drivers (exact number of these initiatives were not recorded). The volunteers addressed the general community such as passersby, shop owners and microbus drivers while tuk-tuk drivers focused on tuk-tuk stops to raise awareness among their colleagues on EVAW. In addition, volunteers targeted men in coffee shops. However, general street campaigns were criticized by respondents as having little lasting effect since it did not involve focused and planned efforts.

2) **Celebrating 16 Days of Activism:** Volunteers performed theatre and art shows to a wide audience. There was no consistent reporting on numbers but for example in 2015, an event in Imbaba had 100 guests and was covered by seven national channels, an event in Ezbet El Haggannah had 415 guests and was covered by the BBC.

3) Four campaigns had expressive messages, and it seemed that most social media interaction came from celebrities, and public service announcements (PSA) shown through TV, radio and especially creative billboards had powerful outreach- see table 4 for the media analytics. Also, according to some of the stakeholders consulted, the campaigns resulted in a change of behavior. For instance, after the 2015 Speak Up campaign, the NCW announced that there was a 25 per cent increase in calls for the hotlines included in the ads. Besides the four campaigns, human stories and on-ground activities were posted on social media. The evaluation noted that the Campaigns were decided and included in annual work plans, but their outreach targets were not set beforehand. Also, as per procurement rules, UN Women could not use the “sponsored” feature on Facebook to have better and more targeted social media outreach. This was reported as a corporate limitation.

**Table 4: Media Campaigns data from UN Women’s communications team**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Media Intervention | Description | Partners | Analytics |
| [“Meen El Sabab” (who is responsible?) song in 2014](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmM6MgoiCSM&list=PLt6Jq6O7V3eQ67Y1UP_1OwazjKczC3RJK&index=22) | Performed by Zap Tharwat and Menna Hussein, the song showed sexual harassment in a public transportation setting and the passive (and sometimes negative) attitude from the public to the victim. | NCW and EU | -Collective approx. 9.5 million views on YouTube and approx. 112K likes comments or share from UNW and Axeer (the producer) accounts-Collective approx. 171K views, 425K reach and 17K engagement[[45]](#footnote-45) from UN Women and UN Women Egypt pages. |
| Speak Up Campaign in 2015[PSA 1 (Sexual Harassment in Transportation)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMvFriimY4M&list=PLt6Jq6O7V3eQ67Y1UP_1OwazjKczC3RJK&index=8)[PSA 2 (Domestic Violence)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W4VYR38IlM&list=PLt6Jq6O7V3eQ67Y1UP_1OwazjKczC3RJK&index=9) | PSA on sexual harassment in transportation and victim blaming and another PSA on domestic violence, specifically spouse abuse shown on widely viewed TV channels MBC Misr, Al Hayat, CBC, and Al Nahar and broadcasted on 2 famous radio channels (Nogoum FM and Radio Misr). In addition, a billboard was put on major highways of greater Cairo, Alexandria and Minya for 4 weeks (+ extra pro bono advertising). The billboards seemed plain in the morning with woman’s face but at night bruises start showing as seen in Annex 8 showcasing how domestic violence against women can be invisible to people around the victim. | NCW, USAID, JICA, UNDP | PSA 1: Collective YouTube likes/dislikes 327 and 27k views from UN Women and UN Women Egypt channels. PSA 2: Collective YouTube 185 likes/dislikes, 23K views on UN Women and UN Women Egypt channels. On UN Women Egypt’s Facebook page: 218 engagements, 7.8K reach and 1.4K views.- A single Facebook post on the billboard was shared over 8K times and had 34K likes in only two hours and a total 62K likes and 16K shares.-The SpeakUp hashtag (in Arabic) was trending on twitter-TV viewership estimated at 37.7mn views-Radio reach estimated at 12.6mn persons-The billboard is estimated to have been seen by 57 million Egyptians-Campaign featured in 54 newspaper and digital articles-The 2 PSAs received 2 silver awards in the Dubai Lynx 2016 under the film craft category |
| [Speak Up Campaign in 2018](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzTzsdYxQFw&list=PLt6Jq6O7V3eQ67Y1UP_1OwazjKczC3RJK&index=36) | PSA featuring Menna Shalaby the actress and Hani Adel the actor and musician talking up speaking up against sexual harassers and standing with the victims launched during the 16 days of activism | NCW, Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Transport, GIZ, AFD, EU, USAID, Drosos, RATPDEV, SODIC | UNW Egypt YouTube channel likes/dislikes 41, 1K views. Collective Facebook 17K engagement, 425K reach and 172K views from both UNW and UNW Egypt pages. The campaign was also mentioned in 81 articles from different news outlets |
| [Zenin Market Documentary in 2020](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ6nqg_pXq0&list=PLt6Jq6O7V3eQ67Y1UP_1OwazjKczC3RJK&index=47) | Documentary on the urban intervention of Zenin Market through voices of the beneficiaries | NCW and USAID | UN Women Egypt YouTube channel 9 likes/dislikes, 242 views. Collective Facebook 148 engagement, 7.3K reach and 1.4K views from UN Women Egypt and NCW pages |

4) **ENACTUS[[46]](#footnote-46)** collaboration was able to spread the message of Safe Cities geographically. The collaboration included featuring the EVAW in the annual ENACTUS 2013, 2014 and 2015 competitions through the “women, leadership and empowerment” theme where students across the participating universities designed projects addressing VAW in Egypt. According to UN Women’s progress report, 910 students reached people in their 16 governorates through 48 campaigns on EVAW. It was also estimated that another 4,000 students were indirectly reached under the activities according to UN Women’s progress report. UN Women funded the competition through training, trophies, and awareness material. It was not clear what the topics of the projects were neither from the progress reports nor from the interview conducted with the founder of ENACTUS Egypt. The stakeholders recommended that more attention be given to economic empowerment as an enabler to EVAW.

5) **Cairo University Anti-Harassment Unit** was a “home-grown initiative”, according to one of the founding faculty members of the Unit. UN Women supported activities and big events that the Unit did not have a budget for, such as concerts and lighting Cairo University’s dome orange as a proclamation that the campus is violence-free. Safe Cities also funded retreats for the coordinators of the Unit and funded camps for students. This support gave the Unit “credibility and visibility”, helped them in widening their outreach to other universities and made them want to replicate their model and changed faculty members’ attitude in their favor. This support also encouraged endorsement from the management, which gave legitimacy to the Unit while raising the motivation of the students involved in the Unit.

**Effect at the beneficiaries:** The quantitative figures illustrated a positive effect on the safety narratives and knowledge about the laws and procedures (that punishes harassers) of the direct beneficiaries. The DiD results showed that the adopted intervention yielded an increased feeling of safety for ever-married and never-married women and males in Haggannah region in comparison to Al-Salam (control) region since the baseline survey by 58.55%, 71.39% and 75.71% respectively. The DiD results also showed that the adopted intervention yielded an increased feeling of safety for ever-married and never-married women by 18.92% and 13.94%, respectively, in Mansheyyet Nasser region in comparison to Al-Ebageyah (control) region since the baseline survey, However, males’ feeling of safety was reduced by 22.06%, probably due to contextual factors or perhaps due to heightened awareness of safety risks. (Annex 7) The logistic regression from the quantitative data collection showed a positive effect of interventions on households in Imbaba compared to the control area

The data also showed an overall positive effect on the intervention area compared to the control areas in relation to feeling of safety, knowledge about laws that punishes harassers- table 5 below.

**Table 5: Effect on intervention area compared to control area**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Effect on intervention area compared to control area** |
| Likelihood that participants feel safe (for all ever-married women participants)  | 1.4 times more likely to say yes |
| Likelihood of knowing about laws that punishes harassers (for ever-married women participants) | 10.3 times more likely to say yes |
| Likelihood of knowing about laws that punishes harassers (for never-married women.) | 11.03 times more likely to say yes |
| Likelihood of knowing about laws that punishes harassers. (for male respondents) | 43.5 times over the control site. |

According to the stakeholders, Safe Cities managed to spread vital awareness on Violence Against Women that had a role in altering attitudes and breaking community taboos. The programme played an important role in mainstreaming the word “harassment” which was not used a decade ago. Many beneficiaries had not distinguished between forms of harassment nor considered non-physical harassment a violation. One beneficiary, in agreement with multiple respondents, explained that

*“People didn’t know that the gaze alone can count as sexual harassment…people used to believe that sexual harassment is that someone touches you”*

In addition, some even believed sexual harassment meant rape. Other forms of awareness and knowledge gained by women and men were valued regarding their bodies, sexuality, women’s rights and standing up against Sexual harassment and Gender based violence in general. Others gained more awareness on their experiences, as one volunteer explained:

 *“all of us one way or another experienced violence [gender-based] but before Safe Cities we didn’t know that we were being subjected to sexual harassment in the first place”.*

The street campaigns in general also broke the taboo of discussing sexual harassment openly. As a volunteer from Mansheyyet Nasser puts it,

*“it is enough that the word [sexual harassment] is now being uttered in Mansheyyet Nasser”.*

Interactive theatre also had a big role in spreading awareness and its impact was seen in people’s responses to the plays, one volunteer said that the audience’s opinion used to reject discussing sexual harassment but then it changed, and they started interacting by blaming the harasser. The awareness offered by Safe Cities offered “pathways for people to talk” as an NGO staff member said, and as a beneficiary expressed, “it is knowledge, and we were enlightened by it”.

However, some volunteers explained that the impact of outreach and of street campaigns was short-term if not frequent enough to establish changes in gender norms. The infrequency of street and public presence was explained by the difficulty of obtaining permits to conduct them. There was an incident in Imbaba where volunteers were arrested, and were released later, even though they had coordinated verbally with the police station. Firmly entrenched beliefs such as the tendency to blame victims of sexual harassment also challenged the impact of campaigns. Another issue that was reported with the Cairo University Anti-Harassment Unit was the absence of an MOU between the Unit and UN Women, which prevented the development of long-term plans.

**Data Sources and Credibility:** The finding relies on directly observable documented data and on interviews. The quantitative findings are derived from the DiD analysis and from regressions that provide empirical data on effects of interventions.

**Outcome 4: Improved local Infrastructure that incorporates physical implementation to address women and girls’ safety.**

Finding 6: Infrastructure interventions were relatively effective despite facing bureaucratic challenges. The establishment of the Imbaba women-friendly space offered a safe area for women and girls while being under the direct supervision of the NGO. At the same time, the Ezbet El Haggannah football field renovation was established as a community space and safe area for women. Still, it was not fully operationalized due to challenges with the Education Department. However, it offered needed lighting to the area. The first phase of Zenin Market was successfully upgraded to provide a safer and more gender-sensitive environment, and women received economic empowerment training, but its sustainability and impact were unclear and should be further investigated by another study.

Infrastructure interventions were relatively effective despite facing bureaucratic challenges. According to CEO of Takween Integrated Community Development, the organization that undertook all the urban upgrading interventions, “Egypt was among the few countries that succeeded in doing urban interventions under Safe Cities”.

Safe Cities in partnership with Takween Integrated Community Development, renovated a football field in Salah Al-Din School in Ezbet El Haggannah. The school lay beside an empty plot of unlit land and the roads. The renovation turned the football field into a safe space/community center for students, women, girls and families and flood lights were installed to make it usable at night and so as to render the area safe for passers-by. The initiative was to be managed by a local parents committee and the school’s board of trustees. El-Shebab NGO trained the trustees and committee members and made considerable efforts to clean the area around the school, which was filled with heaps of garbage. The main effectiveness of this intervention was the provision of lighting in a dark and dangerous public space, making it more accessible. However, changes in government officials within the Education Department ended the nightime operation of the field. The lighting still operated at night maintaining safety in the area. The field visit by the evaluation team revealed that the area was not cleaned regularly, parts once again had become rubbish dumps and some children in the area paid the school keeper, against the rules, to rent out the field and play after school hours.

The programme established a Women-Friendly Space in Imbaba,beside the Bahethat Al Badeya girls’ school. The area used to be a hub for drug dealers and was controlled by thugs. Boys would also regularly wait for the girls to come out of school to harass them. Collaboration with the Governorate of Giza allowed the land to be owned and managed by Hawaa Al Mostaqbal. With planning and execution from Takween in participatory consultations with the community, a playground for children, benches for women and families to relax and an amphitheatre for performances and lectures was put in place. The space had a security guard and a keeper and had a user fees (of EGP 5) to generate some revenue for maintenance.

The programme also upgraded the municipality-run market Zenin market in Boulak Al Dakrour. It was a dilapidated building piled with rubbish; dimly lit and dangerous. The stalls were not visible from the street and vendors had little footfall. Most of its vendors were women (almost 150 according to a UN Women progress report). The upgrading, designed and executed by Takween in collaboration with NCW and the Governorate of Giza, was based on needs assessment of the community and the vendors. The intervention focused on giving safer access to the market through a pavement, redesigning the back of the market to make it an enclosed space, and raising the profile and visibility of stalls by opening them out to the street. Improved lighting meant that the market could stay open till 6 pm instead of 3 pm. Good ventilation, fire safety, toilets, disability access, and a playground for children (closed at time of research due COVID) were added. Two closed rooms were added to house representatives of the Department of Markets from the governorate to manage the market and for community representatives. The upgrade included training vendors to ensure that their businesses were profitable and viable. A consultant worked with 168 stall vendors to provide training on budgeting and ways to boost their profit margins. More attention was given to 12 vegetable and fruits shops, whose female vendors were the poorest. They received additional training on efficient business practices. There was also integration with another UN Women program under which a CSR component with a partner managed to provide those vendors with free fruits and vegetables in order for them to have capital (each had around EGP 500).

The market was physically upgraded as planned but its potential to enable women’s economic empowerment was modest [[47]](#footnote-47) as the market stalls were underutilized. As per vendors, rent prices by the municipality as they used to pay was EGP 30 and post upgradation, it was EGP 200 (original plan by the municipality was to make the rent EGP 500). This surge in rent should have been considered in the planning phase in order to mitigate it as much as possible. Most of the shops were closed, and the research team visiting (during COVID-19) was told that this was because there were problems with the municipality. The enclosed renovated space only had 5-7 female operating vegetable vendors and one female butcher, while the outward space had several alcove stalls selling garments and offering tailoring services among others. One vendor explained that customers preferred informal markets more because they sell fruits and vegetables at cheaper prices. Others explained that people do not come simply because the Market is empty. Consultants who worked on the project identified a lack of a marketing vision for the Market, which could be one of the reasons for the slump. More planning on the economic viability of the market was needed although the main planning/goal was just to make the Market safe. In addition, no training for the Market Department employees was done to ensure the sustainability of the model or for them to replicate the model elsewhere.

In cooperation with UN-Habitat, UN Women contributed to the development of first gender-sensitive design of the Cairo Rapid Bus Transit (BRT) by supporting a gender-sensitive study. Surveys were conducted to capture women’s travel patterns and needs. UN Women reviewed the survey in participation with 27 experts in different fields to make sure the questions were relevant and gender sensitive. UN Women also contributed to the first steering committee of the project composed of multiple government partners.

The urban upgrading intervention in Manshyet Nasser did not materialize due to complex licensing procedures. The NGO used graffiti as a mode of changing the urban landscape and with volunteers created street art on gender equality themes.

**Data sources and credibility:** The data for this finding relies on field visits, stakeholder interviews and qualitative research in intervention areas. It has high credibility as all the data was triangulated from several sources.

Finding 7: The program’s monitoring system included errors in the uniformity of reporting, specifically with regards to figures. When cross-referencing data from different sources, acquiring clear, consistent, and credible data was challenging. Activities in communities could be well tracked from the NGO quarterly reports.

CARE was responsible for monitoring the NGOs and trained staff on basic project management and on monitoring activities and reporting. The NGO reports captured progress of activities and their link to results as they monitored the achievement of planned activities and mentioned the gaps in achievements while discussing challenges and feedback from the field. The results of the monitoring were then raised to UN Women on a regular basis to formulate their quarter and annual reports.

There was an abundance of data, yet it was extremely difficult to aggregate figures to analyse performance. This was mainly due to reporting gaps. The quarterly reports acquired from NGOs were incomplete for all the program years, except for Ezbet El Haggannah. Some files were lost in Mansheyyet Nasser and Imbaba also had some challenges to regular reporting. The reports followed a simple template, but the level of detail and organization varied from one report to the other and from one NGO to the other. They also do not consistently report on figures.

For the UN Women reports, beside the suboptimal structure and clarity, it was confusing to see that certain description of activities achieved with their figures were identical in more than one annual document, this prevented the use of some of the numbers mentioned as it was not clear if they are credible/ complete or not.

# **4.3 Efficiency**

Finding 8: Human resources were efficiently allocated throughout the program. UN Women reacted with agility to changing conditions in terms of staff allocation and agreements with implementing partners. UN Women head quarter provided necessary technical support through the provision of tools and advice on best practices in addition to financial support through seed funding. There was an overall financial efficiency attributed to the multiple extensions provided by donors, 100% funds utilization and the keenness for implementing partners to provide ToTs for sustainability. However, funding delays were frequently reported by NGOs in their quarterly reports.

A program officer was 100 per cent dedicated to the program throughout the period despite a robust turnover of program coordinators. The initial organization chart of the program included a program analyst with a team of an M&E consultant, a MoSS consultant, a program associate, 2 program assistants and a finance associate. During interviews, a number of the programme implementing partners, and local NGOs praised the program officers across different phases on their capability and dedication to the program’s goals. In addition, given that the program relied in some parts of its implementation on external consultants and implementing stakeholders, the small number of staff allocated to the program at certain times at UN Women attested to the efficient use of human resources. The use of the consultants and implementing partners allowed for a varied range of expertise to be included in the program while ensuring that their expertise was passed to the local communities for the sustainability of the outcomes. CARE and its field supervisor maintained close involvement in all activities and reporting.

UN Women head quarter provided significant support for the Cairo Safe Cities program. As a flagship program, Safe Cities received support from global advisors regarding conceptual approaches and the provision of necessary tools including the safety audit conducted at the beginning of the program and the formulation of a comprehensive evaluation strategy. The head quarter also provided advice on global best practices and global standards for responding to VAW, bringing in the expertise of different cities in the program through frequent convening events. In addition, the head quarter provided seed funding at the start of the program.

Overall, the total budget for Safe Cities was USD 5,341,583 (see table 11 for break-down by donors). The program was successful in utilizing 100 per cent of funds and in securing funding extensions which indicates donor satisfaction with the performance and efficiency of the program.

UN Women had adhered to due dates of donor reports. All reports were uploaded on UN Women’s “Donor Agreement Management System” to avail monitoring of timely submission. These reports point to an efficient and transparent use of financial resources. Frequent ToT activities furthered the efficient use of funds, as they enabled a sustained (and sustainable) extension of knowledge and knowhow.

However, delays in funding to community-based NGOs were reported both in documents and in interviews. Documentation reviewed pointed to interruptions of activities due to funding delays. UN Women progress report linked these delays to the delays from the community-based NGOs in reporting and in providing budgets. However, it appeared that delays were later remedied through consultation between local NGOs and CARE, who helped resolve problems in operations due to delays or operational gaps.

**Table 6: Safe Cities donors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Donor** | **Amount Funded** |
| USAID | $3,612,083 |
| EU | $1,000,000 |
| Spain | $590,000 |
| Netherlands | $139,500 |

It was difficult to report on timeliness of programing and budget dispersal as some Safe Cities activities melded into EVAW once the USAID funding was obtained. Nonetheless, the parallel operation of an extended Safe Cities program of activities alongside EVAW work had been in the best interest of the program’s effectiveness and achievement of its goals, as the nature of the interventions required an extended timeline to build strong community cohorts to be able to sustain the program after its termination.

**Data Sources and Credibility:**  These findings rely on the project reports as completed by UN Women, implementation partners and community NGOs. The findings are complemented by stakeholder and NGO staff interviews. Hence they present credible triangulated data.

# 4.4 IMPACT*[[48]](#footnote-48)*

Finding 9: Safe City interventions impacted the capabilities of women and girls. The interventions contributed to their self-reported access to work, education, social networks, dignity, security and to leisure. Self-defense, available protection resources, and life skills were the newly acquired knowledge and skills valued by the women and men beneficiaries of Safe Cities' training and awareness sessions. The discriminate difference in the quantitative end-line findings between control and intervention areas showed that there was an increase in overall risk to safety and security. Consequently, it informed the readings of prevailing insecurities.

The Safe Cities Evaluation presented quantifiable evidence of impact (in its quantitative survey analysis) and qualitative evidence based on contextual qualitative analysis. While quantitative findings were mainly considered for impact evaluation, qualitative findings also offered a deeper insight into the changes expressed by the beneficiaries and NGO staff.

Eight impact themes emerged from qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, and project documents) collected from the three intervention areas. Main significant quantitative findings are presented as community-level observations or associations with the program.

**Figure 6: Eight impact themes from qualitative data**



**Figure 7: Interlinkages between Safe cities interventions and increased Capabilities**



Women were able to move freely around the upgraded areas. More importantly, and COVID lockdown aside, women reported that they had greater mobility due to the awareness-raising sessions and empowering activities they participated in under the program’s umbrella. They also reported that they were no longer afraid to access more public spaces and use public transport. For instance, the Imbaba women-friendly space enabled women to safely participate in awareness-raising sessions, economic empowerment activities, and interactive community events, including art therapy and sports days. Before upgrading this area, women reported that they only felt safe moving around their narrow local alleyways where they and their families were known but they could not access the main street of the current space. Through the programme, they became aware of how to deal with their predators.

Regarding sense of security, the self-confidence gained by going far beyond their localities strengthened women's agency. One beneficiary said that she felt comfortable and confident going to her college using transport, whereas, before her exposure to Safe Cities, she was afraid of moving around and was clueless when it came to transport. Daughters were given the freedom to go out, knowing they knew how to react if bothered. The Tuk-tuk initiative was also crucial to increased mobility in some areas. The drivers had been trained and had earned the sticker announcing their vehicles as safe for women. Knowing what to do in case of a threat or discomfort enabled a sense of confidence.

The quantitative data pointed to an essential contextual dynamic.[[49]](#footnote-49) Overall, as described below, the perceptions of safety had deteriorated but less so in the intervention areas. For example, in the El Haggannah intervention area it was interesting to note that in the baseline survey, 57 per cent of ever-married respondents, 44 per cent of never-married, and only 26 per cent of males in El Haggannah reported that they considered the site safe. The percentages were noticeably higher in the end-line survey where 82 per cent of ever-married respondents, 80 per cent of never-married and male respondents reported that they considered the site safe. On the other hand, comparing the data in the control site of Al-Salam, the baseline results reflected that about 75 per cent of all types of respondents in Al-Salam reported the area was safe, the percentages declined significantly in the end-line survey as 46 per cent of ever-married respondents, 42 per cent of never-married, and 56 per cent of males in Al-Salam reported that they considered the site as safe. This result gave the impression that there was an improved sense of safety in the intervention area. In case of the control area, although it seemed to be safer in general than that of El Haggannah when the Safe cities programme had started, it seemed to have reversed in ten years.

Considering other intervention sites, in Mansheyyet Nasser according to baseline results, 76.5 per cent of ever-married respondents, 72 per cent never-married, and 74 per cent of males reported that the site was safe. According to the end-line survey, the results in Mansheyyet Nasser dropped slightly among ever-married women and male respondents to 70 per cent. Comparing this to the control site, in Al-Ebageyah, around 91 per cent of ever and never-married respondents and male respondents reported a safe neighborhood. The percentage however, declined more (to 62 per cent) among the never- married women, to 68 per cent among ever-married women, and to 72 per cent among male respondents according to the end-line survey. The results gave the impression that the feeling of security relating to harassment had noticeably dropped in case of the control sites. It dropped in case of the intervention site also but to a relatively modest level.

And finally, in Imbaba, the baseline survey indicated that 61.5 per cent of ever-married, 48 per cent never-married and 40 per cent of male respondents reported that the site was safe. The end-line survey results reflected a decline among women concerning the site’s safety and were 59 per cent, and 42 per cent respectively reported by ever and never- married women. At the same time, the percentage increased among male respondents to 54 per cent. Comparing this to the control site, around 81-85 per cent of all respondents in Boulak Al-Dakrour reported that it was a safe neighborhood in the base-line survey. This result gave the impression that Boulak Al-Dakrour was safer in general than Imbaba. However, the end-line survey results indicated a sharp decline in the respondents’ opinions concerning the site’s safety. Only 50 per cent, 41 per cent, and 57.5 per cent of ever-married, never-married and male respondents viewed the site in Boulak Al-Dakrour as safe at the end-line survey.

Overall, the discriminate difference in the quantitative end-line findings between control and intervention areas showed that there was an increase in overall risks to safety and security but less so in the intervention areas.

Beneficiaries made a strong connection between education and safety. For instance, upgrading the women-friendly space in Imbaba enhanced safety in the nearby areas. Through encouraging more police presence around the nearby school, girls attended exams at schools safely. Beneficiaries and volunteers explained that before the increased police presence and the safety of the women-friendly space, predators would hang around schools during exams knowing girls’ dismissal hours from school. One beneficiary in Imbaba said that her sister dropped out of school in the first secondary because she could not face the dangers of the streets. Similarly, some girls could not go to school because the streets were not safe very early in the morning (in winter), and they could not safely go out in the dark. Volunteers and beneficiaries in other areas also explained that the training sessions helped instill confidence and knowledge on dealing with harassment. This enabled girls to access education and work, where the parents portrayed more confidence in their daughters’ capabilities. Women who had attended awareness sessions gained the confidence to go out and work. One beneficiary noted that many women went out to work as cleaners and in distant locations. Another pointed out that the service taxi stations had more women than men waiting for their ride in the morning as some women were encouraged to seek work beyond their locality when given a sense of safety.

Although going out at night or working late was still problematic, the percentage of women who considered working late at night as safe increased from 10 per cent, to 40 per cent, of ever-married women according to the end-line survey data. However, the end-line survey also indicated that worrying about young girls persisted as 28 per cent still reported their biggest concern as letting young daughters/sisters go to school alone. Never-married women reported lower safety percentages in many situations in both intervention and control areas compared to the baseline survey. For example, in the baseline survey, 57 per cent, and 71 per cent, of never-married respondents in Mansheyyet Nasser and Al-Ebageyah reported that it was safe to work inside the neighbourhood compared to 47 per cent, and 59 per cent, in the end-line survey.

Furthermore, safety to allow mobility of younger siblings and children declined in the end-line survey. For instance, in Mansheyyet Nasser about 82-85 per cent, of ever-married women reported that it would be safe to allow young daughters/sons or brothers/sisters to go alone to school or other neighborhoods in the baseline. In the end-line survey, the percentages of women respondents declined significantly (ranging from 34 to 38 per cent). Comparing this to the control site, the percentage was slightly higher in Al-Ebageyah (88 per cent) in the baseline, and it went even lower, ranging from 23 to 25 per cent in the endline.

The vast majority of interviewed women who volunteered in or had been a beneficiary of Safe Cities agreed that program activities helped them to enjoy companionship in the activities organized for them taking off the psychological pressures of daily and home life. They mentioned theatre, sports, awareness sessions, interactive theatre, and art activities for children as occasions when they stepped out of the narrow domestic circle, got to know other women, had some fun, and learned to handle life’s stress. The leisure and self-fulfillment opportunities were fondly remembered and highly valued by the participants. The women-friendly space in Imbaba provided local women and girls a safe space they could use as it was open till late in the evening and had become a favorite safe destination. The availability of a playground was also appreciated as mothers could enjoy the space while their children enjoyed the facilities. Before creating the safe space, women had nowhere to go except to work, run errands or do home visits.

**Data Sources and Credibility:**  These findings rely on end-line survey data, DiD analysis, stakeholder interviews and FGDs. Hence, they present credible triangulated data.

Finding 10: There was stronger recognition amongst men and women of legally mandated rights and penalties regarding gender-based violence in comparison to compared group. They were aware and had used state-provisioned services for protection and support.

Women reported increased knowledge about protection services and support. The evaluation noted that the information relayed through sessions and community-based activities was retained by many interviewed beneficiaries. There was a clear recollection of how to report harassment and a sense of how important it was to report these acts. The role of the National Council for Women was mentioned as was the access to shelters. One woman in Imbaba remembered that every woman has a right to three days of full board in a shelter. Women also knew of the female police officers and their role. The hot-lines (violence and child-protection) were also known to the beneficiaries.

In Ezzbet Haggannah women spoke of their right to protection and safety. One woman said that after she attended sessions, she became adamant not to put up with her husband’s beatings. She reported him to the police and later got a divorce. She had been putting up with his abuse for years because she had no knowledge of how to act against him. Another beneficiary said,

*“A woman would be given a beating and be drenched in blood and all she could do was go to her mother who would send her back to her husband. Now I swore I would not let any man lay a hand on me. Now husbands are afraid of us.”*

The testimonies of local women illustrated the meaning of empowering knowledge. They knew that violence was not to be tolerated and they also had a clear understanding of how to react if subjected to violence. Women in one group remembered a session given by a police general who explained the way the police support victims. Women stuck the helpline number (as given out) on their hand wallets. NGO workers and volunteers also appreciated the efforts of the police general, stating that his work in Safe Cities made a difference. He ensured that the complaints were addressed on time, including with frequent police raids on drug dealers and gangs as well as handling cases of abuse, as needed. The group confirmed that such access gave them confidence and acted as an important deterrent to abusers and to criminals.

While some women preferred not to pursue an official route for reporting harassment for fear of scandal, most did praise the availability of police support and legal aid for cases of domestic violence. Women said that they now knew how to deal with street harassment and felt no need to go to the police. Women who had domestic problems did use the help from some of the local NGOs to pursue divorce and reported that they received good support.

The quantitative findings pointed to a positive impact on reporting of incidents of harassment.

Considering the end line survey in the intervention site of El Haggannah about 67 per cent of never- married women indicated they reported exposure to harassment, an increase from 44 per cent at the baseline. A similar trend was noted in the comparison site, Al-Salam- Table 7.

**Table 7: Never-married women’s reporting of incidents of harassment [[50]](#footnote-50)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Area | Baseline Survey | End-line Survey |
| Never-Married | El Haggannah | 44% | 67% |
| Al-Salam | 35% | 67% |

In case of Mansheyyet Nasser, it was interesting to note that women who reported that they will yell in response to harassment incidents increased compared to the base line survey results in both intervention and control sites and among both ever and never married women- Table 8.

**Table 8: Women Yelling in Response to Harassment Incidents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Area | Marriage Status | Baseline | End-line |
| Mansheyyet Nasser | Ever married | 12%  | 18%  |
|  | Never married  | 3% | 10% |
| Al-Ebageyah | Ever married | 5% | 15%  |
|  | Never married | 5% | 25% |

However, the results did not yield a significant change in that indicator and percentage of women who reported they will be doing nothing if/when they were exposed to harassment was still high- Table 9. This was mainly due to Fear for reputation or thought that it was not worth reporting. When asked about passer-by reaction when women faced incidents of SH, the data did not indicate significant changes compared to the control.

**Table 9: Women Having No Response to Harassment Incidents**[[51]](#footnote-51)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area | Marriage Status | Percentage |
| Mansheyyet Nasser | Ever married | 80% |
|  | Never married | 86% |
| Al-Ebageyah | Ever married | 63% |
|  | Never married | 78% |

Further, perceptions on reasons for sexual harassment slightly increased in favor of blaming women’s clothes and manner of walking in Ezbet El Haggannah, slightly decreased for Mansheyyet Nasser and mostly did not change for Imbaba (Annex 9).

According to direct beneficiaries and volunteers, the Safe Cities program had enabled additional layers of support for women that did not exist before, namely legal and service changes that supported women and highlighted reliable local NGOs with the capacity to support women and children. In all three locations, there was a clear impact of the knowledge of NCW services, the Child Protection hotline, and the role of NGOs in providing referral services and legal aid. Some felt that police stations were accessible and could be a destination for filing complaints, but others disagreed, preferring to rely on central state services, not local ones. Male beneficiaries in one group discussion chose to recommend women to resort to family and local leaders as these traditional peacemakers were familiar and effective. But others (women) said that resorting to the local NGO had done much good for women who needed legal support, mentioning examples of a widow who would have been cheated out of her inheritance by her husband’s family had she not sought help and other examples of children being abused who had been referred to the hotline. One beneficiary of Safe Cities recently stopped a doctor from performing Female Genital Mutilation by reporting him to the hotline. A force was sent, and the operation was stopped. This happened years after the program ended.

As per women’s agency and personal development, beneficiaries talked of the personal changes that they associate with Safe Cities. They talked of character development and of the ability to make friends, face problems and act autonomously. For example, one woman had a difficult marital relationship because her husband was 16 years older than her. She said the psychological support and sessions given by Al-Hayat organization helped her a lot. Psychological support and life skills sessions provided by Al-Hayat enabled women to resolve problems of shyness, anti-social behaviour, anxiety, and aggressive behaviour at home and specifically towards their own children. Women also spoke of the sports sessions and how they enabled them to have fun but also have confidence. One woman who had been critical of the idea of sessions, went to one session and was silent at first but then continued participation and eventually started to head one of the NGO projects for economic empowerment in Imbaba.

Young men also said that they learnt important psychosocial skills from these sessions. These skills helped them in professional situations. Another beneficiary, who was a university graduate, mentioned the impact of life skills and theatre work on other public roles and that he could host public events as an MC and was currently active in a political party as the local head of cultural, sports and social activities. One female beneficiary explained the self-defense lessons given and recounted in the interview how to debilitate a predator. Others also spoke of the value of learning how to confront their harasser showing confidence and not fear. Confidence, strategic thinking, anger management, social skills and self-awareness were all mentioned as an impact of these sessions.

**Data Sources and Credibility**: The findings in this section can be directly attributed to the intervention as they rely on primary quantitative and qualitative findings from data collection in the three areas[[52]](#footnote-52).

Finding 11: Children who attended awareness sessions on abuse were more familiar with bodily boundaries, how to react and seek help in case of encountering any incident. Parents were more aware how to talk to their children about their bodies and how to report any incident of abuse. Sessions on parenting and on the rights and health of girls were also impactful amongst direct beneficiaries.

The Safe Kids training, and ToT had a significant impact on children, parents, and volunteers. Since the program had an inclusivity objective, targeting child abuse was integral to the program while possibly having a role in breaking cycles of violence with the young generations. Children were guided to understand their bodily rights, boundaries, and defend themselves and report abuse. Safe Kids sessions delivered messages to the children through simple means such as songs. An NGO staff member in Ezbet El Haggannah recalled that she found children chanting in the street the “Ana Ghaly” (I am Valuable) song and volunteers, teachers who later worked with the children and parents recalled a significant impact on children’s awareness.

The CEO and founder of Safe Kids explained that kids could speak up more and take a stand when faced with a situation. She also recalled a story of a parent who thanked her for the Safe Kids sessions explaining that her son was able to defend himself against his schoolmates who were about to sexually assault him in the school’s bathroom when he yelled and reported the incident to the school principal. One parent found beating marks on the body of her child, who was afraid to speak up. The parent then decided to raise the incident to the NGO and filed a complaint against the teacher responsible. Another parent insisted on confronting her daughter’s abuser when she found out despite the discouragement of her husband, who was afraid of a “scandal”. Other parents who attended interactive theatre shows organized by the volunteers that featured child abuse reported that they understood the importance of believing their children, supporting them, and reporting abusers, while also understanding that the taboos that deem child abuse awareness as “inappropriate” were harmful and nonsensical. Some teachers were also influenced by the awareness sessions and decided to discuss the awareness material with their students and raise the issue within their schools.

While schools were considered a main focal point for such efforts, longstanding patriarchal attitudes among teachers and school administrations allowed child abuse to go unpunished. In addition, it was difficult to enter schools due to bureaucratic difficulties to carry out prolonged activities with students, which limited feasible interventions. Finally, the program did not address children with disabilities who were highly prone to the risk of abuse in general and sexual abuse in specific.

The NCW Complaints Office awareness sessions also influenced multiple parents regarding decisions related to their children as they understood their children’s rights to education, protection, and care. Numerous women explained that as they understood the grave consequences of Female Genital Mutilation and early marriage, they decided not to expose their daughters to such practices. One woman told the story of how she did Female Genital Mutilation for two of her daughters but chose not to do it for her third and fourth, despite her husband’s strong opposition, after understanding its consequences through an interactive theatre show. Multiple other women also told stories of refusing to marry their daughters before they were 18 and letting them continue their education instead, despite societal pressures. One beneficiary also explained how the trauma of her early marriage alongside the awareness sessions pushed her to refuse her daughter’s early marriage. Another beneficiary explained how the awareness sessions influenced her to persuade one of her neighbors against marrying her 12-year-old daughter.

The NCW awareness sessions, life-skills support, and parents’ camps significantly affected the parenting styles of beneficiaries. One beneficiary and volunteer from Imbaba explained,

*“I used to be a bit violent with my children, or I couldn’t understand them, and I used to hit them, I didn’t befriend them, but when I attended the sessions, I changed 180 degrees”.*

The parenting camps also taught parents how to deal with their children, believe them and teach them how to protect themselves. One beneficiary and volunteer from Mansheyyet Nasser recalled the impact of the program on her parenting,

*“I, myself, found out that I used to inflict violence on my children without knowing”*

The stakeholders explained how the Safe Cities programme was able to transform their parenting logic at least partially.

Finding 12: The tuk-tuk drivers intervention based on CARE’s model of engaging men was innovative. The intervention enhanced the drivers’ capacities while addressing gender stereotypes, resulting in behavioral change towards harassment, and encouraged drivers to participate in the programme as change agents/volunteers in their communities. However, these values did not spread to other groups of men. Men were also difficult to attract, so the NGOs engaged them through sports and talking to them in coffee shops. However, it was reported by multiple respondents that men needed a more sustained intervention, especially for addiction, as the impact of engaging men was modest. The approach/narrative used to engage men relied on paternalistic guardianship principles and patriarchal norms, to a large extent reinforcing the gender stereotypes.

The tuk-tuk drivers’ innovative project was noteworthy. An NGO staff member in Imbaba explained that almost all problems are blamed on tuk-tuk drivers, but no one tried to deal or work with them, no one tried to listen to them. Another NGO staff member in Mansheyyet Nasser commented that tuk-tuk drivers were one of the highest engaged participants of the program. CARE’s approach with the drivers aimed to enhance their capacities through art therapy as an entry point before directly speaking about Violence Against Women in awareness sessions. The drivers explained a significant change in their attitudes towards women and gender stereotypes. As a volunteer commented, “even their [the tuk-tuk drivers’] language changed,” and many of them became active change agents in their communities. The drivers who were part of the training put stickers on their tuk-tuk that read: “my tuk-tuk is safe, free from harassment and addiction,” indicating safety-guaranteed rides to female customers, and some of them even shared their contacts with women in the community to call them whenever they need a safe ride. Drivers were also part of street campaigns aiming at raising awareness on the VAW of their fellow drivers despite occasional ridicule. Drivers interviewed reported that they would intervene if they saw a gender based harassment incident. The drivers in Mansheyyet Nasser also created graffiti on the main road about Ending Violence Against Women. However, an NGO staff member explained that this intervention was terminated before completion and that there were training sessions that did not take place.

Men engaged in Safe Cities activities reported an impact on their perceptions and behaviour. But this did not render the intervention areas safer in any significant way. Multiple male beneficiaries explained how the program changed their attitudes and behaviour regarding women. One beneficiary discussed viewing women as whole human beings without objectifying their bodies. In contrast, others spoke of how they used to harass women sexually and they stopped doing that after attending the program sessions, especially interactive theatre shows and most of them became change agents in their communities, spreading awareness among their peers. A recovered addict and Safe Cities volunteer explained,

*“I have a right to walk in the street, and she [the woman] has a right to walk in the street, I have a right to work, and so does she. Those ideas weren’t on my mind before; I thought that she has no right to go out in the first place”.*

An NGO staff member told the story of one volunteer who used to sexually harass women but he went through a transformation after participating in an interactive theatre show where he had to play the part of a woman being harassed and felt how painful it was. He stated that if he were a woman, he would have thought “a thousand times on what to wear before going out and what to do if someone harasses her.”

A recovered addict and volunteer from Imbaba summed up his experience in Safe Cities:

*“The awareness sessions we took here, [Hawaa Al Mostaqbal] we took as a way of life”.*

Even though there was a change in attitudes, it did not necessarily apply to all program participants. Some beneficiaries and volunteers believed in women’s freedom of clothing and that it was not the reason behind sexual harassment. In contrast, others still stigmatized women’s manner of dress and blamed them for sexual harassment.

One tuk-tuk driver said:

*“Yes, the largest part of the blame is on men, but the woman also wants this [the harassment].”*

Another beneficiary claimed that women who react to the harasser instead of ignoring him signal that they want to get sexually harassed.

Engaging men was one of the Safe Cities’ main challenges. Men were much harder to attract than women and required more monetary compensation, which strained financial resources while they were generally more resistant to ending violence against women ideas. In addition, even though unconventional means were used to attract men, such as sports and raising awareness on coffee shops, the outcome, as agreed by most of the evaluation participants, was still modest. The stakeholders shared that there were also persistent threat and worries related to use of drugs addiction that increased the probability of men becoming predators and that the programme needed a more sustained intervention with men, especially related to addiction. The evaluation also noted that in the end-line survey, drug addiction gained more importance than in the baseline, as it was cited as a significant vulnerability associated with harassment by more than 95% of ever and never-married groups in Mansheyyet Nasser, but at a relatively lower level among the same groups in Al-Ebageyah (77%). The evaluation noted some reluctance by the households to participate in the questionnaires, mainly in the areas of Imbaba and Ezbat El Haggannah as they did not want to speak about the issues (theft and robbery, drug dealing, kidnapping) for fear of reprisals.

In acknowledgment that engaging men was very difficult, attention to the sub-texts of narrative used in their engagement was essential lest it reproduced the already problematic power dynamics, albeit in a different way. Most of the male evaluation participants explained that they started to refrain from sexually harassing women when they were told that any woman could be their sister or mother and protect the women of their community. A tuk-tuk driver from Imbaba talked about not sexually harassing women anymore and “looking the other way” because he “put her in the place of my sister.” This lens also favored “neighbors” and “women of the community”, which indicated that outside females could still be in danger of violence. The narrative did not reinforce the idea that women should not face violence because of their human rights as equal citizens in the community, whether sisters, mothers, neighbors, strangers or not. According to the UN Women Safe Cities program personnel, the conservative neighborhoods where the program intervened would not have accepted the language of equality and the open discussion of sexual violence had the program not adopted an initial “guardianship” lens to male roles. This lens was later dropped. The evaluation noted that even if deployed consciously and for strategic reasons in the initial phase of community-based work, the narrative of kin, guardianship, and protection had lingered in the perceptions of men and women interviewed.

Finding 13: The women-friendly space in Imbaba had a profound impact as shown in the interviews and focus groups. Women reported that what used to be a space for drug dealers and sexual harassment was now a space for them that they considered it “a breather” among other benefits to the community. In addition, even though the Ezbet El Haggannah football court renovation could not fully serve its intended outcome, it contributed to enhancing security in the surrounding area.

The women-friendly space in Imbaba was one of the Safe Cities’ significant successes. The space transformed an otherwise dangerous and insecure area that was rife with drug use, sexual harassment, and even garbage into a safe haven for women in Imbaba. Women described the space as a “breather,” and one NGO staff member commented that “now they [the women] love the area before they really hated it…now women come to me and say, ‘our area became beautiful’”. Even though the area was not very large, the interviews and FGDs revealed how much the community valued it. A woman from Imbaba explained how the space fostered a sense of community that was lacking before:

*“Before, people didn’t speak to each other, now whoever has a problem can go and speak with their friends in the garden [women-friendly space] and kids can play safely.”*

One NGO staff who started as a Safe Cities volunteer said,

*“I can be comfortable [in the area] …the safe space has become a safe refuge for me that I can even just go to sit in for 10 minutes and come back”.*

The space also offered safety to the surrounding areas. After the upgrading, the lighting from the space enhanced the safety, decreased sexual harassment around the nearby school, allowed more women to feel safer sending their girls to school, and even encouraged more police presence.

As explained under the “Effectiveness” section, the school football court renovation in Ezbet El Haggannah did create a safe space due to the streetlights installed. Still, the intended community center to be managed by the parents’ committee did not materialize.

Finding 14: An unintended positive impact was how the programme messages were able to reach non-beneficiaries. Respondents who participated in the program explained how they were keen to spread what they learned in the program to their family, friends and colleagues. In addition, the program had a far-reaching impact on the lives of its beneficiaries in terms of their later life choices such as education and career paths.

The raised awareness amongst beneficiaries not only helped spread the message of Safe Cities but was also the reason for more volunteers and beneficiaries joining the program as was clear from the interviews and FGDs. The program also had a far-reaching impact on the lives of its beneficiaries in terms of their later life choices. For example, one beneficiary explained how speakers at events inspired her to continue her education become like them and now she was in high school. She said: “I started telling myself why I am not like those people?”.

Other volunteers who participated in the interactive theatre became professional theatre actors later on. Some beneficiaries chose educational goals and paths inspired by the program like social work. Furthermore, the program inspired Hawaa Al Mostaqbal to establish an economic empowerment project to complement the program and, although not evaluated, multiple beneficiaries in Imbaba spoke of its benefits to them in how it taught them skills that could increase their income. Evaluation did not detect negative unintended impact for the program.

# 4.5 SUSTAINABILITY

The findings in this section trace three types of sustainable outcomes of the Safe Cities work in terms of three partners/agents amongst whom evidence of sustainable change can be found. This evaluation found consistent effects in some areas and amongst some agents, modest in others and a clear reversal of some achieved outcomes. Contextual factors have played a role in sustaining, mitigating, or even reversing this impact.

**Table 10: the sustainability Analysis Matrix**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level of sustainable outcomes | Community | Intermediaries | National |
| Ideational | Examples* Knowledge of harassment as a crime
* Knowledge of Safe Cities interventions
* Entitlements around safety and security
 | Examples* NGOs continue work despite end of project cycle out of conviction and due to expertise
* NGOs and volunteers identifying as experts
 | Examples* Broadening agenda of gender justice and challenging taboos
 |
| Behavioural | Examples* Reduced level of harassment
* Safety leading to more mobility
* Feeling safe at home
* Recourse to protection services
 | Examples* NGO’s initiating their own interventions
* Volunteers continuing work
* Intermediaries gaining and using new skills
 | Examples* Changes in laws
* Initiation of services
* Maintenance of services
 |
| Moral/ethical | Examples* Rejection of stereotypes that champion predatory practices
* Critical awareness of safety as a right
 | Examples* NGO’s mainstreaming gender equality in other work
* NGOs believing in the importance of work in the field
* Intermediaries’ commitment to providing services and protection
 | Examples* Support for women’s rights amongst policy-makers and service providers
* Acknowledgement of shortfalls and gaps in protection
 |

Finding 15: Changes in laws and the introduction of formal services that protect women and criminalize abuses were achieved through support to national partners affecting the law amendment and the adoption of National Strategy for combating Violence Against Women. There were sustainable effects detected at the national, community and personal level but limitations were also identified. The structural weaknesses of implementing NGOs and contextual factors had accentuated risks in public spaces for both women and men and had impacted the robustness of sustainable change. The program’s exit strategy was also mentioned as a risk to sustainability as it was unforeseen by participating NGOs and had an adverse effect on them and on the morale of volunteers.

It was difficult to ascertain direct attribution of national level change to the program itself, but it was evident that Safe Cities had channeled national level change to the communities and confirmed this change in the legal, service, and administrative ecology through direct engagements with some community members. It was also key in supporting national level stakeholders and service providers in taking on accountable roles and rising to the challenge of providing fair protection and recourse for women victims of violence, as demonstrated in the amendment of law 306 and the technical support given to the NSVAW[[53]](#footnote-53). Laws were amended, penalties increased; legal aid and training for forensic officers and police were provided although with varying degrees of effect or impact. The diffusion of ideas from the centre/top to different levels of bureaucracy, service providers and communities had achieved an objectively observable and sustainable effect. Media campaigns and general social media presence had also greatly enabled this sustained impact.

The Safe Cities programs also nurtured multiple networks of intermediaries. The acquired skills and new techniques enabled some of the networks of intermediaries to branch out into the fields of gender and development work, beyond the confines of the three intervention areas. Intermediary NGOs reported mainstreaming the Safe Cities approach into all of their work. The Safe Cities approach, they explained, was one whereby they relied on the intermediation of elected local committees and volunteers for their extension work. NGO workers learnt the skills of management, proposal and report writing and community work, and said that the skills informed and continued to inform their work. Volunteers who had been involved in Safe Cities work also continued to use their expertise to provide services. The individuals continued to work on gender justice and on ending violence against women beyond the scope and duration of the Safe Cities program. The psychological support training received continued to inform their support for members of their community. Others had become professional actors and participated in theatre for development activities. Some formed a performing troupe called “Outside the Box” that toured schools and events in governorates outside Cairo and performed awareness-raising sketches learnt as part of Safe Cities. According to the stakeholders consulted, a sense of ownership developed amongst individual NGO workers and volunteers whereby the ideals of Safe Cities became their own.

Moreover, NGOs continued their referral work for cases of abuse, as they became a constant reference hub for support even after the end of the Safe Cities activities. They continued to be a center for the legal support process of the NCW. They also adopted the managerial and outreach lessons of Safe Cities, which enabled some of the intermediaries to continue work in the EVAW phase of the program, become local and national credible GBV advocates and service providers, as well as win new grants in other fields of gender work. One NGO worker said that it was a dream to see the area (Mansheyyet Nasser) free of harassment. This was a dream that the NGO continued to pursue. Volunteers mentioned the way Safe Cities instilled in them an ability to change the difficult conditions in their area and to not accept the neglect, harassment and drugs that proliferated around them. Another said that Safe Cities changed her life and that its message became her own as she continued to promote this message and its ideals.

There was observable change in the activities of mediators who continued to engage in EVAW work and in their attitudes and ideas about gender equality. They become vocal advocates of equality although the evaluation was unable to investigate the degree to which ethical principles propagated by Safe Cities were reflected in the work and internal dynamics of these organizations themselves.

Many beneficiaries of Safe Cities programs became volunteers and community organizers. This in itself is a level of agentic change that is worth noting. One 62-year-old beneficiary and volunteer explained how he channeled his Safe Cities expertise into other forms of civil society services. He chairs the board of a local mosque and uses the principles of Safe Cities to train and raise awareness in the mosque around issues of gender equality and anti-harassment. A mark and memory were left by some training experiences on beneficiaries and volunteers. Several volunteers in different areas noted the interactive theatre and the Aspire workshops on sports, leadership, and personal skills as memorable experiences.

Women mentioned their familiarity with complaints procedures, with available services and with ways to defend themselves. They retained this information and acted upon it when needed. Several volunteers went to police stations to file harassment charges, intervened to protect victims and responded on the spot to violations. There was a clear awareness of rights to mobility and of freedom from harassment. But these positive actions did not always yield the desired results due to structural and cultural factors that are covered in the next section.

However, there were some limitations noted by the evaluation. NGOs had some critical comments concerning sustainability. Practically all NGO staff and volunteers mentioned three challenges to sustainability. The first concerned the lack of an infrastructure that mainstreamed anti-harassment work and provided services. The second concerned the lack of support for community-based civil society organizations that did not have the resources and expertise to sustain work beyond donor funding. They also indicated the need for continued support from the donors. The third concerned multiple emerging challenges to safety and security.

In Ezbet El Haggannah, volunteers mentioned frequent kidnappings and thefts committed with Tuk-Tuks whereby the thieves would hang out of the fast-moving vehicles to perform the crimes. Volunteers participating in a group discussion collectively asserted that the kidnappings and thefts were a new problem that began after the end of the project. Drugs were also proliferating in the 3 areas[[54]](#footnote-54). Young men used drugs openly, and drug dealers, including women dealers, were active despite police clampdowns. Group discussions with beneficiaries in Mansheyyet Nasser confirmed the proliferation of drugs and the heavy price paid by women and young girls who no longer felt safe in their own neighborhoods. The fear of drug related crime was consistently voiced by women in group discussions in all areas. One participant said that she was afraid to walk in the streets as she knew that the young men were under the influence of drugs and may not know what they were doing. She worried about her teenage daughters and thought of making a formal complaint but was scared for her young son who might be attacked by gangs if she caused them trouble. Another said that her husband worked in Alexandria and that recently her daughter broke her fingers in martial arts training, but she was too scared to take her to a hospital or doctor at night and kept her at home and in pain till the morning when she could feel safe enough to go out. Another beneficiary said that she used to leave her children at home for hours but now was too afraid to do so as their area had become too dangerous. Women spoke of the open sale of drugs and the failure to control youth who were unemployed and with nothing to do and time to loiter on the streets. Social media was also blamed for giving young men negative ideas impacting violent behavior. These were the challenges emerging in the general context and although were not associated with the impact or effect of the interventions, needed attention.

NGO workers also spoke of resurgent apathy towards public incidents of harassment. One spoke of the fear of knife crimes which led people not to interfere when they witnessed violent acts against women on the street[[55]](#footnote-55). In one area, the NGO worker said there had been five such deaths in the recent past when young men who had interfered to protect a victim of harassment had been knifed to death for doing so[[56]](#footnote-56). Harassers had also become more brazen. One woman said that she had spoken up when she was followed and harassed several times by a man, “But instead of being afraid and walking away, we used to say that harassers are cowards, he shouted back at me” she said. The incident turned into a shouting match and ended when observers asked her to move on and end the confrontation.

In Mansheyyet Nasser there had been severe deterioration in safety according to one woman beneficiary. She said there had been some improvement but, over the past two years, the situation had gotten worse due to drugs and corruption. She feared for herself and for her daughter as, even after surveillance cameras were installed, the situation did not improve. Others in a FGD also in Mansheyyet Nasser confirmed that the laws were there but that they were not well implemented. It was claimed that police prioritized other crimes and had a tendency to forgive petty crimes of harassment or drugs if they were given information in exchange for release.

An NGO staff member was specific in criticizing the failure of response on the part of protection services and hotlines. One woman was told she deserved to be beaten when she called a hotline saying her husband beat her. Once, a staff member (also a lawyer) called the child protection line when they discovered parents were abusing a young girl. The response came two months later by which time the child had already been hospitalized. The ability to implement, follow-up and provide protection services was not sustained after the end of the programme. Another staff identified the cognitive dissonance of implementation service providers, “once a girl went to the police station to file a harassment complaint and the officer encouraged the assailant to file a counter complaint against the girl because she insulted and beat him (in response to his attack)”.

A female beneficiary said that she had made complaints in the police station, including recently when she and her daughter-in-law were harassed, but that the responses were discouraging. Other beneficiaries participating in a FGD confirmed the reluctance of police officers to register complaints. At times they preferred not to document incidents that could then disturb women themselves (who, it was assumed, were better off forgetting incidents of abuse). They preferred to informally deal with complaints and chastise assailants, assuming that a talk was enough to discourage repeat offences.

As described in the “Effectiveness” section, some NGO staff were not informed by their management of the program’s lifecycle/end and had to cut plans for a number of activities. NGOs did not have the time or consultations to formulate an exit strategy for a program that ran for an intensive four years in their communities. Even though UN Women and CARE attempted to put a sustainability mechanism in place through the NGO coalitions after, the sudden ending of the program had impacted the overall sustainability of the activities, especially since it impacted the morale of volunteers who invested much of their time in the interventions and did not know what to do next as reported in the interviews. UN Women personnel mentioned that there had been a four-day training workshop that convened all NGOs staff and some volunteers, as well as executive directors, to develop sustainability plans according to each NGOs’ available resources. Fundraising and resource mobilization trainings were held to ensure that NGOs seized funding opportunities to ensure continuous community engagement for cultural and behavioral change around women’s rights. In addition, regular coordination meetings continued to be held after the funds/agreements ended, to follow up on and troubleshoot emerging bottlenecks in the continuation of activities. The NGO staff interviewed did not mention these activities, however. They remembered a hurried attempt to form a network of NGOs at a meeting/retreat organized at a Cairo hotel, but these plans did not come to fruition. Some NGOs said that perhaps the network was viable and active but that they were not part of it.

A final sustainability challenge concerned the limited control that locals, beneficiaries, intermediaries, and citizens had in organizing services or in decisions on utilization of public spaces, zoning, and policing. These conversations had a palpable effect on Safe Cities outcomes and effects, yet they took place in circles that were beyond the influence of beneficiaries or of civil society. Moreover, scarce resources such as places in shelters, human resources in police stations or amongst service providers, and lawyers meant that the provision of protection in a timely manner could not be guaranteed.

**Data Sources and Credibility:** The finding relied on interviews, personal testimonies and on focus group discussions. The finding was applicable mostly to direct beneficiaries of Safe Cities activities and as such caused by Safe Cities interventions and was sustained by EVAW interventions and resources. This finding was a commentary on sustainability and relied on primary qualitative data.

Finding 16: Safe Cities challenged gender norms that were characteristic of the intervention areas. For example, addressing attitudes on gender relations, mixing between men and women in activities, engaging young men, and enhancing women’s access to mobility, work/education, and leisure. The program took a human rights approach by centering the enhancement of rights to safety, equality, freedom from discrimination, mobility and access to leisure on both the local and national level while using participation, empowerment, equality principles. Concepts of LNOB were incorporated in the program through implementation in vulnerable communities, however it fell short from directly addressing disabilities. The programme also fell short of being a gender transformative as it at times reinforced gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms in its attempt to engage men.

Gender equality and human rights findings are cross-cutting to all the previous criteria. Safe Cities challenged gender norms through challenging the attitudes of most of the female and male beneficiaries on gender equality and EVAW. The program enhanced the capabilities of women on the levels of mobility, work, education, leisure, access to support and self-confidence while giving them awareness on their rights and gender equality. The values of gender equity and of women’s bodily rights were well promoted by the programme interventions. Beneficiaries and volunteers mentioned a commitment to bodily autonomy and reported on the importance of fighting back to reclaim rights to dignity and safety[[57]](#footnote-57). According to them, the programme had enabled a conversation on harassment amongst beneficiaries. One woman shared her story about how she was buying bread from a bakery, and someone put his hand on her body, so she slapped him and spoke up. She said that the rest of those waiting in line at the oven clapped and cheered for her. Another volunteer said that she had slapped a service cab driver who pulled her into his car. Others cheered for her and when the police officer came to investigate, he did not look at her to see if she was culpable as they used to do (by judging if women were daringly dressed and therefore deserving what happened to them). On the contrary, he immediately charged the driver.

Some beneficiaries reported changing long standing views on favoring males to females or allowing males to do certain activities while denying them to females, such as sports and continuing education. Volunteers also explained that enjoining men and women in interventions was controversial at the beginning, but that they then learned more about boundaries, dealing respectfully with each other and being empathetic towards one another.

Engaging men, whether they were beneficiaries or volunteers, by challenging their views on women or by supporting them to become agents of change and active advocates for gender equality and EVAW was also considered a major step in achieving better gender equality in the target communities. Men reported about a positive change in their world views and values due to their involvement and participation in the programme.

The program took a human rights approach mainly through centering participation in local communities by giving priority to the participation and guidance of volunteers and community committees, responding to emerging local needs and opportunities while maintaining a commitment to gender equality.

Overall, the programme was found to be gender responsive and to some extent gender transformative in terms of the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale GRES developed by UNDP[[58]](#footnote-58). The programme worked to address structural causes of gender inequality. It sought to raise gender justice as a common cause for both men and women. Even though the extent of male involvement was constrained by structural factors; the program did raise awareness about gender justice and equality, but specifically amongst direct beneficiaries. The programme however, fell short of being a fully gender transformative programme as it at times reinforced gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms in its attempt to engage men.

Safe Cities also incorporated principles of leave no one behind (LNOB) by operating in underprivileged, deteriorated, and challenging vulnerable communities. Activities accommodated the time schedules and conditions of women, enjoined men and were inclusive of beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds and religions. However, the program did not specifically target disabilities, an element of LNOB. NGOs did not recall having any beneficiary with disability, while opportunities such as giving awareness on child abuse to children with disabilities, who were highly vulnerable, were missed even if they were not considered the main target of the program. In addition, plans to make the upgrading of the two MoSS shelters as disabled friendly also did not take place. However, other urban upgrading interventions such as the Imbaba women friendly space could be considered as able to facilitate access to less able individuals.

**Data Sources and Credibility:** This finding relies on interviews, personal testimonies and on focus group discussions. This finding also relies on NGO reports and relates specifically to implemented activities.

# CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1:** Safe Cities was a unique, well-funded, relevant, broadly supported, and effective long-term programme that had been an element in Egypt’s changing landscape and ecology on recognizing, preventing, and addressing gender-based violence, with a specific attention to safety in the public space. The programme theory of change had relevance at the national level as combating sexual violence had gained traction over the past decade. The theory of change focused on essential pillars of societal change; local ownership, national policies, urban development, and social norms, to reduce the risks of gender-based violence and lead to women’s empowerment. Focusing on such composition of issues in one program was unprecedented and much needed, as stated by different stakeholders, national partners and most importantly, the beneficiaries. However, the relevance of the theory of change to local communities was less obvious. The assumptions implicit in the theory of change concerning diffusion and the dynamics of change limited its use as a modelling, analytical and evaluative framework. The path dependence of these dynamics was not explained but was assumed. They therefore were difficult to measure, verify or describe. (Finding 1 and 2)

**Conclusion 2:** The programme established national partnerships, collaboration with UN agencies, and a network of partner NGOs to realize sustained change. It was evident that the program had taken significant steps with regards to enhancing the capacity of duty bearers through advocacy and technical support for a more equitable legal system and accessible service provision, enhancing the awareness of program participants, especially youth volunteers, women, and children, through various innovative interventions. It also managed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the volunteers and community committee members, women and children to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces. Involvement of men specially by including the tuk-tuk drivers contributed towards increasing their awareness and knowledge and changing some of their attitudes towards women’s rights. However, the misfit between the scope of activities and the scale of the challenge, inadequate response to the growing addiction issues, inadequate engagement with male and inaccessibility of schools posed obstacles to the full realization. Programme monitoring system was also limited in capturing actual change in behavior and attitude as it was predominantly focused on monitoring process rather than actual change. The monitoring systems also did not measure social norms change. The programme had a lot of reporting but little analysis, synthesis or grounded research that narrated the intervention from the point of view of locals and community members. The investment in reporting and monitoring should have been matched with an investment in research that documents the processes of change and challenge enacted by the programme. (Based on Findings 2, 3 and 4).

**Conclusion 3:** Improving small parts of the infrastructure in Imbaba, Ezbet El Haggannah, and Zenin provided more safety for target communities.However, coordination between these many partners was weak at times, thus challenging the realization of the full potential of interventions. In addition, the programme intervention needed a multi-partner coordinating mechanism to take the intervention out of the ‘project’ mode and mainstream its message through networking and alliance building. For example, the infrastructure interventions required better partnerships with Ministry of Interior/ Ministry of Education/Cairo governorate/municipalities to facilitate upgraded facilities’ maintenance, administration, and management. Further, the market was physically upgraded but its potential to enable women’s economic empowerment was modest. More planning on the economic viability of the market was needed as the main planning/goal was to make the Market safe. (Finding 6 and 15)

**Conclusion 4:** Safe cities programme did influence the way Cairenes perceived harassment and gender rights. It positively impacted the capabilities of women and girls by contributing to their access to work, education, social networks, dignity, security and to leisure. The newly acquired knowledge about self-defense, protection services and life skills were also valued by the women and men beneficiaries. It also had a positive unintended impact on the lives of its beneficiaries in terms of their later life choices such as education and career paths. The programme also managed to reach the non- beneficiaries. However, it underestimated the challenges posed by a complex urban landscape. The theory of change[[59]](#footnote-59) lacked a holistic approach that connected public and private risks of violence, economic empowerment, decent work, and the engagement of men. The programme did not recognize the deeply rooted patriarchal norms that were entrenched in households starting at a very young age, as activities focused primarily on the capacity building of women, girls, and boys to recognize violence against women in public spaces. Awareness sessions conducted by national NGOs such as SAFE addressed issues of violence and of domestic and child abuse. But the focus of activities remained in the realm of the public and skirted issues of private transgressions and of power inequalities within the home. The Continuum of violence was recognized in some training and awareness activities, but actual support and services were slow to follow. The action was taken in public media campaigns and in some policy and advocacy work that addressed violence and harassment in mass transport and on university campuses. But the ways in which patriarchal norms and private arrangements exacerbate risks of violence and disabled women’s autonomy were not directly addressed at the community level. The approach/narrative used to engage men also relied on paternalistic guardianship principles and patriarchal norms, to a large extent reinforcing the gender stereotypes. Work within communities that sought to engage men required more in-depth engagement with increasing problems of drug use and insecurity. The theory of change did not consider, and the programme also did not address how gender norms changed or in what ways the change was at risk.[[60]](#footnote-60) It also did not adequately address the issue of disability inclusion. Overall, it was found to be gender responsive and to some extent gender transformative in terms of the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale GRES developed by UNDP. **(**Finding 9, 10, 12, 14 and 16)

**Conclusion 5:** The programme had some sustainable effects at the national, community and personal level. Changes in laws and the introduction of formal services that protect women and criminalize abuses were achieved. It also nurtured multiple networks of intermediaries. The knowledge and skills gained by the direct beneficiaries of the programme also had a potential to sustain but the diffusion of equitable gender norms and safety for women in public spaces required continued and substantial investment far beyond the existing interventions.Lack of an infrastructure that mainstreamed anti-harassment work and provided services, structural weaknesses of implementing NGOs including lack of support for community-based civil society organizations that did not have the resources and expertise to sustain work beyond donor funding as well as contextual factors such as multiple emerging challenges to safety and security had accentuated risks in public spaces for both women and men and had impacted the sustainable change. The program’s exit strategy was also mentioned as a risk to sustainability as it was unforeseen by participating NGOs and had an adverse effect on their and the volunteer’s morale. (Finding 6,12 and 15).

# Lessons Learnt

1. Interventions that seek to inform social behaviour in dense, dynamic, and deprived urban contexts can only realize broad change if by design have long programme cycles rather than small projects. Because it takes time to appreciate and address sustainable changes. The Safe cities programme approach was partially successful because it relied on a long-term strategy that transcended narrow project cycles. (Finding 1,4,5,8).
2. UN Women and partners can change gender norms if committed to a grounded approach that is adaptive and which is not premised on a linear and/or top-down approach to changing norms.It is possible to change social norms through well planned interventions immersed in local contexts, but this change has to be supported by institutional and structural factors. Moreover, social norms are not immune to the stressors and currents that may endanger women in public spaces, and which are beyond the scope of interventions. (Finding 10,11,13,16).

1. Media campaigns should be complemented with investments in services and locally grounded programs to change gender norms.Grounded research (also accessible in local language), as an integral part of program implementation helps to address obstacles and take advantage of opportunities. Media campaigns are a powerful means to spread the program’s messages through billboards, social media and especially TV (which was shown to be the most common medium of acquiring knowledge on sexual harassment in the evaluation survey), however, communicating new norms and ideas is a first step towards gender justice and not a goal in itself. Credible services that provide safety, justice and protection are equally required to observe any sustainable and incremental changes pertaining to normalized social practices. (Finding 5)
2. Building a movement for gender justice needs feminist organisations and groups to protect and build on any gains. Strategic and structural changes that favor gender justice require an acknowledgement of the necessity of participation and engagement of organized women’s groups at multiple levels to optimize gains and to contest threats to these gains. Coalitions of state, civil society, feminist, community, and development actors can best realize safety for women and for men. Creating diverse coalitions of community level actors was a strength of the Safe Cities program, however these groups need continued recognition and need to be supported. (Finding 15)
3. Alignment with and expansion of national partnerships on different levels including the national, regional, and local level are essential for the realization of sustainable and locally owned program outcomes. UN Women and partners should invest in the support of national gender coordination mechanisms that involve multiple state, municipal and civil society partners for their flagship programs. (Findings 1 and 5)

# Recommendations

The recommendations were developed using a consultative and participatory approach wherein the Evaluation Management Group and the Evaluation Reference group were involved through a workshop to develop the set of actionable recommendations that can be implemented in a time bound manner. Recommendation under three broad categories is provided: partnerships, operational and strategic. The recommendations were given a priority ranking -Very high, High and Medium- to facilitate prioritization and action.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Section** | **Directed** | **Priority Rank** | **How Can Action be Supported** |
| **Partnerships** |
| 1. Give active civil society organizations long term support to enable sustained action and enable NGOs committed to gender equality. | Conclusion- 5Lessons 2,4 and 5 | UN Women Donors | High | -Provide core funding for NGOs and delink partnerships from project cycles-Create coordination mechanisms that are not project dependent-Be selective in working with organizations that favour gender equality.-Commit to supporting active, grounded, feminist community-based groups. |
| 2.Coordinate the work of gender equality with other UN agencies so as to achieve effective national partnerships at the level of ministries, governorates, and municipalities relevant to the planned program activities and in particular when high-cost projects such as urban upgrading are concerned. | Conclusion- 3 and 5Lessons- 2,4 and 5 | UN Women | Medium | -Share strategic plans and planned activities with other UN agencies in a timely manner that permits joint planning-Brief UN agencies on project/program needs and networks to facilitate joint action-Coordinate with other agencies to establish effective partnerships with national partners and counterparts at the central, regional, and implementation levels so as to optimize their role and avoid duplication and confusion. |
| 3.UN Women should continue to support the NCW as a national partner to coordinate the allocation of funds and interventions through formation of a structured committee of monitoring and evaluation. | Conclusion-2 and 5 | UN Women,NCW | High | -Support a national level monitoring and evaluation body that reviews funded national gender programs.-Enable the sharing of this information with government and with civil society.-Support the drafting of an annual gender report that informs on the progress of projects and provides critical commentary on their impact and potentials. |
| **Operations** |
| 4.Consult with local NGOs throughout program stages to ensure timely and clear communication and adaptation to changing context and conditions in which NGOs operate. | Conclusion-2 and 5Lesson 2,4 and 5 | UN Women | High | -Structure periodic conversations with teams of implementation partners to share information, opportunities, and concerns-Encourage academic and operations research collaborations so as to have an additional perspective on project and program implementation. |
| 5. UN Women & donors should standardize monitoring tools, if applicable, and regularly triangulate/ validate data. | Conclusion-2 | UN Women, Donors,national implementation partners | Medium | -Develop mutually informed monitoring systems that enable all stakeholders to follow up on implementation and to have verified data that correspond to predetermined targets, when applicable.-Budget for post-program monitoring to measure sustainability. |
| **Strategies** |
| 6.Engage men as from the onset. Male engagement is imperative to eliminating violence against women. Projects and programs design, implementation plans, and budgets need to engage men from the beginning of the program. Projects and programs also need to articulate public and private spheres of influence while refraining from narratives of guardianship or patriarchy. | Conclusion-4 | UN Women,Donors,National partners | Very high | -Commission consultations and studies that enable an updated understanding of patriarchal challenges to gender justice.-Design programs on the basis of grounded and updated cultural and political knowledge on gender.-Mainstream gender into program implementation by targeting men and women in all activities while considering, financially and technically, methods of male participation. |
| 7. Change is slow and monitoring or evaluating the impact of interventions on social norms and behavior is complex. UN Women should acknowledge structural and contextual problems that challenge interventions and influence the theory of change and accordingly incorporate this ecology into program design. It should focus on and invest in measuring social norms change | Conclusion-2 and 4 Lessons- 2 | UN Women | Medium | -Target endemic challenges such as addiction through sustained, broad interventions, coalitions, and strategies.-Recognize contextual factors when drafting a theory of change for programs.-Expect deviance and adapt through flexible program, forward plans and trajectories-Encourage an understanding of the ecologies of gender justice.-Temper expectations of interventions with informed research on context and on broader historical changes-Differentiate between process monitoring and outcomes. Focus on and invest in measuring social norms change.-Go beyond projects and project cycles to address through engaged research trends of broad social change. |
| 8.Engage with digital spheres, as a space for violence against women but also as an opportunity for intervention, in their own terms and not as proxies of the real world. | Conclusion 4  | UN Women, donors,implementation partners | Medium | -Design ethical interventions in the digital sphere to avoid doing harm.-Research and apply appropriate tools and conceptual frameworks to address digital harassment and violence while engaging digital feminist coalitions. |
| 9. Transcend small project cycles and build up programs to match expectations of impact to scale of intervention and ensure that time is factored in. Scale is an essential ingredient of success. Interventions that seek to inform social behavior in dense, dynamic, and deprived urban contexts can only realize broad change if their scale is appropriately large and extensive | Conclusion- 3 and 5Lessons- 1 | UN Women | High | -Reconsider the meaning of community and acknowledge the fluid and complex nature of urban settings-Develop a Lego approach to project objectives [[61]](#footnote-61)whereby small objectives add up to broader change-Revise evaluation timelines so as to capture immediate and medium-term change-Transcend small project cycles and build up programs through longer term sustained engagements |
| 10. Develop a strategy and a concrete plan for disability inclusion. Also, develop an approach to economic empowerment that aims to engage women in decent/dignified and/or protected work and avoid investing in unsustainable and unprotected work.  | Conclusion-3 & 4  | UN Women,donors,national implementation partners | High | -Develop a concrete plan for disability inclusion, implement and monitor it. Document the lessons for reflection and future improvement. -Avoid the creation of dead-end jobs that are not sustained by market forces-Provide women with marketable skills that enable them to compete in markets as these skills protect women-Address workplace transgressions in programs and projects-Support the right to decent work by giving women access to information and knowledge of economic rights-Acknowledge the rights to a minimum wage when creating work options for women |
| 11. Continue to invest in legal protection for women and in enabling gender responsive services but audit the quality and accessibility of these services and make funding contingent on basic standards of quality | Conclusion-2 and 4  | UN Women | Very high | -Support the study of the impact of legal reforms to ensure that laws are being implemented in ways that realize their promise-Create coordination mechanisms with service providers so as to regularly monitor the performance of service providers (legal aide, shelters, women police) and help resolve problems encountered-Ensure that funding is contingent on basic standards including universal access and fairness |

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3. <https://mped.gov.eg/EgyptVision?lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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27. Interviews with stakeholders depended on availability and relevance. Some interviews may not be mentioned in the stakeholders mapping. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. For a full list of stakeholder interviewees, see ‘[Annex 2”](#_ANNEX_2:_STAKEHOLDER). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. For a full list of documents, see “[Annex 3](#_Annex_3:_LIST)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. ​​The number of volunteers is expected to be higher than the recorded one. This difference is due to the fact that some participants identified themselves as beneficiaries although they did some volunteering work along the way, therefore there is some overlap between the volunteer and beneficiary categories. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr302-dhs-final-reports.cfm> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. [WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251759/9789241510189-eng.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. <https://egypt.un.org/en/24330-united-nations-partnership-development-framework-unpdf-2018-2022> [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/portal-document/Egypt_UNDAF%202013-2017.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Associated with the program since 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. [Egypt: Parliament Approves Draft Law Amending Provisions Penalizing Sexual Harassment (2021), Link](http://loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2021-07-19/egypt-parliament-approves-draft-law-amending-provisions-penalizing-sexual-harassment/) [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. [Egypt: Parliament Approves Draft Law Amending Provisions Penalizing Sexual Harassment (2021), Link](http://loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2021-07-19/egypt-parliament-approves-draft-law-amending-provisions-penalizing-sexual-harassment/) [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. [National Strategy of Combating Violence Against Women (2015-2020)](https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/egypt/2015/national-strategy-for-combating-violence-against-women-2015-2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The National Council for Women then organized five workshops gathering 13 NGOs, 27 media corporations, 27 representatives for the people with special needs, and 16 institutions in charge of executing the NSVAW to operationalize the strategy. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. While the advocacy for ending Violence against women agenda on the legal and policy levels continued under the Ending Violence against women program. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. [UNDP-Egypt, 2021, The Egyptian Human Development Report 2021, Final Report, Link.](https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/launch-of-egypt-human-development-report-2021.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. NCW – Complaints Office (2015) Report of the Complaints Office of the National Council for Women on the implementation of the activities of the Safe Cities Project in the period from May 2013 to April 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Variability in level of details on sessions provided in the report are due different levels of reporting in quarterly and annual reports. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The national campaigns and the emergence of a political will to fight GBV as evidenced by statements of political leadership also may have contributed to raised awareness. Moreover, social media and digital sources of information may also have played a role. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Likes, comments or shares [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. A global non-profit and community of student, academic and business leaders. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The impact evaluation of this intervention is out of the scope of this report (as the Market was only inaugurated in 2019), a field visit showed that the Market was almost empty, and vendors were struggling for revenue. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Impact is defined as the long-term effects of a project, or an initiative as expressed in the behaviour, recollection, perceptions, and experiences of intended beneficiaries and stakeholders. Although impact is conceptualized in evaluation research as a palpable, calculable, quantifiable, or concrete effect, some indicators cannot be measured in a quantifiable manner. For example, trust, dignity, power, confidence, safety, and security are indicators that should not be reduced to their quantifiable proxies. Impact was detected in the opinions, knowledge, beliefs, and recollection of beneficiaries and residents. But it is difficult to confirm that this impact was optimal or appropriate to the interventions. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Respondents were asked about safety and security pertaining to sexual harassment, verbal harassment, street fights both verbal and physical as well as muggings and thefts. The perception of increased risk was significant overall, and the figures listed pertain to harassment. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Reporting incidents to the police is still among the least favoured options women choose when exposed to anything but serious physical harassment. However, it is worth mentioning that women who said that they reported to the police increased slightly in both sites in the end line survey compared to the base line survey mainly among the ever-married women. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. In both sites; the most common response that ever or never-married respondents did when they are exposed to harassment was doing nothing. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. This approach does not rely on quantifiable evidence but rather focuses on ‘emic’ or insider accounts of change. Consequently, stories of significant change as identified by purposively sampled beneficiaries and stakeholders are the evidence of impact. Respondents are asked to talk about the main changes in their lives that they attribute to their experiences of the intervention. They are asked to identify the factors and drivers that can be attributed to or associated with the intervention. Their attributions may well be from multiple sources. A control group is not required as evidence of attribution is sought through respondents’ own accounts of causal mechanisms. The questions posed to interviewees and focus group participants reassemble the project’s theory of change from the point of view of these respondents by asking them to attribute inputs to impact. The QuIP also focuses on the final causal link from outcomes to impact on intended beneficiaries which is also often the hardest to assess. This approach places a strong emphasis on multi-stakeholder engagement to validate, interpret and explore potential implications of findings. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. As shown in outcome 1 in the “Effectiveness” section [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. [As demonstrated in annex 10](#_ANNEX_10:_SAFETY) [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. ​​Frequencies from the quantitative data showed an overall high response rate in the “may act badly if action is taken” in both control and intervention sights as a response to why women may choose not to take action in cases of harassment, which adds to the qualitative findings that harassers are becoming bolder and that some men who stood up for women were harmed. The figures are significantly higher than both the intervention and the control at the 2011 baseline. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. This statement could not be corroborated by research [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. There is selection bias in these testimonies as qualitative in-depth and group interviews were conducted with beneficiaries and volunteers mostly and relied on their willingness to speak about the programs. Perhaps beneficiaries who did not experience an impact would have been reluctant to take part in interviews. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Independent Evaluation Office, August 2015 United Nations Development Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *If (1) gender-responsive, locally relevant and owned interventions are identified on creating safe public spaces (SPS); if (2) comprehensive policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are developed and implemented; if (3) investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces are effective and accessible to all; and if (4) social norms related to women’s and girls’ rights to enjoy public spaces free from SVAWG are improved; then (5) women and girls are socially, economically and politically empowered in public spaces; because (6) the risks of SH and other forms of SVAWG have been reduced through sustainable local solutions.* [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. The results in the unintended impact section also sheds light on the difficulties and challenges pertaining to the theory of change. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. LEGO (Living Engineering Process) allows building customized process meta-models based on multiple inputs, making an organization more efficient and effective by optimizing resources, time and costs. For more information, refer to

[Four elements of the LEGO Approach](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-four-elements-of-the-LEGO-approach_fig1_269689312#:~:text=LEGO%20(Living%20Engineering%20Process)%20allows,optimizing%20resources%2C%20time%20and%20costs). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)