



# **SUPERPOWERS LIE WITHIN YOUR POWER!**

**Practice them  
and be sheltered  
against any form of  
gender-based violence!**

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**Terre des hommes**

Helping children worldwide.

This brochure is addressed to all children and youth who have been direct or indirect victims of gender-based violence. Since all statistics show that girls and women are the main victims of sexual and gender-based violence, this brochure is in particular addressed to them.



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# LET'S TALK ABOUT...

**Gender** - fundamental framework whereby we define the roles of and relations between women and men in a particular society. Alongside class, race, ethnicity, education and age, it is an important social category through which the society defines the roles and relationships between women and men in society. It pertains to the social and cultural meanings and norms that are attached/prescribed to sexes in particular social systems. Whilst sex refers to the biological differences between women and men, gender pertains to social and cultural differences built and imposed based on such differences, which sometimes turn into prejudice and gender discrimination. While sex is assigned to a person at birth, gender is acquired. Gender is universal, yet not uniform, since it is dynamic in time and space.

**Gender stereotypes** - preconceived ideas according to which women and men have predetermined and limited (and most of the times different) characteristics and roles based on their gender. Colour („boys wear blue, girls pink”), occupation or relational based stereotypes exist. Stereotypes may lead to prejudice (unfavourable attitudes towards the group in question) and sometimes to discrimination (with negative impacts on the group).

**Gender-based violence** is a serious breach of the universal human rights. More specifically, is a breach of the right to life, liberty and personal security; to physical and mental health; to circulation, opinion, education and personal development; to cultural, political, public participation etc. (See extended definition in the next chapters).







# FIRST OF ALL...

Everyone, irrespective of his or her place of birth or residence, sex, gender, age, ethnicity, race, social class, standard of living, religion or sexual orientation is entitled to life in liberty, without experiencing violence of any kind, battery, bodily harm, harassment, sexual abuse of any kind, threats and bullying. Everyone is entitled to a normal life.

In order to prevent and fight gender-based violence, national and international laws and treaties are in place, local, regional and global organisations and bodies that deal specifically with such issues exist, and individuals, experts in these problems, are available, all of whom can support and help those in need.

Only the educated and informed have access to such resources (laws, organisations, individuals), and thus stand much higher chances to avoid sexual and gender-based violence situations, to avoid becoming victims of such violence or, should they find themselves in such appalling situations, to know what they can and should do.

Children and youth on the move are exposed to gender-based violence and abuse in their country of origin, while on the move and in the destination country. An overwhelming majority of girls and boys on the move (more so when unaccompanied) are unaware of the gender-based violence risk. They don't know where and how to get services. Thus, serious gaps exist that first line professionals and workers can fill in.

Under the Project "Building Relationships through Innovative Development of Gender Based Violence Awareness in Europe – BRIDGE", the Terre des hommes Foundation and its partners are helping experts and children to tackle, prevent and deal with gender-based violence.







# WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Gender-based violence** is a serious breach of the universal human rights. More specifically, is a breach of the right to life, liberty and personal security; to physical and mental health; to circulation, opinion, education and personal development; to cultural, political, public participation etc.

Both men and women may be victims of gender-based violence, but all statistics from around the world show that women are victims most frequently. That is why the terms 'gender-based violence' and 'violence against women' are often used interchangeably.

Gender-based violence is **a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women**, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women (United Nations Organisation, 1996).

Gender-based violence is **a PUBLIC**, not private **matter**.

Gender-based violence is an **underreported occurrence**. It is MUCH MORE PRESENT in day to day life than shown by the figures. For reasons related to social stigma, fear, lack of knowledge and trust in state agencies, many gender-based violence cases go unreported.

Gender-based violence is **NOT normal**. Irrespective of the cultural norms, which differ across countries, irrespective of the tolerance of certain societies to various forms of violence, there is nothing natural and ordinary in battery, murder, mutilation, bullying, rape, harassment or restricting access to social resources and services.

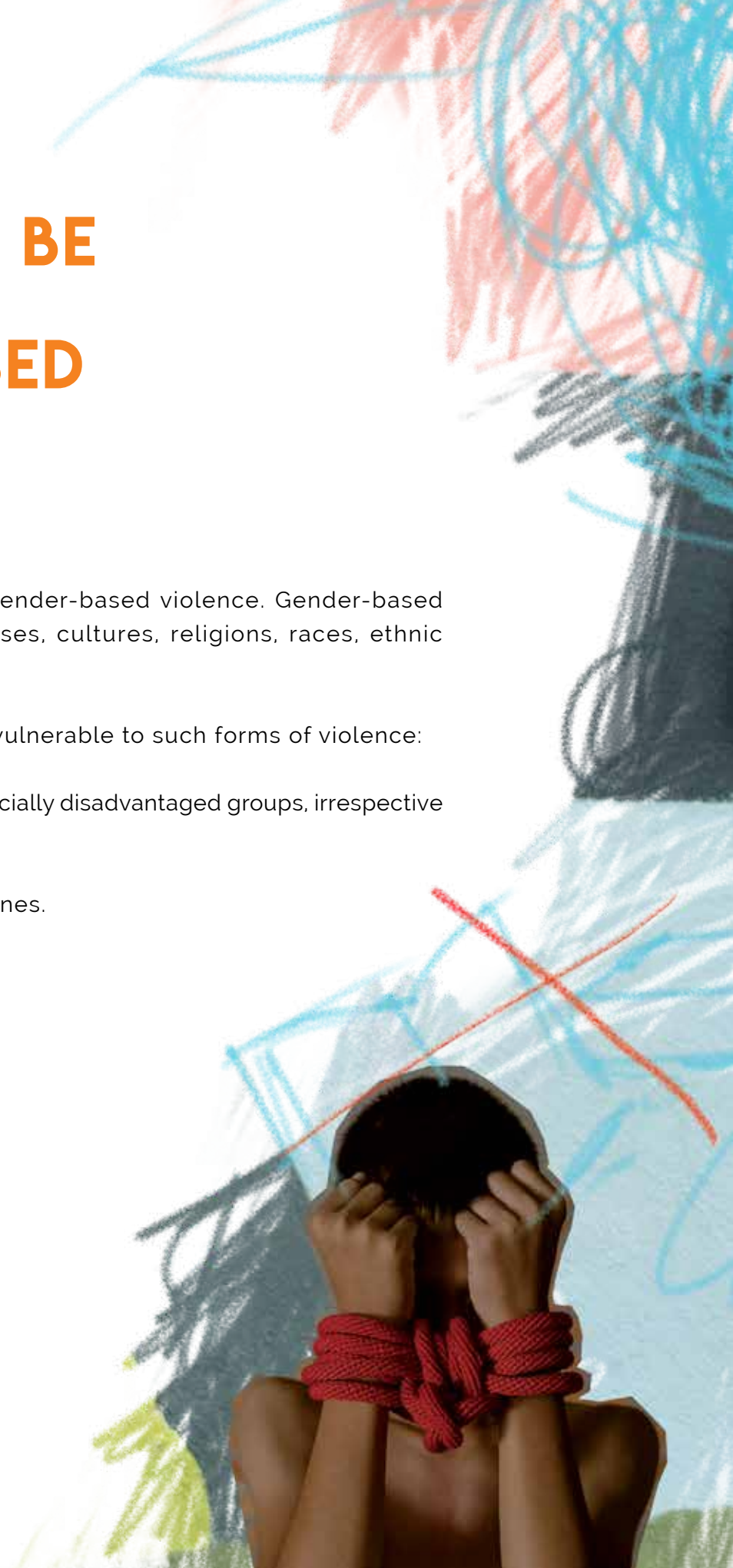
The victims of gender-based violence **are NOT** guilty for their predicament. Under no circumstances should they be blamed (as it often happens) for having been assaulted, raped, harassed or mutilated.

# WHO COULD BE A VICTIM OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Anyone may become a victim of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence appears in all social classes, cultures, religions, races, ethnic groups etc.

However, certain groups are more vulnerable to such forms of violence:

- young girls and women;
- persons from economically and socially disadvantaged groups, irrespective of sex and gender;
- migrants/immigrants;
- populations in armed conflict zones.







# FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence takes many forms, including:

- **Sexual violence:** rape, sexual abuse, incest, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment
- **Physical violence:** assault of any kind, human trafficking/slavery
- **Psychological violence:** emotional abuse, false imprisonment
- **Traditional painful/harming practices:** genital mutilation, early marriage, forced marriage, denial of the right to education
- **Social-economic violence:** denying access to healthcare, education, career; marginalisation, social exclusion; denial of certain civil, political and social rights
- **Cyber violence:** online harassment, cyber stalking, non-consensual pornography via the Internet
- **Symbolic violence:** non-physical violence related to the consequences of social power relationships between women and men, more often than not dominated by masculine norms, customs and values.











# CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence leaves behind serious physical, mental and social scars on the victims. The consequences are mainly related to:

- **Health:** death, disease, wounds, infections, drug and alcohol abuse, abortion, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Psychological:** depression, anxiety, fear, anger, shame, hat/self-hate, lack of self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, feeling of insecurity.
- **Social and economic:** marginalisation, social exclusion, poverty, lack of security.







# LIFETIME SPIRAL OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence generates gender inequality and discrimination\*, which, in turn, leads to gender-based violence occurrence and proliferation.

Gender-based violence is therefore both cause and result of sexism, racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Keeping quiet, not telling, not reporting gender-based violence in which you are directly or indirectly involved means to perpetrate a **spiral of silence** and to prevent gender-based violence from becoming a public topic that various relevant authorities and agencies may tackle.


**\*Direct (gender) discrimination:** treating someone less favourably than another in a similar situation because of their sex/gender, in breach of applicable laws (e.g. Different wages for women and men for the same work).

**Indirect (gender) discrimination:** applying apparently unbiased provisions, criteria or practices that, through their effects, negatively impact on women (or, less frequently, men); form of gender discrimination that may go unnoticed and is more difficult to document (e.g. height over 1.8 m is eliminatory police academy admission criterion).









# I AM CHILD /TEENAGER. HOW DO I ESCAPE THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

If you have been or are in a situation of physical, psychological, emotional, or economic abuse, if you have been bullied, harassed or threatened, than you need to call upon the **SUPERPOWERS** that every person has, but not everybody knows how to grow and use for their and others physical, psychological and economic safety.

Superpowers will help you to regain your liberty, independence and control over your ow life. They will protect you against any form of violence.

Superpowers develop if you learn every day to empower yourself - that is to become strong and stay in control when confronted with hardship, to have more confidence in yourself and those around you who can help.

Superpowers will help you to escape the vicious circle of gender-based violence, since they will give you the **COURAGE** to:

**B**e aware that your fundamental human rights are being breached, understand that your physical and psychical health and your safety are at risk.

**F**ind out who deals with gender-based violence - in other words, learn what gender-based violence is and why does it occur, what forms it takes and which agencies are responsible for preventing and fighting it.

**R**eject victim blaming. You will not blame yourself for what is happening to you. You will understand that it is not your fault, but it is your problem, and you must confront it and reject with dignity any kind of offensive and unrepresentative label attached to you.

**T**ake action. You will be proactive. You will be able to anticipate, to feel that you may be in a gender-based violence situation. If need be, you will step up and talk to a family member, friend, neighbour, teacher, psychologist or representative of the local authorities. You will ask for advice and help and not wait to become a victim of violence, knowing that you will not be judged, but you will certainly receive help.

**C**ritically judge a gender-based violence situation. If this is happening to others around you, it doesn't mean that it is all right and natural. If people tell you that it is normal because you are a boy or a girl or because you are of a different ethnicity or nationality, it doesn't mean that they are right. If some are trying to blame you for what you've been through, you will not accept guilt for something you haven't done. It is not the victim, but the aggressor and the society at large who are guilty for the existence of such violence that is still tolerated and not sufficiently punished.

**SUPERPOWERS LIE WITHIN YOUR POWER!  
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**Recommended reading:** in order to understand the terms related to gender-based equality and violence, go to this link: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus?lang=en>







# LAWS AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS CONDEMNING GBV

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** is the most important treaty signed by the states that promised to defend the rights of children. This document defines children (all persons under 18 years old), all their rights and the responsibilities of countries. Among other things, any child in the world has the right to be safe, healthy and be protected against sexual abuse.

**CEDAW - The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women** - was adopted and opened for signing in 1979 by a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It came into force on the 3rd of September 1981 in all UN Member States. It is deemed to be equivalent to a Convention on Human Rights for women. 187 countries, including Romania, have ratified the Convention. USA and some other countries did not ratify it.

**Istanbul Convention** - It came into force in 2014. It provides a comprehensive legal framework for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and for the protection of victims. The Convention explicitly defines violence against women as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination. Moreover, the document provides a first legally binding definition of gender. Romania has signed this Convention. Many countries though have not signed it (Bulgaria, USA, Hungary).



**In Romania** the concept of equal opportunities for women and men is defined in **Law no. 202/2002** whereby Romania has approximated the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW-1982). Under the law, equal opportunities for women and men means considering the different capacities, needs and aspirations of persons of male and, respectively, female gender, and treating them equally. Equal opportunities is a fundamental principle of human rights that is based on ensuring each individual's full participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life, irrespective of their ethnicity, sex, race, religion, age, disabilities, sexual orientation or education. When referring to sex/gender aspects, we talk about equal opportunities for women and men.

#### **Others** (selection)

- ✓ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- ✓ The United Nations Convention about elimination of racial discrimination
- ✓ The European Social Charter
- ✓ The Roma Treaty
- ✓ The Amsterdam Treaty
- ✓ The European Charter of Fundamental Rights

# WHO CAN HELP YOU ?



No sort of violence is tolerable! If you need advice or assistance, there are several options for children (if you are under 18):

- The hosting center for asylum seekers or refugees - you can trust **the employees** there. Do not hesitate to talk to them, they can help.
- If you are alone, **a legal guardian** has probably been assigned to you. This person will help and advise you.
- If you don't know the language of the country you are in, you have the right to **a translator**.
- **The Police** will protect you if you are in danger or threatened, no matter what your nationality is. Call the Police (112 in Romania)

If you would like to talk, there are many organizations that can help you for free. You can contact the General Departments for Social Assistance and Child Protection in the respective county (if in Romania), the **Save the Children! organization** ([www.salvaticopiii.ro/](http://www.salvaticopiii.ro/) +40 760 939 691), **JRS Romania** ([www.jrsromania.org](http://www.jrsromania.org)), **CNRR** ([www.cnrr](http://www.cnrr)), **ICAR Foundation** ([www.icarfoundation.ro](http://www.icarfoundation.ro)), **AIDROM** ([www.aidrom.ro](http://www.aidrom.ro)) or **Terre des hommes** ([www.tdh.ro/](http://www.tdh.ro/) +40 371 300 390).

If you need legal support you can contact the **Pro Bono Network for the Human Rights** <http://probono.actedo.org/en/>, a lawyer or the **Child Ombudsman** ([petitii@avp.ro](mailto:petitii@avp.ro)).


If you go to school, talk to **one of your teachers** or **the school counselor**. You can talk about your worries with them.





## USEFUL EMERGENCY CONTACTS

**You are not alone. You will not be judged. Help yourself so you may be helped!**

- 🌸 Children's Line (24/7): 116 111
  - 🌸 Emergency line for victims of domestic violence (24/7): 0800500333
  - 🌸 Children's Line of the General Departments for Social Assistance and Child Protection of each District of Bucharest and each County of Romania.
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These drawings were made in Bucharest by migrant children and teenagers in an event from the BRIDGE project, implemented by Terre des hommes Romania and supported by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014 -2020)

