

Ear to Asia podcast

- Title:** The push to end violence against women in the Asia Pacific
- Description:** Violence against women is at epidemic proportions in the Asia Pacific. The region's governments, if they are to find ways of preventing domestic violence and support its victims, need reliable data, but getting the numbers is a difficult undertaking. Public health researchers Dr Henriette Jansen and Dr Kristin Diemer join host Ali Moore to discuss the quest to understand the dimensions of violence against women, and programs aimed at bringing about lasting change. An Asia Institute podcast. Produced and edited by profactual.com. Music by audionautix.com.
- Listen:** <https://player.whooshkaa.com/episode?id=582222>
- Voiceover:** The Ear to Asia podcast is made available on the Jakarta Post platform under agreement between the Jakarta Post and the University of Melbourne.
- Ali Moore:** Hello, I'm Ali Moore. This is Ear to Asia.
- Henriette Jansen:** Twenty years ago, no government was interested in violence against women. Now, every single government is committed. The changes have been huge, but what's really needed is behavioral change at society level.
- Kristin Diemer:** My biggest fear is that in the next five to ten years, countries will be expecting to see change. And change is such a long process that they might then become disinterested. Okay, we know what the prevalence rates are but the deeper understanding of what's happening is where we need to move to next.
- Ali Moore:** In this episode, the quest to end violence against women in the Asia Pacific. Ear to Asia is the podcast from Asia Institute, the Asia research specialists at the university of Melbourne.
- In 2012, 15-year-old Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head while riding on a bus in her native Pakistan because of her advocacy for the right of women to be educated. While her story made global headlines, the epidemic proportions of violence against women remains an urgent public health priority across the Asia Pacific region. Despite the growing awareness of the causes and consequences of violence against women, and the need for public policies to address it, there's little to no reliable data to tell us just how common it is. Reliable information on the prevalence of violence against women and girls is vital to finding workable solutions to both try to prevent it and support victims, but getting the numbers is a difficult undertaking, not just because of the trauma experienced by victims, but also because of the diversity of cultures, histories, religions, and worldviews across countries where violence is prevalent.
- Joining us to discuss the scourge of violence against women and an ambitious project to reveal the size of the problem across the Asia Pacific region are two public health researchers at the forefront of efforts to try to

bring change. Dr. Henriette Jansen is a pioneer of global research into gender-based violence and is from the United Nations Population Fund, or UNFPA, and Dr. Kristin Diemer is a sociologist based in the Department of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. Welcome Henriette, and welcome Kristen.

Kristin Diemer: Thank you.

Henriette Jansen: Thank you very much.

Ali Moore: Let's start with what would seem a very basic question, but I'm sure in fact is quite complicated. Is there a definition of violence against women, Kristin, across different cultures and different countries? Is there a common understanding of what we're talking about?

Kristin Diemer: Yes and no. There are common definitions that have been adopted by the WHO, or the World Health Organisation, and the UN, and these are what we try to work towards when we're measuring violence against women. They cover the forms of violence, like physical, sexual, economic abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, and we have quite lengthy definitions of what all of those encompass. When you take it to the local context in particular countries, the way that violence is expressed can sometimes be different. So when you're working with individual countries, you need to identify some of the types of violence that you might put into a questionnaire to see whether it exists in that country, the types of controlling behaviour for example, that will be different in one country from another.

Ali Moore: So it doesn't really, Henriette, lend itself to a strict box-like definition, does it?

Henriette Jansen: Can I take it one step back? There's an official definition that the UN has, and it's part of the Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, that defines that violence against women is any form of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual or emotional suffering, or threats of such violence. It's a very broad definition. It also defines that it's any violence against women in public or private life. It's really a very broad picture definition that's like very hard to measure, but it also defines all the types of violence that fall under it, which can be intimate partner violence, which can be trafficking of women, which can be forced prostitution, female genital mutilation. There's a whole list of that. It's a very broad definition with very many examples that is included. But when we measure it, then we go to what Kristin was saying, we need to break it down and we need to operationalize. We need to define the behavioural acts that we can measure so that we can measure it in a comparable way.

Ali Moore: So you need to know what you're measuring, in essence.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah, yeah. You can't measure this whole complex definition that tries to explain what violence against women is.

Ali Moore: So if we look specifically at physical or sexual violence against women, how common is it? What do we know about its prevalence?

Kristin Diemer: Well, we have prevalence rate that we quote about what's prevalent across the world, which is an average, where we say on average one in three women experience physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their life. That range varies by country and by definition a little bit, so what's encompassed in sexual violence or physical violence, whether it's controlling behaviour as well as physical acts. But across the region it will vary from between 15% through to 70%.

Ali Moore: That's such a large range. Is that within countries or across countries?

Kristin Diemer: Well, the types of violence will also vary within each country. We pull it together into a physical and/or sexual so that we have a measure which is comparable across countries, but when you break it down by physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, you'll see that some countries will be higher in physical and others will be higher in sexual violence and some in emotional or controlling behaviours. I think Henriette could probably speak to some of that variation.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah. As Kristin said, it varies a lot. It varies from one and six to two out of three in the Asian Pacific region. But it also, as she mentioned, it varies within countries. It varies between countries, it varies in severity. Even if you have the same prevalence rate in two different countries, it can still be very different because a prevalence rate, which expresses the proportion of women who have experienced violence at least once in their life, that rate doesn't tell you how often it has happened, what types, how severe and so on.

A prevalence rate is very useful for advocacy and it's the number that people really use for advocacy. The famous one in three, but it hides the real story, the real experience of women, and that can be very varied.

Ali Moore: And I want to get to how we get to those real stories in a minute, but just staying with that big number, the number people latch onto, do you think it's accurate?

Henriette Jansen: Ah, that's a very good question. I think a lot of people hope it's accurate. My-

Ali Moore: As in it's not worse. I mean, it's bad enough.

Henriette Jansen: The reality is actually worse, because when you measure prevalence you have to interview a representative sample of women without knowing in advance whether they have experienced violence or not. So you're going to ask women often about their most painful experiences in their life, their deepest secrets. You won't get all women to speak, so you miss the stories from women that are too afraid to talk, but you also often miss the most severe. Because if you do, and you are going to ask us later about how we do it, you do it in a survey, if you do a survey, you don't get to women that

are killed. You don't get to women who are institutionalised because of the violence. You don't get to women who are hiding in shelters or hiding in order people's houses.

Ali Moore: You get the women who are prepared to speak.

Henriette Jansen: You get the women who are prepared to speak, so you always miss the most severe and that is a part of the story that I think needs to be mentioned as well when you bring out these numbers.

Ali Moore: Kristin, from the numbers that we do have and the information that we do have, do we have any understanding of the drivers behind it? Are some countries worse than others? Is it cultural? Is it about economic development? Is there anything quantitative that allows us to make those conclusions?

Kristin Diemer: What we do know is that it tends to be aligned with levels of gender equality in a country, so the lower the gender equality is the higher the rates of violence. It sort of co-exists also with the definitions of masculinity and how masculinity is expressed and how much power and control or patriarchy there is. We do see a lot of variation, but when we want to look at prevention or reducing violence is we look at the way that masculinity or men are controlling and then we hope that by increasing gender equality that we can start to alleviate some of the violence or improve or prevent the rates. [crosstalk 00:08:20].

Ali Moore: Is that from your research, that really becomes the focus? If you can improve gender equality, you can reduce the rates of violence against women.

Kristin Diemer: That's correct. That's not measured in our survey. We measure some questions on attitudes so you can understand how people are thinking about violence in the community, but from other surveys that are done about attitudes and about gender equality and the control that women have in their lives and how they're limited, then you can put the two side by side and you can look at the two different surveys, and you look at if they're high in one, they're also high in the other.

Ali Moore: Let's get to this question of how you do measure it, and Henriette, you're a global authority on measuring violence. You were instrumental in designing the World Health Organization's Methodology. Before you entered this field, what were the methodologies?

Henriette Jansen: There were methodologies. I mean violence against women was kind of part of the life of some grassroots-level groups, women groups, activists. There were people already working on violence against women a couple of decades ago, but that was very limited. It was mainly in the U.S., Canada, in developed countries, and really hidden from the mainstream. I mean, governments weren't working on violence against women or national statistics, in the academia a little bit. It is actually through the Beijing Platform of Action that this call came, like we don't have data and we

actually need to have data because we think violence against women is important.

Ali Moore: This is through the UN?

Henriette Jansen: The Beijing Platform of Action is not only the UN, but they had this call for action, the call for collecting data, and then the UN stepped in, in particular the WHO among others, and thought let's try it. If we try to show that violence against women is also a public health programme, we may get other sectors, other actors, interested into the issue. Because when it was presented as a human rights problem, a woman's problem, it was more in the margins.

The WHO multi-country study, which took place from 2000 through 2005, they brought to light that it was a problem that happened everywhere, that we could measure it in a relatively robust, comparable and safe way, and that it was a public health problem. We could show that violence against women had serious impacts on reproductive health, on general health, on mental health. When that came out, it was groundbreaking. I mean, people in the grassroots knew this, but it wasn't general knowledge and it wasn't general knowledge that the violence against women, especially intimate partner violence, was so common. I mean, when I started working on it, I had no idea that it was so common. It was a huge eye opener for me as well, because I wasn't working on that topic before. When that came out it really brought violence against women on the international agenda, on the global agenda, and then it actually changed the world since then.

Ali Moore: Indeed, both of you are now working on this project, this enormous project, No Violence Against Women. How does that link back to the Beijing Platform, Kristin, and tell us a little bit about this project.

Kristin Diemer: The questionnaire and the survey process that we're teaching through the course – the kNOw VAW Data course – so it started about 20 years with the WHO initiative to do a prevalence survey across multiple countries. And Henriette Jansen was one of the key researchers on that project. After the study was finished and published and there were identified rates of prevalence across many countries in the world, WHO thought that that would be the end of it - we'd have a measure and we could just go forward with programming. But what came out of it was a lot of countries wanted to continue measuring prevalence, and so people like Henriette started working individually working with countries to train them and support them in getting additional measures, or countries that weren't covered in the multi-country study. So over time the No Violence Against Women Initiative has evolved.

With so much demand, Henriette is one person and so she couldn't every country all the time, and she ended up being employed by the UN to kind of develop this program and have some more capacity. So we can upskill additional people to do this work.

Ali Moore: And that's led to this project, No Violence Against Women.

Kristin Diemer: Yes, that's right.

Ali Moore: And it is Henriette, as you said, when I ask how you measure it, you measure it through a survey. But of course, that survey, that questionnaire, what's in it is absolutely vital, isn't it? How do you design a questionnaire that will be able to encourage women to talk about some of their most terrifying, most emotional, some of their deepest secrets.

Henriette Jansen: The questionnaire is developed in such a way, one of the most surprising thing for you may be that there is not the word violence in it anywhere. We don't use it as the name of the survey and there is no mention of violence, rape or abuse anywhere in that questionnaire. The questionnaire is a lengthy one. It's about 50 pages if you would have it in print, but it's very carefully built up. It starts with asking about general questions about a woman, her life, her children, her partner, her health. Health is a very big component which comes early on. Then after a while, when there has a rapport been built up, the interviewer gets to the more sensitive questions on violence against women and then pre-warns the woman. In the beginning, there is an informed consent in which the women are already being told that there will be difficult issues that she may find difficult to answer, but it will be helpful. But then when she reaches the violence questions, again she will be reminded, and she will be reminded that if somebody interrupts that they will change the subject. I mean-

Ali Moore: So it's completely private between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah, and that's another part of it. But the questionnaire itself is built up in such a way that it leads gradually to the violence questions to give the chance to build a rapport, and then the violence questions are not being asked did you ever experience physical violence, but they're very much about behavioural acts, so have you ever been slapped, have you ever been kicked. It starts with asking about the partner, the husband or her ex-husband or her cohabiting partner or whatever is the definition of partner in that particular context. Then it will be a sequence of questions on behavioural acts, like slapping, kicking, strangling, choking, the use of a weapon and so on, for physical violence. Whenever she says yes to one of the items, there are follow-up questions on when it happened, if it happened in the last 12 months or before that, and how often and so on. It's a complete series or battery of questions for each type of violence.

But that doesn't give you necessarily the quality of data. It's the whole context. People think that a good questionnaire gives you good data, but for me a good interviewer gives you good data and it's not-

Ali Moore: Who is asking the questions is key.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah, and the context in which it's being asked, the privacy, the safety. One of the key components of getting good data is to have good interviewer training. So you train interviewers, first you start to sensitise them about the

issues, violence against women, about gender, what are causes and consequences so that they are aware of it, and then you work with their prejudices. If you have interviewers that are judgmental or blame victims for their own violence, they won't be very good as interviewers, so either they need to work with getting rid of being judgmental or biased, or if not, they shouldn't be interviewers. Then you need to work with their own experience of violence, which could be in the way they could be re-traumatised. It can be difficult. There's a lot you need to do around the training of interviewers to make them good interviews even before you work on the questionnaire.

Ali Moore: What is the key factor for an interviewer to build trust? Is it time? Is it the broadness of the conversation?

Henriette Jansen: It's a lot, but in particular, I think it's the attitude. It's to be mature, to have an open mind, to be empathic, to be a good listener, and to be nonjudgmental as I said already. For me, I think a good interviewer is somebody who can reach that level that she can consider an interview an exchange of gifts. I always say the best interviewer is the one who can give the gift of her heart, her open mind, her empathy. By giving that gift, she gets a gift back, and that's that most painful, most secret story of a woman. If she can make the woman feel valued, validated, heard, her story is important, often it's a story she's telling for the first time and she feels it beneficial that she has told it, then you get those stories.

People always ask is it good if she has experienced herself violence or not. And there is no right answer to that because some women who have experienced violence find it very hard to listen to all those stories, but others use their stories to build upon that and build that trust.

Ali Moore: You're listening to Ear to Asia from Asia Institute at the university of Melbourne. I'm Ali Moore and I'm joined by public health researchers, Dr. Kristin Diemer and Dr. Henriette Jansen. We're examining the health epidemic of violence against women in Asia and how best to work towards ending it.

We've been talking about the interviewers and, Kristin, I imagine that for some, if they have had experience of violence, there would be real potential issues of hearing these stories. How do you follow up with the interviewers and ensure their wellbeing post of survey process?

Kristin Diemer: Very important. The course that we run talks about everything about how you train and develop interviewers as well as how you follow up and how an organisation can then use the results to promote programmes or build advocacy in the country. The safety elements of the survey extend both to the interviewers as they're doing the interview, so they look after their own emotional health and how do you build that into an interview team, so do you have counsellors that go along with the team or do you have some sort of a phone helpline, but we stress that the most important thing is that there is a support plan in place. What that looks like in each country will be a little bit different, depending on what the services are that are available.

The important thing is to support both the interviewers who are listening to the stories as well as the interviewees having a response they can give to the person who's answering the questions if they ask for it, if they need help or they ask for help. We always ask them to think about what they could design as a gift to give to the woman, a resource for them to access for service and support. This has been quite empowering for some countries where they haven't had a support system in place prior to doing the survey and having to think through what this would look like on a national level. Vietnam is a particular example, where they did their first survey about 10 years ago and they didn't have a national telephone line. So the process of putting the survey into place, they then followed up by creating a national helpline, which still exists today.

Ali Moore: I guess that's the point, that collecting this information is all about trying to bring about change. So the way you've just described the process, the mere fact of doing the survey brings about change because you do need to have some sort of support system. Henriette, have you been back to countries, I mean, for example Vietnam's first surveyed a decade ago? Have you been back and measured what sort of a difference these surveys had been able to make?

Henriette Jansen: Yeah, Vietnam is a very good example because they were an early country that did the survey and I was involved in the survey 10 years ago. As well as the most recent one, which was taking place this year.

Ali Moore: So they've done another one, they've have done a follow up.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah. The survey that they did now, which is 10 years later, we don't have the results yet. We are still in the process of analysing and writing up. But the first survey resulted in a lot of change and awareness. Before the first survey was done, Vietnam already had a domestic violence law. When they had their first data, that came as a big surprise. In Vietnam, everybody thought this doesn't happen in our country, whether it was the government or the general public. By having the government on board with the survey ... And that's one of the things that we hadn't mentioned yet, how do you make sure that results are being used, and one of the things is to have a very participatory process.

Ali Moore: Because you need countries to own the data, [crosstalk 00:21:26].

Henriette Jansen: Exactly. You bring stakeholders from the beginning onboard when you develop the methodology, when you go through the questions so that they know how it's being collected, what's collected, and how to understand it. When the results came out for the first time, it was a huge surprise. They had the one in three, like the global average in Vietnam. So when it came out, they started working with what they call a stakeholder consultations, making them understand the data and developing campaigns, creating huge awareness about the levels of violence, about that it's not acceptable, that it's a crime. Even the general public, now everybody knows violence exists and that a woman who suffers violence now knows that she's not alone, but before that was completely unknown. So they developed a lot of campaigns.

They developed interventions, they had pilot projects, they were setting up a lot of shelters and they call it safe houses. Yeah, we will now see if that had any effect.

But there is also something that we need to bring on the table when we do a second survey. We need to manage expectations, because sometimes when you do a second survey, during the first survey, women were not aware of something like violence against women being a common problem and that may affect disclosure, so a second survey sometimes brings a higher disclosure because it's a much more common thing to talk about, especially things like sexual violence. Before, nobody talked about sex. Sometimes you find more, so you need to dig into your data and really analyse how to measure that change-

Ali Moore: And manage the manage the expectations of ...

Henriette Jansen: And manage the expectations, yeah.

Ali Moore: I guess when you're talking about the buy in of national governments, Kristin, how difficult is it sometimes to make violence against women a priority, particularly in some of these economies that are developing and that they often do struggle to find funds for other public services?

Kristin Diemer: There can be a time and place where there are people in government who are open to doing a survey and it's to be able to grab hold of that opportunity and to be able to run with the survey, especially if they don't expect to find violence, if they're going to be surprised by the data. Sometimes those windows are very short and in some countries we've started the programme to get a survey in place and then government's changed and it's off the agenda for another few years and then it comes back on. So it's really interesting to watch that process and to stay involved with some of the key stakeholders in those countries who are advocating for the surveys.

But once the survey is run, I think what Henriette pointed to is one of the first steps that's really important, is the awareness raising. So to acknowledge that there is an issue here, that there is a rate that people can think about or talk about and not try to understand what does that mean. If you have your governments on board in terms of deciding that this is okay, that we're going to go ahead with the survey and you have a national statistics office actually running it, they believe in the data, they own the data, it stays in their country. We can help and support with how they train and how they analyse and how they use the data, but we really like people in the country to be doing the actual work and we're just supporting them.

Ali Moore: Are there examples of countries where it hasn't worked, where the survey has failed? I don't know how you define failed.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah, that's a good thing. How do you define failure? I think you would define failure is when you get data that absolutely don't reflect the truth and-

Ali Moore: How do you know that?

Henriette Jansen: It's actually easy to fail. That's the very reason of having developed this training, is we want to try and avoid as much as possible that people make the mistakes that are easy to make. There are two levels of failure for me, the way you measure, the way you collect your data, and I go into that in a minute, and the other thing what for me causes failure is if you collected very well but you don't have a participatory process in place or a way that the data gets accepted and used.

To come back to the first, the methodology as developed for the WHO multi-country study, which is a good questionnaire, good training, good ethical and safety measures, and a participatory process. That ensures quite good level data and ownership of the data. If you don't do that, you can get data that completely misses the point. If a country believe suddenly it's an important problem, I have to measure it, and they add questions to a questionnaire on something else without a special training, without having the behavioural-specific questions but just asking a woman who sits on the couch with husband, "Have you ever experienced physical violence from your husband?"

Ali Moore: Who is sitting next to you?

Henriette Jansen: And it does happen by an untrained interviewer, not in a context of safety, privacy and so on. You don't get the answers. We have surveys where that has happened. It's not hypothetical. I mean, I don't want to pinpoint countries, but it has happened. So you get a very low, very low prevalence rate, which becomes an official number, then you undermine the whole importance of the problem. It isn't happening here and we don't need to do anything. So you really undermine everything. You often know from small studies, from grassroots groups, from NGOs, from academia, that the problem is much higher. So you do know, you often do know, because things happen on smaller scale in most countries.

But the problem now is with the sustainable development goals, which have goals on gender equality and which have indicators on violence against women. Every country now is committed to measure violence against women because they have all signed into the sustainable development goals. So everyone jumps onto that bandwagon. There's much more money available from the donors for measuring violence against women. The risk is that a lot of people are starting to do this without really knowing all the intricacy of the work.

Ali Moore: Without necessarily involving an organisation like yours and using a questionnaire like yours. It's more we've got to get this information quick, we'll go and do this survey.

Henriette Jansen: And that's the very reason why at some point we thought we need to build these capacities. We need to make people realise that if they want to go in and measure violence against women, they'd better do it well or not do it,

because bad data can really undermine the whole importance of the problem.

Ali Moore: We talked earlier a lot about the impact of doing these interviews on the interviewer. What about the interviewee, Kristin? This was touched on earlier, often are women almost relieved to have the opportunity to speak?

Kristin Diemer: It's often true that women have never told anybody about the experiences that they've had until they're asked in a questionnaire or through an interview process. For them, if it's done well, if the interviewer is listening and compassionate and empathetic, it can be quite empowering and validating for her. This is also a process of change. She may never tell anybody else and she may never ask for help. Going through that process gives her the sense that she's been listened to, that her experience is important and that they often say, "Thank you for coming, thank you for listening, thank you for sharing my story. I wish you were here 10 years ago." Then sometimes they will ask for help. They'll get to the end of it and they'll be given a card with a number on it and they'll say, "Yeah, I might call that."

There are instances where interviewers can end up in a situation which is quite dangerous, where they feel like the woman is in immediate risk of harm and then you need to have processes in place where the interviewer leaves the environment and then working through the manager or the survey team how do you actually support that woman safely without escalating some sort of risk. There's multiple different ways that you can actually benefit the woman who's the participant. Most often it's just by her being heard and being able to tell her story.

Ali Moore: We've talked a lot about the actual questionnaire and how it's designed, but I wonder how in the context of that you account for different cultures and I mean that in maybe a subtle way. For example, religious practises in a particular country may be more liberal in urban areas and less liberal in regional areas. Do you have to account for that in the questions asked, the phrasing of the questions, how the woman is addressed?

Henriette Jansen: There is a core set of questions which we basically try to keep as unchanged as possible, so that's for the comparative analysis. That doesn't mean that women get exactly the same questions, because in the translation of the questionnaires into each of the local languages you still need to come to a wording that has the same cognitive meaning and it is not necessarily the same literal translation. That's one part of the adaptation. Then the adding in of acts that are specific for certain contexts. If you look at partner violence, in some contexts it's the in-law's violence that actually is an extension of the partner violence. You need to make sure that you measured it. In some countries you have dowry violence. In other countries dowry doesn't exist at all. You make sure you add that in.

But then again, every time when you work with a questionnaire, you work with numbers. If you also want to get that really deeper lived experience of women, you need other methods as well. We have been talking a lot about

the questionnaire, the quantitative component of the methodology, but there is a qualitative component of the methodology which we haven't touched yet. In every country, I mean in most I would say, maybe not every, we emphasise that we need also to have that qualitative component for deeper understanding. People do in-depth interviews with women who have experienced violence or with service providers or with the general population to measure their perception. We really need to get that context story and the deeper story as well in order to properly interpret what you really find, because from the numbers you don't get this really lived experience of women.

We also do that because not everybody relates to numbers. There are people that are much more touched by a story of one woman, which is a deeply emotional story, than having a percentage of 68%.

Ali Moore: But I imagine that qualitative research is so much harder because it is so much more subjective and so it would be so much more complex to take the information and make it comparable country to country.

Henriette Jansen: The qualitative is not to get to comparability, but it's really to get the understanding of the numbers.

Ali Moore: Context.

Henriette Jansen: Yeah, to give the deeper story and to understand some of the surprising findings. If you have something which doesn't make sense or you worry about a finding, you need to get qualitative information. So that's practically always part of a study, but has been done by a different group of researchers often within the country because there are different skills to do that.

Kristin Diemer: Ali, if I could add to that, coming back to the question you had about whether cultural or ethnic groups or religious groups and sometimes there could be differences. Some countries often are interested in analysing by culture, ethnicity or by religion, which we don't suggest you do that to try to profile a group, but sometimes they want to understand if the practises are slightly different. This is where the numbers can inform countries on where they need to do a bit more qualitative research to understand if there are some particular practises that they want to know about.

Ali Moore: But you do have to be careful, don't you?

Kristin Diemer: Yes.

Ali Moore: That that information could be used in a way that you never intended.

Kristin Diemer: Exactly.

Ali Moore: You both work in the Asia Pacific, but how many countries globally are now involved with the No Violence Against Women programme?

Henriette Jansen: The No Violence Against Women Data Initiative is only taking place in Asia and the Pacific. It's Australian government that's funding this initiative. Then we got a partnership with the University of Melbourne, in the first place, specifically to develop this four-week training and to have a sustainable on-going training that can go on for many years.

Ali Moore: But surely the survey would apply to almost every country.

Henriette Jansen: The survey is not designed by the No Violence Against Women Data Initiative. But the rest of the world is also doing violence against women prevalence surveys. This is not unique for this region, but the training-

Ali Moore: How many countries have this training?

Kristin Diemer: [crosstalk 00:34:16].

Henriette Jansen: The training is unique for the world. We develop the training now, we pilot it last year. The University of Melbourne did the pilot and we developed it together and this is the second year it's run. The next steps it's making it sustainable, not only by having it as part of their regular curriculum and having the academic credits and so on, but also by twinning with other institutes, having people from other institutes co-deliver, learning how to run the course as well.

Henriette Jansen: One of the unique aspects of the course is it's opensource. Anybody can use the course materials. It's co-owned by a whole group of organisations. It's WHO, UN Women, other agencies, the demographic and health survey. The idea is that this course becomes a model, and we are now already having a lot of interest, like from Africa, to adapt and run the course, Middle East, central Asia. Gradually we hope to roll out the course globally.

Ali Moore: When you look at how long you've both been involved in this area of data collection and and violence against women, it's an extensive period of time. I just wanted to finish by asking you both whether you can see a day where your project will naturally end, where, Henriette, the data's in, the changes are made and violence against women is really being successfully dealt with. Can you see a day where you've done yourself out of a job?

Henriette Jansen: I don't think I will live long enough to see that day. I think it's something for the long run. From the positive side, the 20 years that I'm working on this topic, I've seen huge changes. The work, when we started it 20 years ago in the WHO, it was groundbreaking. We heard yesterday from a speaker that Australia's funding for ending violence against women in one decade has increased eightfold. So there's a lot of more interest. I mean 20 years ago, no government was interested in this topic. Now, every single government is committed in paying attention to this topic.

The changes have been huge, but what's really needed is behavioural change at society level, and behaviour change can take a long time. I mean, there are all kind of activities and interventions going on to test programmes to see what works, what works best, but there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

There's a long way to go to achieve this behaviour change and we still need to monitor for the sustainable development goals. We need to monitor until 2030 to see if the situation is changing. The aim is to eliminate violence against women by 2030, but I think that's a political aim. I'm afraid we won't reach that, but we will work very hard on getting as close as possible.

Ali Moore: And Kristin, do you share that view that we've made a lot of progress but there's a lot to be done? I guess doing the work that you do, getting the facts, is a very key part of that process.

Kristin Diemer: I think we've done great things for raising awareness and I think that now, as Henriette pointed out, governments are looking at what are the programmes that we can implement to make deeper change at a societal and community and behaviour level. My biggest fear is that in the next five to 10 years, countries will be expecting to see change, and change is such a long process that they might then become disinterested if they think everything they've been doing so far they can't see immediate or quick change. I think the understanding at a deeper level, okay, we know what the prevalence rates are, but the deeper understanding of what's happening is where we need to move to next, and I'd like to be able to see that discussion go forward before I end my work in this field. But I-

Ali Moore: Do you think it's getting there?

Kristin Diemer: I do think it's getting there, and part of that is when we do a second or third survey, like in Australia in particular where we've been running a survey for one of the longest survey waves. Government's asking questions, why hasn't our prevalence rate decreased, it's just kind of stayed static, and so we can probably start to learn from countries that have run more surveys about how they're going to address that issue.

Ali Moore: Thank you both so much for talking to Ear to Asia. You do extraordinary work and it is so incredibly important to starting and bringing about real change in so many countries. Thank you very much for joining us, Kristen and Henriette.

Kristin Diemer: Thank you, nice to be here. Thanks, Ali.

Henriette Jansen: Thank you very much.

Ali Moore: Our guests have been public health researchers, Dr. Henriette Jansen from the United Nations Population Fund or UNFPA, and Dr. Kristin Diemer from the Department of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. Ear to Asia is brought to you by Asia Institute of the University of Melbourne, Australia. You can find more information about this and all our other episodes at the Asia Institute website. Be sure to keep up with every episode of Ear to Asia by following us on the Apple Podcast app, Stitcher, Spotify, or SoundCloud. And if you like the show, please rate and review it on Apple Podcasts. Every positive review helps new listeners find the show, and of course, let your friends know about us on social media.

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