

2. Advancing health through attention to gender, equity and human rights

The SDGs provide new impetus for advancing health through attention to gender, equity and human rights. This requires partnerships and action within the health sector, across other sectors within government and beyond government.

Elements of these partnerships and examples of successful or promising practices were captured in a summary booklet of short stories, which was launched on 8 March 2017 (International Women's Day). They also fed into the development of a longer regional report intended to inform future efforts on advancing health through attention to gender, equity and/or human rights in the context of the SDGs.

At the same time, given that gender-based violence is a significant public health concern in the Western Pacific Region, efforts were made to strengthen this area of work in partnership across the Organization.

A regional campaign – Human Together – was launched during a high-level side event at the October 2016 session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, building on social and political mobilization and technical support to countries in previous months. The campaign was replicated at the country level during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Ten Member States, with representatives



The Human Together campaign uses posters like this one – and other tools – to challenge communities to eliminate gender-based violence.

from multiple sectors, also participated in a November 2016 regional meeting on Multi-Sectoral Services to Respond to Gender-Based Violence against Women and Girls in Asia and the Pacific, organized by WHO, the United Nations Population Fund and UN Women, with inputs from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

These efforts are just the beginning. They provide a starting point for change.

Programmes can start where possible by considering issues, asking critical questions, and identifying linkages between their programme and gender, equity and/or rights. It is hoped that lessons learnt will help accelerate efforts to build partnerships for action and advance health through attention to gender, equity and/or rights within the Region. ■