

Launch of the National Disability Policy in Zimbabwe

On the 9th of June 2021, His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa launched the National Disability Policy, a first in Zimbabwe. President Mnangagwa called for an end to harmful practices, discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) from participating in different sectors of the economy, adding that government departments should mainstream disability issues in their programmes.

In her remarks, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ms. Maria Ribeiro acknowledged that the launch of the National Disability Policy is an important milestone towards the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the policy also positions Zimbabwe as a global frontrunner on disability inclusion. The UN Resident Coordinator also noted the highly consultative process in developing the Disability Policy which included the extensive engagement between Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and legal drafters.

The Spotlight Initiative (SI) supported the engagement of PWDs in the consultations. Funded by the European Union, the joint UN-EU initiative to end violence against women and girls, also supported the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to convene consultations on both the Persons with Disability Bill and the National Disability Policy. Spotlight supported the training of 73 persons with disabilities from the two umbrella bodies, the Federation of Organizations of Disabled Persons in Zimbabwe and National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped, to participate in the consultations.

"I have every belief that the extensive and inclusive process of consultation has strengthened the final product. It is our hope that the Policy will safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities, including sexual and reproductive health rights of children and women with disabilities and their protection against violence and harmful practices.

We continue to encourage the scaling up disability inclusive budgeting by the Government. Policy is as good as its implementation and allocation of adequate resource would facilitate advancing the inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities," Ms Riberio said.

Zimbabwe's SI has supported women and girls with disabilities and Disabled Persons Organizations to amplify their voices and concerns as citizens in several law and policy-making processes. In addition to the Disability Policy and the Disability Bill, Spotlight technically and financially supported women and girls with disabilities and Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) to submit a position paper to Parliament on the Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 2, following their participation in the public hearings on the Bill.

Women and girls with disabilities also participated for the first time as a constituency in the 2021 national budgeting processes due to the knowledge and skills acquired through the ongoing Spotlight-supported training programme to enable women and girls with disabilities to meaningfully engaged in policy and law-making processes.



The launch of the National Disability Policy took place at Harare International Conference Center (HICC) on 9 June 2021

Spotlight supports steps towards harmonisation of GBV data collection

A major step towards the development of a national GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) took place recently with the convening of key stakeholders in GBV service provision for a validation and consultative meetings on uniform data collection.

Supported by the Spotlight Initiative, the participants were drawn from the protection, education, social, health, and judicial services sectors which included representatives from the Ministries of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MoWACSMED); Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Primary and Secondary Education Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development; Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare; Health and Child Care; Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; as well as Civic Society Organisations, religious groups among others.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), one of the Spotlight agencies, is supporting the MoWACSMED and the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) to establish a GBVIMS that will result in the synchronisation of data collection by GBV multi-sectoral stakeholders.

A technical consultant supported by UNFPA to work with the Ministry, Admire Chiwamba, says the establishment of the Information Management System was informed by a comprehensive GBVIMS assessment that was conducted in 2020 with Spotlight support. This assessment shows that without an appropriate IMS framework, Zimbabwe's efforts to have quality, accurate, and available GBV data will not be sustained.

"The overall aim of this assessment was to explore the most effective ways to link the development of data collection instruments with the development of the GBVIMS, so that it generates data that can be of use; is multi-sectoral; reduces duplicative processes; limits the amount of data that is collected; and allows multiple stakeholders to interact with a common data set," Chiwamba said.

"The main purpose of having a central database with information coming from different sectors in a uniform way is to be able to generate a true picture of GBV prevalence in the country. It is difficult to use and compare data that is collected in different ways. For comparability, data must be collected and analysed in the same manner for it to make sense," he added.

Currently, the main sources of GBV data are population-based censuses and surveys– the National Population Census, the Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), which give prevalence of GBV, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Harmful Practices data at national population level.

UNFPA's Programme Specialist, Piason Mlambo, notes that in addition to national censuses, there is administrative and routine data that is obtained from service providers who collect information during the discharge of their duties for management purposes – this is information that can be turned into statistics.

"The idea of this consultation and validation meeting, therefore, is to get a common understanding as well as to standardise the concept and classification of the different types of GBV across the sectors so that the data becomes shareable across the sectors and can also be analysed for decision making," Mlambo said.

Similar validation meetings have since been held in the other Spotlight Provinces of Matabeleland South, Manicaland, Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central.

According to the GBVIMS assessment report, quality data on reported violence could contribute to more informed decision making on programmes, advocacy and resource mobilization, including in development and humanitarian contexts.

The new IMS framework is expected to support ZimStat to document 'complete' GBV data because, as Tinashe Mwadiwa, ZimStat's Gender Statistics Acting Manager says, "the national surveys that have been used in the past have focused on GBV prevalence in the 15 – 49 age group while in the proposed GBVIMS framework, all data regardless of age group will be recorded. This is an opportunity to harmonise data collection to generate comprehensive national figures which can be reported nationally, regionally and globally."

The establishment of the GBVIMS framework is technically and financially supported by the Spotlight Initiative, a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030.



Pictured above is a participant at a national GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) validation and consultative meeting

The validation of the framework is the starting point for the development of data collection tools and e-tools, which will be administered by the different sectors during the GBVIMS testing and implementation phases, starting in the second half of 2021.

More than 400 women and girls with disabilities targeted for GBV prevention training

UNESCO ROSA within the framework of the European-Union (EU) funded Spotlight Initiative is partnering with three (3) Persons with Disabilities Organizations (DPO) to conduct community-based interventions to address unequal gender power relations and the socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political root causes of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and Harmful Practices (HPs), which negatively affect women and girls with disabilities.

Through this partnership, Deaf Women Included (DWI), Disabled Women Support Organization (DWSO), and the umbrella body, the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH), are conducting capacity-strengthening and social dialogue initiatives that target community leaders, chiefs, local authorities, social workers, police, and other SGBV, HP and SRHR service providers. The issue of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities is at the core of all the initiatives, as the DPOs engage with different stakeholders on possible community-based models that could help address GBV.

The initiative targets at least 480 women and girls with disabilities and local actors in 12 of the 23 Spotlight Districts. The main objective is to strengthen community-based support groups and data collection systems on GBV. As of early June, work had started in the following Spotlight Districts- Epworth, Hopley, Makonde, Chipinge and Shamva. The DPOs are also documenting testimonies of GBV survivors, as well as convening dialogues on key topics such as GBV prevention, access to disability-inclusive service delivery, and women empowerment/ community development opportunities for persons with disabilities. The DPOs also will continue to train persons with disabilities on COVID-19 prevention and supply women and girls with disabilities with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

Research IAGs present at the 2nd UZ Symposium on Gender-based Violence

The Spotlight Research Innovators against Gender-Based Violence (IAGS) recently presented their studies on GBV, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and Harmful Practices (HPs) at a one-day symposium convened and hosted by the University of Zimbabwe (UZ).

This was the second GBV-focused symposium hosted by UZ, also an Implementing Partner (IP) in the Spotlight Initiative funded by the European Union (EU). UZ and the IAGs are supported by UN Women, one of the Spotlight agencies in the Zimbabwe Country Programme (CP). The first symposium was held in 2020.

Eight post-graduate students in the IAG Research Class of 2021 presented their findings to 55 attendees (33 online and 22 in person), which included representatives from the Victim Friendly Unit (VFU), Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, USAID, University of Zimbabwe Lecturers and Civil Society Organisations.

In addition to the presentations, Chief Inspector Samantha Chanetsa from the VFU, presented also on Sexual and Domestic Violence in the COVID -19 context. The VFU is working with the judiciary to address gaps and delays in the administration of justice for GBV cases during the COVID -19 pandemic.

The Spotlight Research IAGs are contributing to the growing body of quantitative and qualitative knowledge on GBV, HPs and SRHR in Zimbabwe. Findings from the following research were presented in the meeting:

Research Topics

1. *Sexual Violence against Women and Labour Market Outcomes: A Case of Mashonaland West-* Talent Nesongano
2. *Factors Contributing to the Underreporting of Gender-Based Violence in Zimbabwe. A Case of Hopley and Epworth Settlements-* Princess M Moyo
3. *The Gender-Based Violence Referral Pathway in Zimbabwe. Assessing Service Provision in The Epworth and Hopley Communities-* Tapiwanashe F Chineka
4. *Men's Knowledge, Perceptions and Practices Regarding Gender-Based Violence. The Case of Muzarabani and Umuzingwane Districts, Zimbabwe* - Osmond M Mambiravana
5. *Estimating The Association Between Women's Earnings and Partner Violence: The Case of Zimbabwe's Mashonaland Central: Mbire, Muzarabani, Guruve, and Rushinga* - Grace Diki
6. *A Comparative Analysis of Gender Based Violence (GBV) Causes Between Low-Income and High-Income Households: A Case of Manicaland* - Washington Muzavazi
7. *Determinants of Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services For Women And Girls With Disabilities In Zimbabwe: A Case of Harare and Chinhoyi Geographical Areas* - Lorina B Hwingwiri
8. *Gender Based Violence, Church and Culture. The Case of Manicaland. Zimbabwe* - Misheck Kandawasvika

The IAGs' findings will be disseminated as knowledge products and advocacy messages, and used to inform GVB programming, policies as well as social and behavioural change in Zimbabwe. The presentations made by the IAGs can be accessed via the link below:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1drA9ytElu3viYNjo3Ypuw39NKM2mRRwW?usp=sharing>



From selling tomatoes to opening a tuck shop through Spotlight WEE Programme

Thirty-eight-year-old Juliet Mhlanga is a proud beneficiary of the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Programme within the Zimbabwe Spotlight Initiative (SI). Married with two children, ages 14 and 8, Mhlanga and her family live in Guvarekipi village, Chisumbanje in the Spotlight district of Chipinge, Manicaland Province.

When she entered the programme, Mhlanga was selling tomatoes at a local market at Chisumbanje business centre. Her income from the vegetable sales averaged USD 40.00 per month and this was her livelihood for 12 years.

She was selected as one of the WEE beneficiaries through the SI's collaboration with district officials and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED). Mhlanga began the *Generate Your Business Idea* and *Start Your Business* trainings, conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Diocese of Mutare Community Care Programme (DOMCCP), the Implementing Partner (IP), with support from the MWACSMED.

The trainings helped Mhlanga to see opportunities in her community beyond selling tomatoes in the market, and she decided to open a tuck shop (small grocery store). She used some resources she had saved through her savings club (ISAL), and recently opened her tuck-shop where she sells groceries, toiletries, and household utensils. Her monthly income is gradually increasing, averaging USD 115.00 in the past three months.

Opening her own business however has not been a smooth journey. Due to theft, she faced a set back and has had to invest in more security at her shop. Mhlanga's shop is strategically placed by the roadside on the Chisumbanje highway, where her market is frequented by both the local community, as well as people traveling on the highway.

"Since opening my shop, my social status in the community has increased; people are now taking me more seriously and giving me respect. Personally, I am better able to support my family, particularly meeting my children's needs," she said. She proudly keeps her business records showing the income and expenditures over the past few months and growing her business by re-investing resources from her tuck-shop is part of her plan.



Juliet Mhlanga poses for a picture in her tuck shop

A worthy catch: Community molds a boy into a women's rights activist

In Zimbabwe's fishing town of Kariba, a boy grew up violent and a predator targeting young girls. A local woman sought him out and hooked him to the Spotlight Initiative (SI) programme.

Tasked with forming a group to volunteer as Behaviour Change Facilitators (BCFs) in an ill-reputed part of Zimbabwe's Kariba town, Beauty Binari (54) recruited among the infamous members of her community. One of them is Paddington Matashu, a 23-year-old, who grew up as a violent youth and is known also for being abusive against girls. "Being abusive to girls, drugs, alcohol and never shying away from a fight. I was leading the youths astray. It was fun then, but I see the errors of my ways now," Matashu said recently.

Life changed for Matashu when he met Binari, a volunteer, in January when she was putting together a team of 30 Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) BCFs for Nyamhunga township.

"For the youths, I targeted the ones I knew caused the most trouble; I wanted to pluck out the roots. There is a girl who behaved just like Paddington, I recruited her too. They have become my most effective foot soldiers," she said, breaking into hysterical laughter and exchanging high fives with Matashu on the verandah of her house.



Paddington Matashu's life changed when he was recruited as a BCF by Beauty Binari in Kariba. From a feared thug, he now spends much of his time with Binari championing the fight to end SGBV

BCFs such as Matashu are critical in AWET's quest to achieve the SI's goals. The Spotlight Initiative, launched in 2019, aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls for them to realize their full potential in a violence-free, gender-responsive and inclusive Zimbabwe. The European Union has committed US\$30 million for the programme in Zimbabwe, which is one of eight countries in Africa to benefit from the Initiative. The UN is implementing the programme in partnership with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development and civil society organisations.

In Kariba, the need for transformation is noticeable. In Mahombekombe suburb, parents and children of different sexes share a single room. A melting pot of religions and cultures, the town is home to some religious and cultural practices that promote SGBV and harmful practices such as child marriage.

Lack of safe spaces for children render young ones vulnerable, said Patricia Machiwenyika, a development officer with the Ministry responsible for Women's Affairs, which works with AWET to implement the Spotlight Initiative. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic worsened an already dire economic situation, leaving schoolchildren idle and open to abuse during the lockdowns.

"It's also about socialization and the way we are bringing up our children in such conditions. There is no entertainment for children in Kariba. The town doesn't even have a proper park or library where children can spend their time. The AWET BCFs are playing an important role by disseminating information in an entertaining way through dramas. We are seeing some change," said Machiwenyika.

For Matashu and his mentor, Binari, the work has become critical in building an empowered community. "People know that they are with people who make them safe when they see our orange t-shirts," she said. The pair had just returned from the government social welfare offices to hand over two children left without food or care by a mother who had abandoned them for sex work at nearby Chirundu Border Post. "When I heard about the case, I called Paddington and said, 'let's go'. I take him everywhere I go so that he learns fast. He has a big job with the youths," said Binari.

Matashu counsels youth in the area, where unoccupied young people are increasingly taking to drugs, alcohol, violence and sex – a life Matashu used to live with abandon. Some are still in disbelief when they see him in his new role though. "They are shocked to see me performing drama with other AWET members. They ask, 'is that the same guy?' It's a good feeling," he said.

AWET started operations in Kariba in January and has 73 BCFs, said Vimbai Muchenje, who touts Matashu as an example of some of the innovative ways used to change behaviours in the community. "Those who interact with him, have seen great change, so they are likely to listen to him. He has become a role model," she said.

UNICEF, one of the six Spotlight UN agencies, states that part of the Spotlight Initiative's vision is to "build a social movement of women, men, girls and boys as champions and agents of change at the national, subnational and community levels".

Kariba's Matashu and his mentor Binari, who say their bond is now unbreakable, seem a perfect example. "We are best friends," said Binari, as a parting shot. "We are one people, inseparable," shouted Matashu, as the pair again broke into laughter and high fives.

Data Update: COVID-19 GBV/SGBV services

GBV/SGBV Service	Beneficiaries Reached
4 new lines to the National GBV Hotline	<p>68 calls received between the 30th of May to 12th of June on Spotlight supported lines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,189 calls received January 1 to June 12th, • 3,581 calls received on Spotlight supported lines since 1 April 2020
Hotline for Key Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,364 total beneficiaries to date; • 401 beneficiaries accessed the hotline in the last two weeks
Shuttle Service (Musasa) for GBV/SGBV survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 survivors (including 2 with disabilities) used the service from 29th May to 12th June • 3,291 (total survivors who have benefitted from the service since May 2020)
Transport facility for survivors provided by MWACSMED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 survivors (20 females and 4 males) have been assisted between the 29th of May to the 12th of June
Static One Stop Centers in Epworth (Harare) and Bindura (Mash Central)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 570 survivors have accessed the static OSCs since they became operational in mid-January 2021. • From the 30th of May to 12th of June, 38 survivors accessed the OSCs – 20 at Bindura and 18 at Epworth.
Behaviour Change Facilitators (BCF) GBV community surveillance	<p>BCFs GBV community surveillance reach continues. Between the 30th May to the 12th of June, 88,425 persons were reached with GBV surveillance and COVID-19 sensitization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,003 young men below 18 years • 14,463 young women below 18 years • 26,717 men over 18 years • 36,242 women over 18 years <p>In addition, 1,016 persons with disabilities were reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 131 men with disabilities under 18 years • 156 women with disabilities under 18 years • 340 men with disabilities over 18 years • 389 women with disabilities over 18 years <p>Cumulatively since 2020, 2,361,326 persons (including 29,143 with disabilities) have been reached.</p>