

Prevention of sexualised and gender-based violence (SGBV)

Strengthening the efficiency of approaches and quality of services of state and non-state actors to prevent SGBV in Rwanda

The challenge

Rwanda is widely considered as a global front runner in the field of gender equality. The Rwandan government has put in place ambitious policies, legislation, and home-grown approaches to bridge the gender divide.

While this progress is commendable, challenges remain in the implementation of gender policies and the transformation of traditional gender roles and social norms that hinder especially girls and women from the full enjoyment of their rights and the realisation of their potentials. Sexualised and gender-based violence (SGBV) in all its dimensions (physical, psychological, economical, and sexual) is a human rights violation, which remains highly prevalent throughout the country and affects mostly girls and women. 56% of women in Rwanda have been affected by partner violence. Two out of five women have experienced physical violence and 22% of women and girls (15-49 years) have experienced sexualised violence (Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2019-2020). Institutional and individual capacities to implement and coordinate innovative and context specific SGBV prevention measures need to be strengthened further to achieve a sustainable impact.

Our approach

The project Prevention of sexualised and gender-based violence follows an integrated approach to address SGBV on a broad scale together with its Rwandan partners, including among others the political partner Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) like Haguruka, Health Development Initiative (HDI), Paper Crown and INGO Kvinna till Kvinna.

The project was developed jointly with its initial partners to address some of the key challenges with regard to the sustainable prevention of SGBV, namely 1) insufficient coordination of stakeholders, 2) barriers and lack of resources to implement high-quality inclusive services for persons affected by SGBV and 3) lack of comprehensive and barrier-free information about SGBV and existing support structures.

At the core of the SGBV project is the technical support to its partners in order to make prevention and response to SGBV in Rwanda more client-centered, rights-based and gender-transformative. Together with its partners, the project focuses on the root causes of SGBV in Rwanda to improve prevention efforts and on the gaps in existing services to support response mechanisms. The strengthening of capacities at individual and organizational level is one of the approaches used as well as the development of digital solutions and materials to facilitate communication and outreach about SGBV.

Project name	Prevention of sexualised and gender-based violence
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Rwanda
Lead executing agency	GIZ
Duration	01.07.2021 – 30.06.2024

To achieve its objectives, the project provides technical advisory services through international and national long- and short-term experts, and funding to our partners.



Left to right:

- PS Mireille Batamuliza (MIGEPROF) addressing the audience during the community outreach in Karama Model Village (December 2023)

- PS Mireille Batamuliza (MIGEPROF) during the GBV clinic in Kayanza District (November 2023)



Audience during the community outreach in December 2023, co-organised with Belgian Cooperation

It is structured into three intervention areas, which are strongly interlinked, informing, and complementing each other:

1. Coordination of stakeholder in SGBV prevention and response
2. Improvement of services for persons affected by SGBV (e.g. legal aid, psychosocial counselling) focusing on a client-centered, rights-based and gender-sensitive approach.
3. Communication and community outreach on SGBV

In the area of stakeholder coordination, the project aims to support MIGEPROF in its efforts to coordinate and guide relevant stakeholders in the field of SGBV prevention. In 2023, meetings with Anti-GBV-Committees at District Level, local leaders down to cell level, as well as the Isange One Stop Centres (IOSC) at District level (multi-service centers to provide persons affected by SGBV with holistic services, including medical services) have been supported. Trainings of local volunteer structures like the Umugoroba w'Imiryango (UWI), supported by the project also took place in 2023 in different districts of Rwanda. An evaluation exercise will inform further trainings in the field and has also identified issues in which volunteer structures need more support.

The goal of the second intervention area is to align existing services for persons affected by SGBV with internationally

recognized quality standards and – where possible – decrease barriers in accessing these services. This includes the counselling services of both state and non-state service providers, from IOSC to civil society actors. Existing services focus on medical and legal aspects, but there is a gap in psychosocial and economic support structures as well as inclusive services that can be accessed by people with disabilities, for example. In 2023, the project has supported several mobile GBV clinics, with their services reaching more than 200 underaged mothers. Also, a consortium of national and international experts has collected data on the quality and availability of services in the districts of Nyarugenge, Kirehe, Rulindo, Nyanza and Nyamasheke, identifying a number of structural and material barriers to access to services, like geographical distance, insufficient referral pathways and challenges in rollout to services on the lower administrative levels. In this intervention area, the project collaborates closely with the Health Project Barame of Belgian Cooperation (Enabel) which supports SGBV services in seven districts in Rwanda. CSO Partner Haguruka has trained district officials in Musanze district to improve knowledge sharing and response mechanisms to SGBV cases.

The intervention field Communication and Community Outreach on SGBV focuses on the vital role of barrier-free information, dialogue, and open spaces to address SGBV and the gender norms that perpetuate it. The project has supported the development of a chatbot based on Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) that can be accessed from simple mobile phones without internet connectivity. The project has also co-created flipbooks to inform community dialogues about SGBV and sexual and reproductive health and rights.



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