Pillar 5: Data

Pillar 5 focuses on ensuring that quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices exists and is consistently collected and analysed. This pillar supported the development of national, regional and community data collection databases to track the prevalence of different of violence and harmful practices, supported research on the underlying factors that perpetuate violence against women and girls (inclusive of marginalised groups) and the digitisation of research and monitoring efforts to better disseminate, share and use data through digital apps, coordinated databases and other technological advancements.

The following good and innovative practices illustrate strong contributions to Pillar 5. This includes a focus on national databases that were created in Mozambique, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ecuador, cross-national femicide research in Latin America, and new technologies and applications that were created in Liberia, Uganda, and across Africa.

National databases

5.1 The InfoViolência digital database for registering gender-based violence cases in Mozambique

Overview

InfoViolência is a web-based application built for the registration and management of gender-based violence cases, with the eventual aim of integrating data collected by all government sectors participating in the response to gender-based violence cases. Prior to the creation and implementation of this system, national data was entered manually in Mozambique, which entailed limitations and led to delays in the systematisation and sharing of data at the Offices for Assistance to Families and Minors Victims of Domestic Violence. This newly designed system is currently utilised by the police sector and has been heralded as a successful example of a national effort to digitise and systematise gender-based violence data.

Through Spotlight Initiative, UNFPA in collaboration with the Mozambique Ministry of Interior began development of the database in 2018. A pre-pilot phase was carried out in 2019,[362] with the pilot phase officially beginning in 2021 after user training and equipment were made available.[363] Since this time, more than 400 police officers have been trained to use the platform, and 253 statistical technicians have been trained to better collect data, including qualitative information, on the prevalence of gender-based violence.[364]

The InfoViolência system is installed on the Ministry of the Interior's server. A separate server is installed at the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Action to harmonise the data coming from Integrated Care Centers. Data is collected through a new single digitised form (referred to as *Ficha Única*), which is used to register medical, psychosocial and legal support to gender-based violence cases.

Results

With the new system deployed and operational in five provinces, including the three Spotlight Initiative target provinces and the capital, data has been able to be captured digitally (offline or online), summarised at the central level and shared in a timely manner. The system collects a wide range of information about the survivor's characteristics, type of violence, relationship with the aggressor, history of cases of violence, as well as the actions taken by the justice sector in the follow-up of a case. Moreover, this information can be shared, anonymised or not, with relevant sectors working in gender-based violence response and in compliance with the principles of safeguarding survivors' rights.

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362 InfoViolência in action (UNFPA, June 2019).
363 *InfoViolência* initially suffered from a lack of ICT equipment required to use the software. Spotlight Initiative had to make budget provisions to acquire ICT equipment; however, the quantities delivered remain below the needs.
364 The 2019-2023 Mozambique Cumulative Report Draft.

> *"We were afraid in the beginning because we have heard of many digital platforms that are created and do not work. However, we decided to assume this challenge, and today we are realising that in practice, it is worthwhile because it will improve our work. InfoViolência will facilitate and give credibility to our work, and it will also allow us to carry out more effective follow up of all GBV cases."*
>
> **Dr. Lurdes Mabunda, Head of the Department of Family Assistance and Minors, Victims of Violence of the Ministry of Interior**

Winner of the global Spotlight Initiative Innovation Award, the platform *"brings huge benefits, as we will have reliable data on gender-based violence in the shortest possible time,"* commented Trindade João, Head of the Statistics, Studies and Dissemination Office at the Provincial Command of the Police in Nampula.[365]

> *"InfoViolência is a gain not only in terms of the quality of the data collected, but also in reducing the response time for survivors of violence...with a responsive and integrated system, cases will be better attended to, response time will decrease, and women and girls will feel more confident that their cases of GBV will be resolved."*
>
> **Tonecas Manhiça, Head of the Department of Statistics, Studies and Dissemination in the Ministry of the Interior**

Notably, as of 2022, more than 6,000 sexual and gender-based violence cases have been registered in *InfoViolência*, a threefold increase from the amount of new cases registered the previous year.[366] This significant increase is an important outcome representing greater uptake of the tool.

Relevant stakeholders have already expressed interest in expanding the initiative and actions are underway to mobilise resources to implement the use of the application across the country. Funding permitted, the application will eventually allow referral of survivors to other institutions participating in the response to gender-based violence, such as health units (Ministry of Health) and justice administration (Prosecutors and Courts). (See more in case study 7.2, which details this work across multiple pillars.)

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication

- **Pinpoint gender-based violence incident trends in order to better prioritise interventions, policies and budgets in areas where women and girls need them most.** Building a data management system like *InfoViolência* enables the police in Mozambique to conduct thorough data analysis and enhance the quality and timeliness of services and access to justice for survivors.
- **Create a single form for registering cases to help avoid additional discomfort for survivors who might otherwise be forced to recount their experience multiple times with different services.** Reducing data collection moments supports victims and is more efficient.
- **Aim to streamline the referral process through the gender-based violence information management system to service providers from different sectors (health, police, justice and social).** This ensures safe, ethical and effective sharing of reported incident data, so that survivors can receive integrated care.[367]
- **Secure further investments to ensure the continuity and maintenance of data management systems.** In order to be sustainable, the Mozambique Ministry of Interior saw the need to secure additional funding sources beyond Spotlight Initiative for *InfoViolência*.

[365] Innovative data tool strengthens services for gender-based violence survivors in Mozambique (Spotlight Initiative, April 2023).
[366] The 2022 Mozambique Annual Programme Report, page 11.
[367] Harnessing the power of data to respond to and end gender-based violence (Spotlight Initiative, March 2021).

🔧 5.2 The Police Records Management Information System (PRMIS) in Grenada for monitoring crime data

Overview

Since 2016, various initiatives have been underway to encourage evidence-based decision-making and to champion a reliance on valid, reliable and comparable citizen security data in Grenada. Implemented by UNDP in partnership with USAID, a task force composed of key representatives from the Royal Grenada Police Force, the Prison Department, the Statistical Office and the Ministry of National Security was set up.[368] Further synergies were established between the CariSECURE project and the Caribbean Regional Programme of Spotlight Initiative in 2022 to specifically improve the monitoring of crime data through the Police Records Management Information System (PRMIS)[369] and link it to the new online Violence Against Women and Girls Data System (VAWG-WebMS).

It was foreseen that this linkage would help mitigate duplication of cases and ensure harmonisation of data on violence against women and girls and family violence. This work brought together stakeholders from the National Data Centre in the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, the Central Statistical Office, the Criminal Records Office of the Royal Grenada Police Force and the Ministry of Social Development and Gender Affairs to support the preparation for the piloting and adoption of the system in 2023.

Results

While results are not readily available yet, the ongoing work to integrate attention to violence against women and girls and family violence into PRMIS is seen as critical to strengthening the nexus between citizen security and violence against women and girls and family violence.[370] This data is important to collect because, on average, nearly 1 in 2 women aged 15-64 have reported that they experienced one or more of the four types of intimate partner violence in their lifetime, including physical, sexual, psychological and/or economic violence. Lifetime prevalence rates among these women varied by country, from 55 percent in Guyana, 48 percent in Suriname, 44 percent in Trinidad and Tobago, and 39 percent in Grenada and Jamaica, but all point to the gravity of violence against women and girls in the Caribbean region.[371] Yet, violence against women, including intra-family or domestic violence, remains greatly overlooked as a public policy issue within the security sector's protection mandate.

> *"Violence against women and girls is definitely a citizen security issue for the Caribbean region because it is one of the leading causes of violence and it affects the safety of so many people. However, citizen security to date has focused on organised drug and gun violence as though that defines what citizen security is."*
>
> ***A respondent in the stakeholder interviews***

As such, training has been carried out in collaboration with the Central Statistical Office in Grenada to improve stakeholders' capacities to gather and enter data on violence against women and girls and to use the data system.[372] The training sessions aimed at enhancing participants' knowledge and skills for data management and processing, data safety and security and understanding the layout and functionalities of the web-based data system. The equipment necessary for the operation of the data system, including hardware and software, were also procured and distributed to the Royal Grenada Police Force and the Ministry of Social Development as the two data producing agencies, and to the Central Statistical Office as the central hub.

> *"There is no success without successful planning. With 104 officers trained, 13 officers trained as trainers, and all the police stations [equipped] where we will roll out, I do believe that I can say we will have success in all our endeavors."*
>
> ***Merina Jessamy, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Security and Home Affairs in Grenada***

The success of the project resulted in a commitment from the Government of Grenada to expand PRMIS across all police stations. Government officials recognised the value of a digital system that better targets violence hotspots and supports police response efforts. The system also demonstrated the capacity to share best practices across the region and help address transnational crimes.[373]

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[368] Grenada launches task force to drive CariSECURE project (USAID, June 2018).
[369] The developer website, Softengi, describes the key features that were built for the PRMIS software
[370] Situation Analysis of Citizen Security in The Caribbean: A Spotlight on Gender Based Violence and Family Violence (UNDP, December 2023).
[371] Intimate partner violence in five CARICOM countries: Findings from national prevalence surveys on violence against women (UN Women, May 2020).
[372] Grenada Police Force Goes High Tech With Support From USAID and UNDP (U.S. Embassy Barbados, March 2022).
[373] Ibid.

> *"This project is arming governments with a digital tool to not only improve the resolution of crimes, but to inform policy and youth interventions that can help at-risk youth choose a different path."*
>
> **Ugo Blanco, Deputy Resident Representative UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean**

> *"Using this approach, Grenada will be in a better position to identify trends, assess crime and violence conditions, evaluate policies and design effective crime prevention strategies targeting youth."*
>
> **Christopher Cushing, USAID Mission Director for the Eastern and Southern Caribbean**

The task of harmonising the taxonomy and datasets of PRMIS and VAWG-WebMS will ultimately allow for better trend and pattern analysis and improve reporting by victims and survivors. The interoperability of these databases is essential for a more coordinated and effective response to gender-based violence, so that even more targeted and strategic intervention strategies can be developed to prevent and tackle violence issues.

> **Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication**
> - **Link data collection systems to reduce the need for data entry personnel to enter the same or similar data into two different systems.** This is a time-saving and more efficient measure for first responders and the police who are tasked with entering this data. This innovative practice helps reduce potential double counting and duplication across different duty-bearer databases.
> - **Harmonise data within a country and cross-regionally if possible.** Designing a police records and information management system within the larger framework of CariSECURE and for multiple Caribbean countries requires streamlining key gender and crime definitions, careful data handling and nuanced access considerations. Integrating it with another database specifically for records related to violence against women and girls requires further planning and interoperability of systems.

5.3 The Primero Child Protection Information Management System in Trinidad and Tobago strengthens case management on violence against children

Overview

Many children in Trinidad and Tobago are subjected to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, a situation exacerbated by the rise in poverty and socio-economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a survey on violence against children, respondents reported that violence against children was widespread and generally accepted (especially in the case of physical and emotional abuse). 70-75 percent stated they had seen a child hit or shoved. 72 percent were aware of cases of sexual abuse against girls and 36 percent against boys.[374]

In addition to the significant need to address cases of child abuse, the improvement of the internal case management system was considered critical by the Children's Authority in Trinidad and Tobago[375] as it possessed significant gaps. These included a lack of capacity to deal with the high number of registered cases (around 400 per month on average), a high level of manual work and reporting due to system limitations, difficulties in reporting to other agencies when requested, a lack of synergy with other agencies' systems leading to duplication of data, and limited ability to properly refer cases.

To address the need to improve its child protection system, UNICEF through the Spotlight Initiative supported the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago to migrate their data to the Primero Child Protection Information Management System[376] (hereafter referred to as the "Primero System"). The Primero System is an open source software platform adopted by more than 60 countries which streamlines the processing of child abuse and protection cases. The goals of implementing the Primero System in the country included improving the efficiency of care, linking with key national systems to facilitate coordination with other partners such as the police, judiciary and social service agencies, as well as ensuring better confidentiality, data protection and knowledge sharing.

Results

The migration process to the Primero System engaged diverse representatives of the Children's Authority to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the user workflow and how to increase process efficiency in line with international standards. In June 2022, the data migration process was completed and the Primero System was launched in the country with approximately 44,000 cases migrated.

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[374] New Child Protection System Launched in Trinidad and Tobago (UNICEF Eastern Caribbean, June 2022).
[375] The main agency responsible for child protection in the country.
[376] The Primero System website.

After over one year of using the Primero System, Children's Authority members shared that having access to all cases in one place without manual processes and requests from other departments or agencies has led to a reduction in case management time,[377] increased data accuracy, as well as strengthened internal accountability and performance management. Another critical benefit has been the faster response time to requests for more information about a case from different stakeholders, including the media. The reliability of statistical reports and their development time has improved. For example, the Children's Authority is now able to quickly assess which areas in Trinidad and Tobago have the highest prevalence of violence by type. They can also promptly submit data to other agencies, such as specific biographic data to the National Child Registry.

The next step of this project was to focus on an integrated approach to allow the case files to be shared between different stakeholders, such as the police and social services, as well as creating interconnectivity between their systems through application programming interfaces (also known as "APIs"). The integration work is under development and being closely followed by the Office of the Prime Minister, Tobago House of Assembly and Regional Health Authority and will operate beyond Spotlight Initiative. Some advancements have already been made on this front, for example, the integration with the National Family Services Division, the Student Support Services Division and Trinidad and Tobago Police Service was concluded by the end of 2023. As an example of how this integration improved processes, the National Family Services Division can now access the Primero System and source all the information on a case without the need to call or email Children's Authority to find out who is managing a specific case. They can also include additional information and requests into the system.

The Primero System streamlined the Children's Authority case management process and is creating a unified system in the country, where there will be only one case file on a child that can be accessed by all stakeholders involved on the referral pathway, bringing significant gains of efficiency to the entire process. Advances on the unified system will also be possible due to the cross-sector collaboration to improve the referral system. This will benefit all children who have experienced violence, abuse or any other type of difficulties, as they will receive faster and better responses. They will also not be retraumatised as they will not need to recount their experiences many times when referred to different service providers.

Going beyond Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF will continue supporting the integration process and expand it to other stakeholders, such as the National Children's Registry and the International Organization for Migration.

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication
- **Support systems and processes that respond to stakeholders' needs and pain points and that draw on regional or international standards.** One of the key factors that contributed to the success of this work was drawing on a case management model that had already been developed and was being used in over 60 countries. The country did not need to reinvent the wheel but rather could implement the Primero System in their context efficiently. In addition, establishing a cross-department working group that was responsible for the data migration process was essential. This collective effort made it possible to migrate five years of cases, including those in manual systems, within the project timeline and despite the difficulties imposed by COVID-19.
- **Foster cross-sector collaboration to design integrated and efficient solutions.** The engagement and collaboration of the different service providers involved in protecting children's rights and well-being was key in conceptualising the integration process. Other key stakeholders such as the Office of the Prime Minister, Tobago House of Assembly and Regional Health Authority were also involved in the project to make sure the integration process is fully implemented.
- **Leverage available resources that contribute to programmes' sustainability.** Joining an existing and credible global system brought advantages to Trinidad and Tobado in terms of cost reduction, such as cheaper IT support and data storage. Additionally, the knowledge sharing between countries using the Primero System leads to constant improvements to the system that benefits everyone collectively.

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[377] The Children's Authority does not publish an average case management time to avoid generating external expectations, as they claim that case management times vary significantly and cannot be compared with average data. Data on the percentage of case management time reduction was not available.

💡 5.4 Flores en el Aire, a qualitative data approach on ending violence against women and girls in Ecuador

Overview

In Ecuador, femicide rates vary between official statistics and civil society organisations due to different definitions of femicide. The official definition tends to underestimate numbers by not including suicide, even when the suicide is the result of constant violence and thus should be counted as a femicide. To address this discrepancy, through Spotlight Initiative in Ecuador, UN Women contributed to improving official statistical data[378] and UNDP implemented an innovative, qualitative approach to femicide data to better illuminate the dynamics of femicide, to humanise the numbers behind it and to build momentum for fighting the problem and ending it.

As such, Spotlight Initiative launched *Flores en el Aire*[379] (translated as "Flowers in the Air"), a social mapping tool that allows users to digitally explore memory routes of sixteen victims of femicide in eight cantons of Ecuador.[380] It collected the experiences and testimonies of family, friends and organisations to honour the memory of these women. The narratives are expressed in the form of stories, photographs, texts and other georeferenced media according to the cities, streets and meaningful places in the lives of the victims. It also shares these families' routes of (in)justice, reparation initiatives and community responses to violence. The site acts as a source of information on how and from whom to seek support and what the bottlenecks are in the support system.

To design the tool, Spotlight Initiative and its implementing partner[381] engaged mothers of femicide victims through a participatory process. Each route was carefully planned with the victims' families and friends with the support of local organisations in each canton. Clinical psychologists provided support to families that were recounting painful situations to avoid re-traumatisation.

Results

Since its launch in 2021, *Flores en el Aire* has been used in awareness campaigns and events, as well as in engagements with various public entities. It has also been used as an advocacy tool for more effective public responses towards femicide and other forms of violence against women and girls and for better reparation policies. It has also been a powerful tool in training programmes across different sectors, such as journalists and prosecutors, to strengthen their awareness, gender perspective and sensitivity, as well as increase their understanding of critical bottlenecks across the entire system that involve femicide, from sociocultural dynamics to public responses.

> *"Flores en el Aire was in the media and gave journalists another perspective. We managed to present Flores en el Aire in the State Attorney General's Office, in training sessions for journalists, at the local level, in various events with local governments. At the time of the local elections, the maps were used for dialogues with the candidates. And we continue discussing what is happening in the territories and talk to people in the public service using this tool."*
>
> **Nicoletta Marinelli, member of the Aldea Foundation**

Flores en el Aire proved to have multiple effects at different levels. On an emotional level, it offered symbolic reparation and contributed to a healing process for the families and friends of these sixteen women and adolescents who were murdered due to their gender. They stated that they felt listened to through this mapping exercise and that Spotlight Initiative's visibility gave them a form of emotional reparation that has been better than the reparation actions taken by the State to date. Another key result from this process was the supportive networks built between families, organisations and movements.

> *"[Flores en el Aire] was a balm that allowed me not to disappear in this pain or fight alone for justice. It was a way of channelling my pain and making Camila's cause visible. I could raise my voice, because I said, my daughter, I will transform every tear into a cry of protest, so that your voice and your name will be synonymous with freedom. Now, people identify me as Camila's mother. I am also invited to give conferences and lectures at universities. I am also now part of two movements, Madres Coraje [Brave Mothers] y Madres Justicia [Mothers Justice]. I see now that Camila's case is promoting some changes."*
>
> **Mother of Camila, a victim of femicide**

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[378] National Protocol for Investigating Femicides and other Violent Deaths of Women and Girls in Ecuador: A Prosecutor's Approach (Spotlight Initiative, September 2022).
[379] The *Flores en el Aire* website. (in Spanish)
[380] Azogues, Cayambe, Cañar, Cuenca, Lago Agrio, Portoviejo, Puyo and Quito.
[381] Aldea Foundation.

A significant impact arising from this work was that all victims' families that had lost a mother were able to access the orphan's bonus,[382] one of the State reparation measures, for which they had been fighting, in some cases for years, without succeeding. Due to continued advocacy work of civil society organisations and contributions from *Flores en el Aire*, changes were finally implemented in the orphans' bonus policy in March 2022. Now all families can access the bonus before final sentences, which can take years to happen.

Using the tool in training programmes also proved to be a successful strategy. As a result of the impact that *Flores en el Aire* had on prosecutors after a specific training was provided in 2021, the National Training Department of the State Attorney General's Office extended the training to other professionals in 2022. In total, 730 professionals were trained, including prosecutors, legal doctors, psychologists and social workers, and there is interest in including the tool as a regular module in their annual training programme.

Spotlight Initiative in Ecuador is opening access to this social mapping tool so that any organisation can use it and develop their own routes autonomously, even for other topics beyond femicide (e.g. routes of (in)justice for homeless people, etc.). Once launched, capacity-building programmes will be carried out to transfer the know-how on how to build social maps with local organisations.

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication
- **Engage local organisations as allies to reach multiple cities, villages and hard-to-reach areas, as well as to leverage local knowledge and relationships.** Working with local organisations was key to accompanying the victims' families in the process of building their routes and seeking reparation. Local organisations were already supporting families to demand justice, so the initiative drew on and deepened the relationships of trust between them.
- **Leverage qualitative approaches, including stories from lived experiences, as impactful tools for advocacy.** *Flores en el Aire* created momentum by raising the visibility of the humans behind the numbers and put pressure on the Ecuadorian government to take action. The storytelling project highlighted challenges in families' pursuit of justice. This powerful influencing strategy resulted in concrete shifts from the state, such as changing the orphan's bonus policy.
- **Make sure to provide adequate support to survivors or families of victims involved in initiatives to prevent retraumatization.** The inclusion of a psychologist to support those that participated in *Flores en el Aire* was a good practice to ensure that retraumatization did not occur.
- **Use qualitative data as tools that have greater sustainability over time, unlike numbers that can change from period to period.** To sustain this project, Spotlight Initiative and partners will continue disseminating *Flores en el Aire* at strategic moments and on emblematic days to keep the stories alive and raise public awareness. It will also expand training programmes using the *Flores en el Aire* tool to other sectors, including judges, to deepen awareness across various duty-bearers and institutions.

[382] The orphan's bonus consists of financial compensation granted by the State to support children whose mothers were victims of femicide.

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⭐ 5.5 Cross-dimensional and cross-national research on femicide in Latin America

Overview

In 2021, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (hereafter referred to as the "Economic Commission") estimated that at least 12 women per day died violent, gender-based deaths in the region.[383] In 2022, the numbers remained fairly consistent with one gender-related killing of a woman every two hours in the region.[384] Despite these statistics, data remains limited,[385] and the Economic Commission qualifies its data by explaining that *"it is not possible to identify an upward or downward trend in the rates of femicide or feminicide in each country, since the variations are small and do not reflect an increase or decrease in the problem."* They also cautioned that comparable time series for the region's countries cannot be determined due to limitations in data and methodological adjustments.

Through Spotlight Initiative's Latin America Regional Programme, UNDP brought together implementing partners and field experts to conduct eight multidimensional studies on femicide/feminicide.[386] 14 of the 25 countries with the highest number of femicides in the world are within this region.[387]

Each study examined intersectional impacts on high-risk and vulnerable populations. This comprehensive framework has provided an in-depth analysis on the relationships between violence against women and girls and femicide with human mobility processes, with social violence and organised crime and with multidimensional inequalities that stem from, for example, poverty in the region. Additional studies examined the role of the justice systems in cases of femicide, explained the relationship between trafficking and the disappearance of women and girls and femicide, and analysed the available data on gender-based violence, including on femicide, and its influence on public policy.[388]

Results

With the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the multidimensional studies within Spotlight Initiative's framework sought to provide an exhaustive analysis and evaluation of the quality of existing femicide data in Latin American countries. The study, *Calidad de la medición del femicidio/feminicidio y muertes violentas de mujeres por razones de género en América Latina*,[389] covered twenty countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela.[390]

Contributors to this study came from 24 public institutions and four UN agencies, including ECLAC, UNDP, UN Women and UNODC. A further 14 interviews were conducted with government officials and technical personnel housed at 23 institutions from 11 countries responding to a self-administered online questionnaire on the characteristics of the administrative records of femicide/feminicide in each country. Their expertise was essential to better understand the processes used to collect, record, validate and disclose information.

As a result of the detailed study, a regional index on the quality of the measurement of femicide/feminicide helps to demonstrate what data exists and what data still needs strengthening. It incorporated seven dimensions and twenty indicators, which were fed with primary and secondary information provided by the key informants of each country, as well as the data obtained during the documentary and bibliographic review phases of the project. Likewise, findings from other studies have revealed significant insights into the contextual factors compounding femicide.

A key finding included the need to improve the interoperability of measurement and operation systems of femicide records. This highlights the importance of a single registry that could allow quick access and traceability of information. Furthermore, the study provided a series of recommendations in four dimensions: statistical system management; management of the institutional environment; management of statistical processes; and management of statistical results both at the national and international level.[391]

[383] Femicidal violence in figures - Latin America and the Caribbean (bulletin no. 1) (ECLAC, November 2022).
[384] Femicidal violence in figures - Latin America and the Caribbean (bulletin no. 2) (ECLAC, November 2023).
[385] Gambetta, V. (2022). Dificultades y desafíos para investigar el femicidio en Latinoamérica (translated as "Difficulties and challenges for femicide research in Latin America"). *Revista Latinoamericana De Metodología De Las Ciencias Sociales, 12*(2), e115.
[386] The terminology of femicide versus feminicide also remains widely disputed. For the purposes of this compendium, the words are used interchangeably to describe this extreme form of gender-based violence. See also Analysis of Femicide/Feminicide Legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean and a Proposal for a Model Law (UN Women, 2018).
[387] A Gendered Analysis of Violent Deaths (Small Arms Survey, November 2016).
[388] A Multidimensional Approach to Address Violence Against Women and Girls and Femicide/Feminicide in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP Latin America and the Caribbean, December 2021).
[389] Estudio sobre la calidad de la medición del femicidio/feminicidio y las muertes violentas de mujeres por razones de género (Spotlight Initiative, 2022). (in Spanish)
[390] Of the twenty countries contacted, sixteen responded to the request for information (80 percent response rate).
[391] To learn more about this multidimensional study, watch the webinar (in Spanish), "*¿Qué nos cuentan los datos? registros administrativos y estudios de opinión pública sobre VCMN+FF*" (translated as "What does the data tell us? Administrative records and public opinion studies on violence against women and girls, including femicide/feminicide (VAWG+FF)).

New technology and apps to track gender-based violence

5.6 The mobile SAV App in Liberia for reporting cases of rape, physical and domestic violence

Overview

Launched in 2020, the Safe Mobile App (also known as the "SAV App")[392] aims to swiftly report, respond and fast track cases related to rape, physical violence and domestic violence that have been perpetrated against women and girls in Liberia. Under Spotlight Initiative, and with support from the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, the project initially kicked off in four communities in Montserrado, eight communities in Bomi and eight in Cape Count Counties.[393]

The mobile application was primarily built to collect timely information from young women between the ages of 12 and 24 to report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence and other abuses. It also serves as a direct line of contact to social, health and other services by opening a communication channel with a medical doctor, counsellor or the police in case of an emergency.

Results

The SAV App has become an important documentation and outreach tool for school-aged girls in Liberia who face multiple forms of abuse at home, in their communities and at school.[394] The data for the SAV App is managed by Girls for Change, a women-led community based organisation focused on advancing the rights of women, youth and children. Their ongoing engagements with Gender Justice Clubs, men champions and stakeholders in other counties has also contributed to widening the application's reach and usage. Between May 2020 and August 2021, 500 members of Gender Justice Clubs were trained in 20 communities in Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Montserrado Counties.[395]

> *"Through Spotlight Initiative, we have seen more women and girls coming up to report cases by themselves. Previously, it would be through other community members who have an understanding of the law and justice processes, but with the awareness created on how to report cases [women and girls] are coming here openly."*
>
> ***Inspector Muna Meah, Commander in the Liberia National Police Force and the county coordinator for the Women and Children's Social Protection Centre in Sanniquille, north-central Liberia***

In June 2021, the Foundation for Community Initiatives and Girls for Change convened a National Dialogue on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence,[396] highlighting how sexual and gender-based violence cases could be reported using the SAV App. Subsequent to this event, individuals who had received earlier training on the use of the SAV App began monitoring and reporting, as well accompanying survivors of violence to judicial proceedings. Three sub-national GBV Coalitions have since been established in Liberia and also help to track, report and follow up on gender-based violence cases. In total, over 1,200 cases have been reported using SAV App between 2020 and 2023. The SAV App can be downloaded from the Google Play Store[397] for Android devices and from the Apple App Store for iPhones.[398]

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[392] The Safe Mobile App website.
[393] Liberia: 'SAV App' Launched To Track And Report On Sgbv Swiftly (Front Page of Africa, September 2020).
[394] The Liberia Results 2019-2021 Newsletter. The following quote encapsulates the impact that the Spotlight Initiative programmes more broadly have had on case reporting. It does not attribute this as a direct result of the Sav App specifically.
[395] The Foundation For Community Initiatives Launched A National Report On Cases Of Gender Based Violence Reported Using A Mobile Application Named "SAVAPP" (Foundation For Community Initiatives, October 2021).
[396] A video clip of the National Dialogue on SGBV in Monrovia, Liberia, 22 June 2021.
[397] The app can be downloaded from the Google Play Store on Android devices.
[398] The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store on iPhones.

> *"In the wake of [an] increased wave of sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia, Sav App support[s] the reduction of violence against women and girls."*
>
> **Lauretta Pope-Kai, Executive Director of Foundation for Community Initiatives and Chairperson of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia**

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication
- **Capture real-time data through mobile applications to potentially help increase case reporting.** Community stakeholders in Liberia, for example, shared that the SAV App increased their level of trust in reporting cases of sexual and gender-based violence.
- **Build digital solutions to capture interest of particular demographic groups, like girls and young women in the country.** The SAV App offered an easy-to-access solution for this demographic and proved to be a successful strategy to reach those left behind and those living in hard-to-reach areas.

5.7 DNA lab in Uganda strengthens prosecution of violence against women and girls cases

Overview

In Uganda, the prevalence of gender-based violence remains high due to entrenched patriarchal social norms and gender roles. According to recent data, almost all women over the age of 15 had experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, by partners or non-partners.[399] Despite the high prevalence of gender based violence, victims and survivors face minimal recourse through formal channels. In 2020, out of 17,664 reported cases, only 1,359 led to prosecution. Out of these, 400 resulted in conviction, maintaining a low conviction rate of 2.2 percent.[400] Given this context, rigorous evidence collection is critical to support investigations and subsequent prosecutions of sexual and gender-based violence crimes.

Through the support of Spotlight Initiative and the Embassy of Sweden, the Uganda Police Force built a state-of-the-art and rapid analysis DNA lab to maintain the quality of evidence and strengthen prosecution. UN Women facilitated the donation of three Crime Scene Evidence Collection vans, 18 Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO) kits, 18 scenes of crime cameras, DNA consumables (for the equipment), three pre-configured containers and three audio visual recording devices.[401]

Results

Reliable equipment and technology to facilitate forensics and proper DNA collection is a critical element to ensure better investigation of crimes. Crime scene vans, for example, are necessary to transport the DNA samples swiftly and prevent degradation. Through the support of Spotlight Initiative, the new equipment in the lab helped preserve and process the evidence at the highest standard and resulted in greatly reduced turnaround time on case investigations.

Widely recognised as a regional hub of excellence, 40 percent of the cases received at the Forensics Biology Lab in Kampala are related to sexual and gender-based violence.

> *"DNA capabilities are crucial to support investigations and come in handy for SGBV crimes. We have been able to decrease [the] backlog to 8 months. Further, the cases investigated have seen credible evidence of perpetrators in 70% of cases. That 30% gap would be filled by awareness (of the general public and medical practitioners) of these capabilities and training."*
>
> **Andrew K. Mubiru, Acting Director of Forensic Services**

According to Mubiru, drug-induced rapes have been a worrisome trend that they have witnessed in Kampala. The Forensic Chemistry Section Head provided training for police officers and investigators on the use of the equipment to detect drugs.

These sophisticated techniques are capable of detecting trace amounts of chemical substances through blood, urine and hair samples and provide the evidence necessary to prosecute sexual violence crimes.

> *"The samples determine alcohol content as well as drugs, the liquid chromatography machine is a game-changer machine. The mass spectrometry machine is a detector, the gas chromatography machine is also a detector."*
>
> **Doctor Jaffar Kisitu, Head of the Forensic Chemistry Section**

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[399] National Survey on Violence Against Women in Uganda (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, UN Women and Spotlight Initiative, 2021).
[400] Domestic Violence and the Death Penalty in Uganda (2023).
[401] Spotlight Initiative Supports the Uganda Police Force Forensics Department to Successfully Investigate SGBV Crimes (UN Women Africa, August 2022).

Survivors in Uganda have been less likely to report incidents due to associated stigma, particularly in cases where crimes have been committed by intimate or known partners.

Assistant Inspector of Police Emmanuel Ogwang shared that he had supported a 5-year-old victim to expound on the details of her abuse after her mother reported the case to the police. Once they successfully concluded this case, another victim, a fellow schoolmate who had not previously reported her abuse, came forward and reported a similar case.

> *"When cases occur in a community and a victim gets justice, they share that feedback with the rest of the community and they are motivated to report similar cases."*
>
> **Emmanuel Ogwang, Assistant Inspector of Police and Regional Scene of Crime Officer for the Kampala Metropolitan East area**

Reporting of sexual and gender-based violence crimes has begun to increase as it is now being taken more seriously by law enforcement agencies and cases are being prosecuted at the judicial level. DNA testing has been a necessary tool for criminal prosecution of sexual violence crimes, and, as such, the new equipment and provisions supplied by Spotlight Initiative has been critical to the fight to end violence against women and girls.

Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication
- **Facilitate necessary forensics equipment to ensure the proper handling of DNA evidence.** Effective investigations of sexual and gender-based violence crimes require up-to-date equipment, such as rapid analysis and testing facilities in the DNA lab, as well as adequate transportation vehicles to transport evidence in a timely manner. This evidence is critical for criminal punishment and data should be quickly available to ensure timely access to justice for survivors.
- **Provide gender sensitivity training through a trauma-informed and victim-centred lens.** Doing so emboldens those tasked with identifying sexual and gender-based violence crimes to do so with greater care.

🔆 5.8 Innovation hacklabs in Africa spark new ideas and technology aimed at ending female genital mutilation

Overview

Female genital mutilation has affected nearly 200 million women and girls across Africa, Asia and the Middle East,[402] with its prevalence spanning over 28 countries in Africa alone.[403] Recognising this challenge, Spotlight Initiative's Africa Regional Programme, in partnership with UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, launched the Female Genital Mutilation Innovation HackLab Project in 2021. Young people, particularly adolescents and girls, were invited to propose innovative ideas and solutions to combat and prevent female genital mutilation. The initiative sought creative and practical ideas from individuals under the age of 35 years, with the potential to be implemented on a larger scale throughout the continent.[404] These "innovation hacklabs" have been an important initiative in the Sub-Saharan African context, where only 30 percent of women receive Science, Technology, Engineering and Medical (STEM) training to actively participate in the tech sector.[405] Its goal was to contribute to creating a future in Africa where every young woman and girl could exercise her right to bodily autonomy, supporting them to make decisions about their own lives and futures.

Results

The first call for innovation opened in the fall of 2021,[406] with 113 applications received from young people from 18 countries across the continent. Over 60 percent of these submissions came from young women. This list was narrowed down to eighteen ideas for further assessment, ten of which came from Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda. These entries were selected to participate in the next phase of the project, called "the boot camp."

The selected participants, all under the age of 35, were invited to an intensive ideas development workshop over a 2-week period to flesh out commercially viable solutions to reach zero female genital mutilation within their communities. Following the boot camp, nine ideas made their final pitches in front of an online audience of over 900 people around the globe and a jury in December 2021, competing for the chance to tap into seed funding and further business support for their idea.

Four ideas benefitted from an initial investment of 70,000 USD and business incubation for an additional 3-6 months. These ideas were all youth-led initiatives (2 led by young women and 2 led by young men). Ideas presented by the winners included the development of a mobile platform in Uganda to support victims and survivors to get help from appropriate service providers; the invention of a mobile application in Nigeria called "Smart Reporting and Referral"[407] that connects survivors anonymously to female genital mutilation and gender-based violence services; the creation of a website in Burkina Faso sharing written and audio testimonies of victims and providing medical and psychological support for girls; and the acceleration of another mobile application in Uganda to collect and analyse crowdsourced, anonymous reports of female genital mutilation practices, identifying patterns and key insights.

The innovation challenges have continued in 2022 with a focus on strategies to reduce early and unintended pregnancies, and in 2023 with a focus on uplifting an individual's right to make decisions about their own bodies.[408] With each successive round, there has also been greater interest and participation, increased seed funding and more targeted enterprise growth support available.

> **Key Elements of Success and Practices for Replication**
> - **Encourage and engage young innovators to contribute their most creative ideas to identify scalable solutions for ending harmful practices against girls.** While running social innovation challenges such as the Hacklabs requires significant preparation, they are met with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm when launched.
> - **Provide financial, technical and professional support to see innovation flourish.** These initiatives have the opportunity to raise awareness and make a large and long-term social impact around the hardest of issues, especially when they are able to stay viable beyond the seed investment.

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[402] Female genital mutilation (World Health Organization, February 2024).
[403] Female genital mutilation (UNFPA East and Southern Africa).
[404] FGM Hacklab (UNFPA, 2021).
[405] Women and the Digital Economy in Africa (Harvard University, Center for African Studies, October 2020).
[406] More on the innovation challenge in 2021.
[407] The Smart Reporting and Referral (SMART RR) application website.
[408] More on the innovation challenges in 2022 and in 2023.