

# Making the connection

between intimate partner violence and violence against children



Around the world, the pandemics of violence against women (VAW) – specifically, intimate partner violence (IPV) – and violence against children (VAC) tend to co-occur in the same household, with devastating, interrelated effects transmitted from generation to generation that impact the well-being of entire societies. But all too often, attempts to address these deeply intertwined problems are made separately, hindering progress; such is the case as well in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where levels of both IPV and VAC remain high across the region.

A study of seven countries in the region – Albania, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine – has provided critical information on the overlaps between VAW and VAC, pointing the way towards more effective approaches to prevent both forms of violence. Key findings of the study include the following:

## ▶ IPV and VAC share a number of common causes

These include high levels of gender inequality, social norms valuing boys and men over girls and women, and the normalization of violence in society, as well as contributing factors such as alcohol abuse and household dysfunction. Eliminating common root causes and risk factors such as these can be the key to reducing multiple forms of related violence, including VAC and IPV.

## ▶ When women experience violence at home, children are at higher risk of trauma, too.

The survey data showed high levels of overlap between children who witnessed domestic violence and those who experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse before the age of 18.





## Children abused at home are more prone to replicate violent relationships as adults.

Exposure to violence before age 18 is a significant factor increasing the risk of later adulthood violence, either as a perpetrator or victim. Men and women who experience childhood trauma are more likely to become involved in abusive relationships, and to use harsh parenting against their own children.

## Exposure to IPV and VAC can have devastating impacts on women's and children's health, wellbeing and ability to function in society.

These forms of violence not only affect individual women and children, but also their families, communities and countries. Response and support services – including healthcare, police and justice systems – account for a significant proportion of the costs of VAW to countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Violence also leads to lost productivity and earnings through its harmful effect on participation in education, employment and civic life.



### Priority areas for preventing violence against women and children:

- Promote early childhood development interventions that aim to involve both mothers and fathers in creating nurturing, violence-free households, and support reporting of incidents.
- Increase access for women and children to complimentary, comprehensive, multi-sectoral services and care in order to break the cycle of inter-generational transmission of violence.
- Address gender inequality and change social attitudes that normalize violence. When boys and girls, women and men, have equal rights and opportunities in society, they are better able to achieve their potential and live free from multiple forms of inter-related violence.