

CSW69 in-person parallel event summary:

Bold policies, programmes and partnerships to end violence against girls

Introduction

On 17 March 2025 at the sidelines of the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) in New York, the **Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence (GAGE) programme** partnered with the **Ethiopian Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ethiopia** (MoWSA), the **United Nations Population Fund** (UNFPA), **UN Women** and the **Global Disability Fund** to deliver the event ***Bold policies, programmes and partnerships to end violence against girls***. The event took place at a critical juncture: in 2025, the global community marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and 10 years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Testament to this important year, the main focus of CSW69 was to review and appraise the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and culminated in the adoption of the Political Declaration confirming the foundational role of the Beijing Platform as well as acknowledging significant challenges ahead. With intensified obstacles towards the full empowerment of women and girls, including decreased bilateral funding globally and political de-prioritization of gender equality, we must do more with less.

The event ***Bold policies, programmes and partnerships to end violence against girls aligned with the Beijing Platform review process***, with focus on underscoring the unique challenges faced by adolescent girls aged 10-19, including their exposure to risks of violence. Violence against adolescent girls is a global crisis with serious implications for the health, safety, dignity and future well-being of girls, their children, their communities and nations. Due to their gender, age and other intersecting characteristics including – though not limited to – disability status, refugee status, socioeconomic and socioeconomic background and geographic location, adolescent girls remain at increased risk of physical, sexual, and emotional violence in school, in the community and at home, as well as facing intensifying risks of harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) in many contexts.

Event overview

The event opened with remarks by Dr Ergoge Tesfaye, Minister, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs MoWSA, Ethiopia and Dr. Mohammed Meqdady, Secretary General, National Council for Family Affairs, Jordan who both elevated the power of data to shine a light on the most critical population groups, often rendered visible only by studies such as GAGE. Keynote speakers also commented on the importance of programmes and policies which target not only girls, but caregivers, extended families and the broader socioecological environments in which girls live in order to eliminate violence in at the community level.

Research presented by the GAGE study, drawing on 10 years of mixed methods research and evaluation work and following the lives of over 20,000 adolescents and young people in the Global South, showcased how trends and experiences of violence change over the course of adolescence and early adulthood for girls. Across contexts, research shows that corporal punishment experienced from caregivers, siblings, peers and teachers evolves as girls grow up and is often replaced with psychological violence and exclusion from opportunities as girls mature – which they seldom recognize as forms of violence. GAGE data featured crushing experiences of violence experienced by girls with disabilities, which intensify as they enter older adolescence and young adulthood. Adolescent girls with disabilities are also at increased risk of social exclusion, elevated risks of sexual violence and face serious challenges to accessing disability-responsive protection services. Across its sample, GAGE data also underscored the endemic nature of intimate partner violence and the major drivers of child marriage. Finally, GAGE spotlighted what works to address violence, by presenting snapshot cross-country evaluation findings highlighting positive effects of programmes that target gender norms on violence explicitly, violence prevention programming with parental components on positive parenting practices and on the negative repercussions of violence against girls.

Stemming from the research presented, the event sought reflections from gender equality advocates, governments and civil society, to underscore the importance of working in partnership and honing in on pathways to advance whole-of-society efforts that are moving the needle on eradicating violence against girls. The event moderator and panellists including Dr Ola Abualghaib (Director of the UN Global Disability Fund (UN GDF) Secretariat), Nyawira Wahito (Executive Director, Resource Centre for Women and Girls), Kathleen Sherwin (Chief Strategy & Engagement Officer, Plan International), Seleshi Tadesse (Technical Advisor, UNFPA), and Lindiwe Ngwenya (Programme Specialist EAW Spotlight, UN Women and African Union) brought concrete examples of how leveraging broad partnerships can allow interventions to reach all girls.

Recommendations

Against the backdrop of CSW69, the diminishing funding flowing to women and girls' rights and the serious risk of depleting political will for gender equality, it is paramount that we act – collectively – to ensure a world where girls can be free from violence. The event coalesced on the need to keep violence response and prevention programmes implemented for and with girls high on the agenda and to ensure policy advocacy on the following key areas:

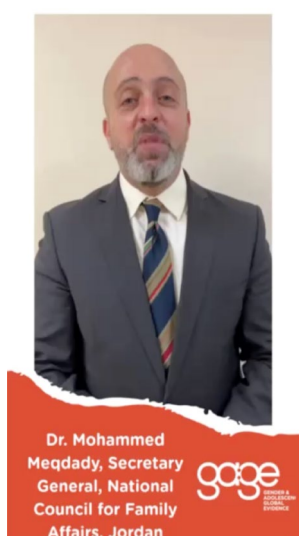
- **Data and evidence** on adolescent girls' experiences of violence are paramount to ensure that no girl is left behind and that the nuances of violence across adolescence are appropriately tackled. Moreover, research is a powerful antidote to counter the spread of misinformation and false claims on girlhood and experiences of violence which are adding to negative rhetoric and rollback on women and girls' rights.
- **Multistakeholder partnerships** including with philanthropic organizations and the private sector must be pursued, including to resource programmes proven to address violence against girls, and remedy bilateral funding fallout.
- **Community-driven programming** must be better supported through increased partnership and funding for women-, girl- and youth-led work, as localized action remains cost-effective, targeted and impactful.
- **Accountability and learning** mechanisms within civil society need to be strengthened. Civil society continues to work deeply at all tiers of the community to address violence against girls, and actors need to be more efficient and structured when it comes to learning from each other to fortify their work and engage in collective advocacy.

Resources

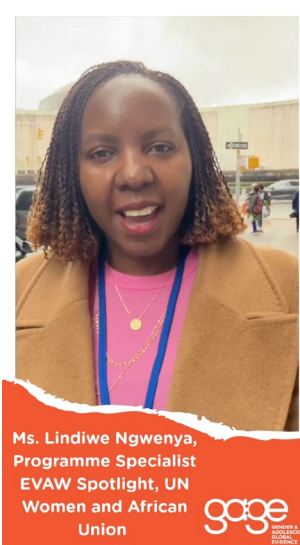
To learn more about GAGE's research findings on bodily integrity and freedom from violence, browse our publications::

- [GAGE publications on adolescent experiences of gender-based violence](#)
- [GAGE publications on child marriage and FGM/C](#)
- [GAGE publications exploring the experiences of adolescents with disabilities](#)

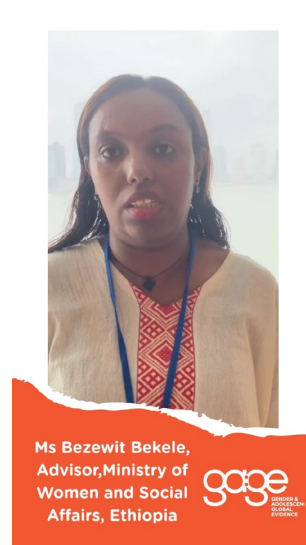
Hear event reflections from three of our CSW event panelists here:



Dr. Mohammed Meqdady,
Secretary General,
National Council for Family Affairs,
Jordan



Ms. Lindiwe Ngwenya,
Programme Specialist EAW
Spotlight, UN Women and
African Union



Ms. Bezewit Bekele,
Advisor, Ministry of Women
and Social Affairs, Ethiopia