



In Tanzania, UN Women is working with partners, including the government and the civil society, to ensure an end to violence against women and girls. The organization also promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women in leadership and political participation.

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Driving behaviour change to end violence against women and girls

Through advocacy and empowerment campaigns, UN Volunteer Tomoko Yatsu (Japan) used her technical skills to raise awareness about gender-based violence and drive behaviour change. She served as a Programme Analyst with UN Women's programme to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Tanzania.

In Tanzania, Violence Against Women and Girls is widespread and pervasive. Patriarchal social structures and traditional gender norms perpetuate violence.

Women may be socialized to accept, tolerate or even rationalize domestic and partner violence perpetuated against them. For girls, some parents prevent their girl child from attending school and insist they fail exams or encourage them to quit schooling. Furthermore, rape and child marriage result in expulsion from education as does pregnancy, all of which are considered violence or violent acts.

“ Tanzania’s Demographic and Health survey in 2015/2016 showed that 46.2 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 years had experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.” Source: [Global Database on Violence against Women](#)

Tomoko served through the Global Human Resource Development Programme for Peacebuilding and Development (HRD) of the Government of Japan from May 2018 for one year.

Through her assignment, Tomoko worked on projects with civil society organizations to prevent violence against women in communities, market places and hospitals. She also engaged with non-governmental organizations to empower women, girls, men and boys to reject and take public action against social norms, attitudes and practices that fuel social tolerance. Tomoko helped strengthen partner capacity to actively engage men as agents of change, as well as youth, to raise their voices with a view to influencing pre-existing social norms around gendered violence.

"My main responsibilities were to work closely with implementing partners at community level and develop people's skills to prevent violence. I supported the development of project proposals and conducted field monitoring visits to observe whether the projects were creating effective change in the communities," Tomoko explains.

"I was mainly involved in advocacy activities. Through awareness raising and advocacy campaigns, driven by community dialogues, community activist and youth peer education sessions, we reached and empowered around 44,033 women and community members," she continues.

The provision of legal aid and counselling in markets by legal community supporters was another focus, with a view to raising community voices and encouraging community members to report incidents to appropriate institutions. By the end of Tomoko's assignment in May 2019, just over 21,000 incidences of gender-based violence had been reported to police gender and children's desks, legal community supporters and other organizations.

Alongside expanding her technical knowledge, Tomoko gained new skills in project implementation and cycles in the UN system. She also acquired monitoring and evaluation expertise in result-based management. Through this assignment, Tomoko deepened her understanding of the causes of gender inequality and women's empowerment in development contexts.

“Poverty, lack of access to justice, cultural and religious issues and social norms all contribute to gender inequality. Raising awareness about gender-based violence and achieving behaviour change require enormous effort; this is exactly where I want to continue working. --Tomoko Yatsu, former UN Volunteer Programme Analyst with UN Women, Tanzania

Tomoko's assignment contributed to SDG 5, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

This article was prepared with the kind support of [Online Volunteer](#) Helen Maccan.



<https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/eastern-and-southern-africa/tanzania/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls>



<https://www.unv.org/unv-funding-partners/unv-and-japan-partnering-human-resource-development-peacebuilding>



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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 5: Gender equality](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)