

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

Zambia: Changing Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women and Girls in the Police

Confronting the Challenge

In Zambia, the majority of gender-based violence (GBV) cases are not reported to service providers. It is estimated that only 30% of cases are reported to the Police Service, while only an average of 11% of these cases are prosecuted. The lack of training in gender-related topics makes police officers fail to present credible cases for prosecution.

The Police Service in Zambia operates Victim Support Units (VSU) at police stations across the country, including with support from the German cooperation. While the VSU are vital entry points for survivors of GBV into the support system, **all units in the Police Service must contribute** equally to an effective response. The VSU operate on 8 hours shifts per day while other police units work 24 hours and thus attend to GBV cases especially between 5pm and 8am. They lack awareness of the legal frameworks on GBV and training on the management of such cases.

Most importantly, attitudes in the police reflect the societal norms that tolerate violence against women and girls (VAWG). Often **survivors are not taken seriously, blamed for the violence and stigmatized**. This kind of behaviour results in an uncertainty for the survivors of what to expect at the police station and is one crucial factor that prevents survivors from reporting cases of GBV. Consequently, **positive attitudes to survivors** of GBV are a crucial precondition for an effective police response.

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 organisations, private sector actors, the media and academia.

Flagship name	Changing harmful attitudes in the police towards violence against women and girls
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Southern Province, Zambia
Key stakeholders	Police of Zambia/ Ministry of Home Affairs, Gender-subcommittee, UNDP
Duration	12/2017 – 11/2020



The flagship project will be implemented together with the Zambian Police, focusing on Southern Province. The curriculum content development for training of police officers is supported by UNDP and the EU-funded project PLEED. A strong interaction with the provincial and District Gender Sub-committees is aspired to ensure a close and permanent exchange with those organisations directly dealing with GBV survivors. In addition, cooperation with private entities such as communication providers and the media is envisaged to publicize the training and its messages.

Taking Action

The flagship project will support **innovative training for police officers across all cadres**. The content and tools tackle harmful

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attitudes and perceptions related to VAWG and enable police of-
ficers to recognize VAWG as unacceptable and perform their du-
ties to respond adequately to VAWG case.

The flagship is built around a stepwise approach starting with the
implementation of a **user-centered needs assessment** based on
e.g. interviews with the target group. The needs assessment will
be focusing on existing technical knowledge, gaps related to
VAWG knowledge and attitudes, and technical skills related to
the usage of the internet and digital devices.

Findings of the needs assessment will be processed into content
that will be fed into **blended-learning tools**, i.e. a mix of face-to-
face and digital self-learning. Once the tools have been devel-
oped, a pre-testing and validation phase with a pilot group will be
conducted followed by necessary adjustments and implementa-
tion.

The roll-out is envisaged to cover around **700 police officers in
Southern Province**.

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 publi-
cised so that they are shared among and **scaled-up by policy
makers and practitioners in Zambia** and other Southern African
countries (research uptake) and fed into the global research
agenda.

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