Intimate partner violence refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. It can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples, and does not require sexual intimacy. Intimate partner violence is often hidden and only a small percentage of victims seek help from formal victim assistance providers.

**Key facts:**
- Intimate partner violence against women is an important risk factor for HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and other reproductive health problems.
- Women exposed to intimate partner violence are almost twice as likely to have an alcohol use disorder, two times more likely to experience depression and have an increased risk for suicide attempts compared to women who have not been exposed to partner violence.
- Intimate partner violence can negatively affect children in households where it occurs.

**Findings from the survey**
A majority of countries report having conducted national surveys on intimate partner violence and two thirds report having national action plans to address it. Far fewer report implementing school- and community-based programmes to change attitudes and behaviour directly.

**Prevention approaches**
Promoting gender equity, creating a climate of non-tolerance for violence and starting prevention efforts at a young age are some of the key strategies for preventing intimate partner violence.

**Proportion of countries with national action plans and surveys**

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<td>National surveys</td>
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Dating violence prevention in schools

Dating violence prevention programmes in schools aim to develop healthy relationship skills and reduce attitudes that are accepting of violence. Evaluations of these programmes in mostly high-income countries show positive changes in knowledge and attitudes toward relationship violence and reductions in abusive behaviours.

Microfinance and gender equity training

Microfinance combined with gender equity training focuses on women living in poor communities and is designed to economically empower them and address gender norms, cultural beliefs and communication. It is one of the few strategies with documented evidence showing reductions in partner violence.

Social and cultural norm-change

Social and cultural norm-change strategies aim to modify social expectations, such as the norm that men have the right to control women, which make women vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual violence by men. Rigorous evaluations of social and cultural norm-change strategies are still needed to assess their impact; however, they remain an important strategy to inform and create cultural shifts in what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and in promoting norms supportive of healthy, non-violent, and gender equitable relationships.

Proportion of countries that reported implementing a particular strategy