



Partnerships for Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Southern Africa

We promote concrete, locally adapted and innovative approaches aimed at preventing all forms of GBV

Confronting the challenge

Gender-based violence (GBV), especially against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations in Southern Africa. Often referred to as a “shadow pandemic” by UN Women, it undermines efforts to meet key global, regional, and national development goals. Ending all forms of violence against women and girls is a key target of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In Southern Africa, the prevalence of GBV is alarmingly high. Between half and two-thirds of all women state that they have experienced violence at some point in their lives, most often from a male intimate partner.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has made strides in addressing this issue, with the revised SADC Protocol on Gender and Equality (2016) driving renewed commitment across member states.

Despite existing policies, legal frameworks and action plans significant challenges remain, particularly in coordinating and implementing primary prevention efforts. There is also a critical gap of reliable data and evidence to supporting these initiatives.

Building partnerships

Given the scale of GBV in Southern Africa, a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder effort is required. The programme fosters collaboration among governments, civil society organisations, religious actors, the private sector, the media, and academia to jointly implement primary GBV prevention projects, called flagships, in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

PfP fosters strong ties and collaborative efforts with UN Women and partners with think tanks, such as SVRI or the Equality Institute.



Project name	Partnerships for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence in Southern Africa
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), co-financed by Ford Foundation (FF)
Project region	South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia Zambia, and Zimbabwe
Lead executing agency	Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (South Africa), Ministry of Gender, Youth, and Social Development (Lesotho), Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (Namibia), Provincial Administration Southern Province (Zambia)
Duration	Current module 12/2021 – 12/2025 Overall 12/2017 – 12/2025

At regional level, PfP cooperates with the Gender Unit of SADC Secretariat to support it in its task of coordinating the implementation of the Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing Gender-Based Violence (2018-2030). The Ford Foundation plays a pivotal role in these efforts, contributing to it through the first-ever co-funding agreement with GIZ.

The work is pioneering innovative approaches stemming from an evidence-informed basis, ranging from low-tech environments in local communities to digitised spaces in tertiary education or among policy makers.

With the unimaginable scale of GBV in mind, these approaches need to be sustainable beyond the project. Building strong partnerships across levels and the region while at the same time developing tangible and context-specific, yet scalable solutions, is at the core of PfP.



Left: Users interacting on the Nokaneng mobile app in Lesotho
Right: Learners and SRHR trainers in a school in Zimbabwe

Page 2 A local community in Zambia after revising their bylaws
Page 2 Learners joining a messenger group on safety in South Africa



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Taking action

The flagships promote concrete, locally adapted and innovative approaches aimed at preventing all forms of GBV. These initiatives work to shift harmful norms and structures, addressing both social and institutional factors.

PfP is guided by the principles of “Leave No One Behind”, promoting an approach that encompasses the whole of society, regardless of gender, age, social status, or economic background. This holistic approach is embedded at every level of the programme to drive sustainable behavioural change.

At institutional level, the programme strengthens the capacity of partners to design, implement, and coordinate evidence-based, context-specific GBV prevention measures on national and regional scale.

Since inception the German Government has intensified its commitment through PfP to support institutions, SADC and research initiatives in improving the availability of reliable quality data on GBV and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The aim is to promote a comprehensive overview of the GBV situation in the region, and to utilise this data to inform programming, and to facilitate monitoring of prevention efforts.

Results in figures

To date, the programme developed 33 context specific flagships, reaching more than 195 000 community members in the region. It has done so by covering sectors such as education, media, community development, health, and others. The work generated new evidence-informed knowledge in primary GBV prevention and has made it accessible for all, with over 24 publications on the project’s resource hub.

Together with the implementation partners of the flagships, PfP developed 17 tools, such as gender-sensitive reporting guidelines for journalists in Zimbabwe, revised bylaws in Zambian chiefdoms or SRHR toolkits and manuals for primary learners in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The project further supports the SADC Secretariat in fulfilling its mandate and frequently brings together several hundred stakeholders from across the region and promotes a Community of Practice to facilitate online and offline exchange among GBV prevention actors of SADC region.

Examples from the field

In Lesotho PfP works with Nokaneng as one of its flagship projects. Nokaneng has 3 complementary components which engage innovative approaches to GBV prevention – digital, mainstream media, and community-based interventions. The digital solution has content aimed at empowering women and girls with knowledge on forms of violence, their rights, available service providers, SMS and alarm emergency features, as well as an online forum for peer support for survivors. The service is available in two of Lesotho’s official languages. With more than 24.000 users at the end of 2025 subscribers of the largest network provider are not charged for data usage. The work on this application earned the project’s technical advisor a top3 placement for Social Heroes in the Digital Female Leader Award – an initiative of Global Digital Women in 2020.

In South Africa, the project works with a flagship to prevent school related GBV and to increase access to SRHR. Together with the national and provincial education authorities among other partners, the flagship empowers learners with skills and knowledge to advocate for the prevention of SRGBV while promoting access to SRH rights and services in their schools. With the slogan #Asiyifuni and a tailor-made toolkit for GBV-free schools, the project targets learners, the schools’ leadership, and entire school communities in 30 schools. #Asiyifuni empowers learners to facilitate intergenerational dialogues with parents and community members focusing on the role of learners in the prevention of GBV, while advocating for access to SRHR for young people with community-based gatekeepers

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