

# Partnerships for Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls in Southern Africa

Zambia: Promoting the Quality of Communication Programmes through a ‘Clearing House’

## Confronting the Challenge

Between half and two-thirds of all Zambian women have experienced violence at some point in their lives and violence by a male intimate partner is the most common form (Zambia Demographic Health Survey: 2013/14). However, in Southern Africa, just as in many other parts of the world, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is still a **highly sensitive issue that is rarely discussed**.

While there is a lot of investment by development partners into the response to VAWG in Zambia, evidence-based communication strategies that speak to the local context are scarce.

The ‘clearing house’ in the national Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) is rarely called upon. Most of the communication work on VAWG, especially by Zambian civil society, takes place locally. However, the clearing house is not present at provincial and district levels. This has led to **unsystematically designed campaigns**. The issuance of messages on VAWG that are not coherent may confuse the audience and even undermine prevention efforts.

Without guidance on the messaging and targeting related to VAWG, grassroots organizations - especially in remote areas - are left alone with designing messages the best way they can. A **‘Clearing House’ at decentralised level** will support the quality of communication programmes to prevent VAWG.

## Building Partnerships

Considering the magnitude of VAWG in Southern Africa, a broad-based effort is required. The pro-gramme supports the formation of **multi-stakeholder initiatives** that leverage financial and technical contributions from governments, civil society organizations, private sector actors, the media and academia.

Flagship name	VAWG Communication ‘Clearing House’
Comissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Southern Province, Zambia
Key stakeholders	ZCCP, Ministry of Gender and Development, Provincial and District Gender-sub-committees, civil society, local media
Duration	12/2017 – 11/2020



The flagship will bring together various stakeholders in the field of VAWG communication. The main implementing agency will be the **Zambian Center for Communication Programmes (ZCCP/ Kwatu)** serving as experienced organisation to provide the ‘clearing house’ function. The MoGD will be involved to oversee ZCCP from a centralized level and in cooperation with their District Administrative Officers in the areas of action itself. Civil society and local media will use the institution to professionally plan, design and quality assess communication strategies and materials. It is envisaged to also include private sector actors such as telecommunication service providers (e.g. Airtel, MTN) or the stateowned communication company Zamtel. These may act as facilitators of messages on VAWG prevention on a widespread level.

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## Taking Action

In 2018, ZCCP conducted a baseline study which examined communication strategies of civil society organisations in Monze, Choma and Livingstone districts in Southern Province. Stock-taking and analysis of the current situation resulted in an **Inventory Report** that was validated with relevant stakeholders.

The findings showed that messages often do not take into consideration the specific characteristics of the target group (language, rural and urban dimensions, ages of the target group, educational qualification). Some messages are of poor quality and sometimes even misleading or contradictory. No official cooperation structures or common standards and guidelines towards coordination and/or quality could be identified.

The **'Clearing House'** responds to these findings and offers free services. Its assignment is to coordinate multi-stakeholder communication and campaigns for VAWG prevention.

This includes: analysis, campaign strategy, pre-testing and design, materials production, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation.

To demonstrate its role, it is foreseen for the 'Clearing House' to carry out an introductory workshop on how to design and implement a campaign on a selected aspect of VAWG that draws in various stakeholders in the three districts.

To set up and consolidate a positive reputation as service provider, ZCCP itself is striving to earn a mandate by the government to **certify communication strategies** that have undergone a quality check by the 'Clearing house'.

## Sharing Evidence

Despite global investment and publications that demonstrate progress in the past years, **evidence on which approaches are effective in preventing VAWG** - in which context, under which conditions and by means of which processes - is still much needed to inform policy-making and programme development.

The PfP flagship projects will be accompanied by operational research to **create relevant and practice-oriented information** through different forms of evaluations as well as lessons learned-studies that document processes and results. This will help to better understand what works under which conditions and provide useful information on how to replicate interventions.

The findings and lessons learnt will be **documented and publicized** so that they are shared among and used by policy-makers and practitioners in Southern Africa (research uptake) and fed into the global research agenda.

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