

DON'T BE A MAN

#HeForShe Kazakhstan



HeForShe

Problem

In Kazakhstan, not less than 80 women die from domestic violence each year, with 300 reports of violence against women being filed to the police daily.

90% crimes occur within the home

From childhood, men hear:

'Don't be a weakling.'

'Don't cry like a woman.'

'If he hits you, it means he loves you.'

Insight



In tradition, it is believed that a 'real' man should be authoritative and aggressive.

Why are we surprised that, becoming adults, men rape, beat, and kill?

- ▶ **'From my father's example, I saw what it means to be a man – nervous, aggressive, unethical.'**
- ▶ **A. Beyshenaliev: 'My uncle could beat me with a bicycle pump, and I would clean the blood off the floor so my grandmother wouldn't find out.'**
- ▶ **E. Suleimenov, a professor at the university: 'You can beat women, sometimes – you should.'**

Idea

A photograph of a man and a woman embracing in a dimly lit room. The man is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and is seen from the side, his arms around the woman. The woman is wearing a white sweater with a dark, geometric pattern and is seen from the back, her head resting against the man's. The background is dark with some blurred lights, suggesting an indoor setting.

We decided to show how not to be a 'normal' man in the traditional sense of the word. Thus, our project 'Don't be a man' was born.

We made 4 films showing how men express emotions and support their daughters. Share household responsibilities with their wives and take care of their children. Stand by women who have experienced domestic violence.

Such men exist, they just remain silent so they won't be thought of as 'unmanly'.

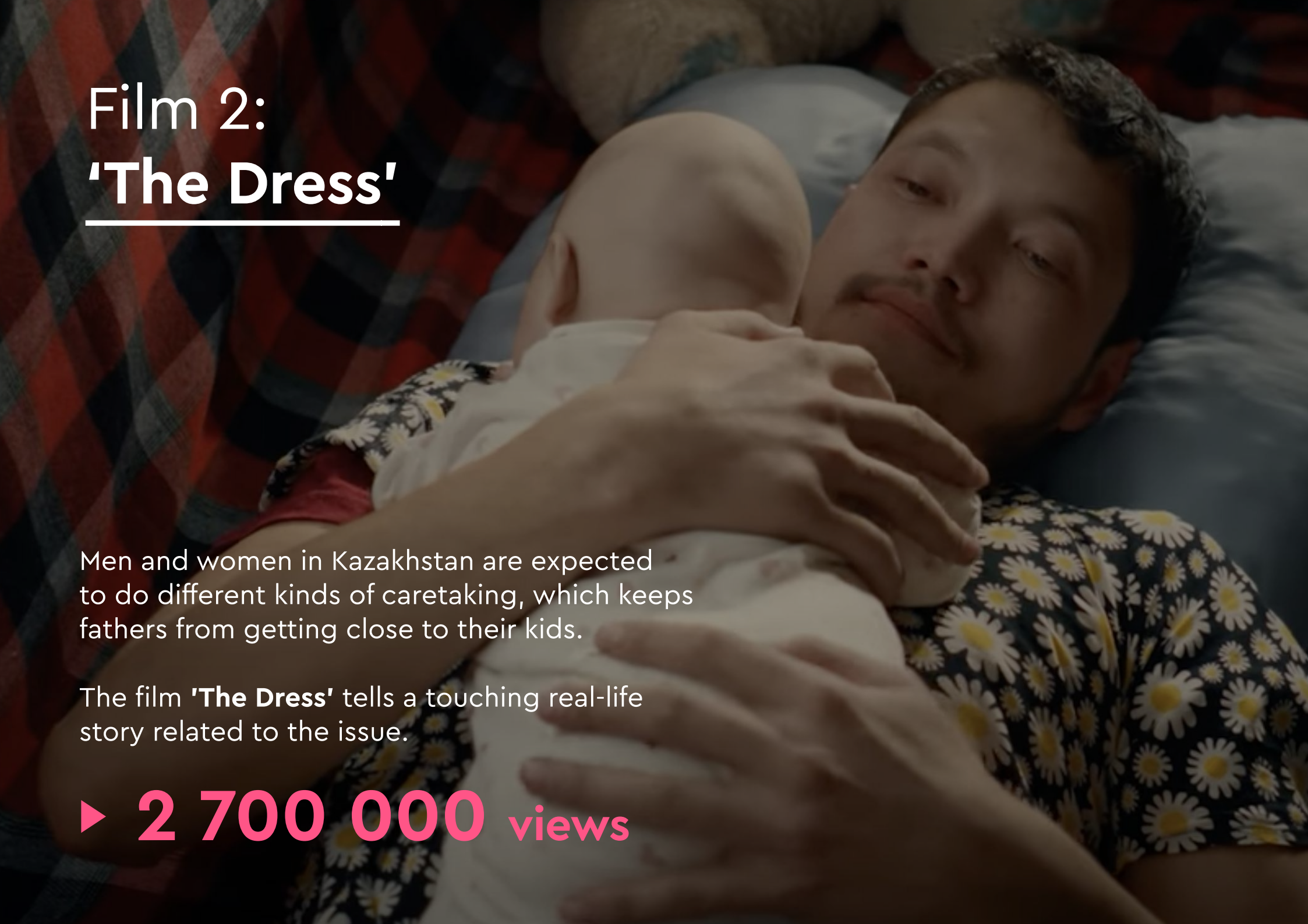
A woman wearing a red headscarf and a grey jacket is smiling and looking towards the right. Next to her, a child wearing a dark, patterned winter hat and a dark jacket is also smiling. They are standing in a snowy mountain landscape with evergreen trees in the background. The woman is holding a colorful, striped fabric bag.

Film 1: 'Do not forget your way home'

In Kazakhstan, many women suffer quietly from abuse by their partners, and families often stay silent to avoid shame. This keeps abuse hidden and lets it continue.

The film **'Do Not Forget Your Way Home'** tries to show an alternative scenario regardless of all stereotypes.

▶ **1 800 000** views

A man with a mustache, wearing a dark t-shirt with a white daisy pattern, is lying in bed holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white onesie. The man is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background shows a red and black plaid blanket and a blue pillow.

Film 2: 'The Dress'

Men and women in Kazakhstan are expected to do different kinds of caretaking, which keeps fathers from getting close to their kids.

The film **'The Dress'** tells a touching real-life story related to the issue.

▶ **2 700 000** views

Film 3: 'All about my Dad'

Boys are more often expected to get higher education than girls in Kazakhstan, which means fewer women being employed.

The film **'All About My Dad'** shows how fathers could support their daughters in getting education.

▶ **230 000 views**

Film 4: 'The Dinner'

When women get married in Kazakhstan, they often have to do what their mother-in-law says because the last one experienced the same before. This is mostly heavy housework and/or something that restricts girls' freedom.

The film **'The Dinner'** shows that family traditions are always our own choice.

▶ **4 500 000** views

Background



The films were created for HeForShe, a solidarity movement for gender equality by UN Women. They were a part of a wider regional HeForShe Kazakhstan campaign that we developed and implemented in 2022–2023.

We ran investigations, mobilized social media, organized a public talk for youth, and cooperated tightly with press, opinion leaders, and gender equality specialists to mobilize men and boys to counter negative stereotypes and toxic masculinity in Kazakhstan.

Reactions

In Kazakhstan, there are 19 766 807 people, of which 9 647 701 are men.

In total, the campaign reached almost

15 000 000 people
or **75%** country's population

This means that men have seen our films.

Partnership with private sector

We received more than
▶ **1 000 000 \$**

of in-kind contribution from local businesses as CITIX, Ololo, KTK, and Russkoe Radio Azia

