

“Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Schools”

Flagship project - Gauteng and Eastern Cape Provinces, South Africa



‘Gender-Based Violence Prevention in schools’ flagship projects - Eastern Cape and Gauteng Provinces, South Africa

1. Promoting gender equality

The *Partnerships for Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls in Southern Africa Programme (PfP)* supports the formation of multi-stakeholder initiatives that leverage financial and technical contributions from government, civil society organisations, private sector companies, the media and academia. These initiatives serve to jointly implement flagship projects in South Africa, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Zambia. The collaborative mode of implementation enhances coordination and mutual understanding among stakeholders. As part of this regional initiative, GIZ PfP implements the flagship project; GBV Prevention in Schools in two provinces in South Africa, namely the Eastern Cape and Gauteng.



Learner-driven Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign in a school in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape SA

In Southern Africa, gender-based violence against women and girls (VAWG) is among the most severe and widespread human rights violations. The prevalence and acceptance of VAWG is high in international comparison. According to Moulton et al (2014), South Africa is facing extremely high rates of gender-based violence perpetration and victimisation of young children and adolescents, which are proved by the following facts:

- Girls tend to be the victims of gender-based violence in schools, including rape, harassment and sexual assault; while boys tend to be victims of physical violence and bullying.
- Assault, rape and sexual violence are ‘endemic’ in South African schools, as young South African girls continue to face many obstacles that impede their path to learning as well as it adversely impacts school attendance and school completion.
- LGBTI learners are facing physical and verbal violence at their schools. A study from 2016 revealed that 56% of South African LGBTQ youth (≤24 years) experienced discrimination based on their LGBTQ status at school.

Schools are recognized as a valuable entry point for prevention of GBV activities. A school-based intervention can primarily prevent violence in schools, but it can also have an influence on the community through

teachers, learners and parents. Adolescence is also regarded as the critical stage for identity moulding. It is therefore seen as the optimal stage for initiating change in attitudes.



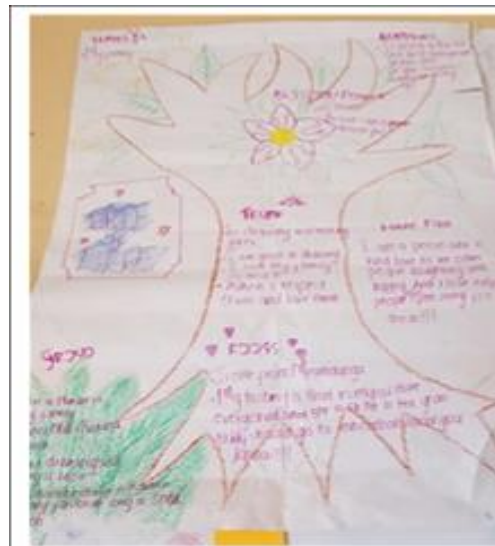
Peer educators (Ambassadors) in discussion with class mates in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape

In Port Elizabeth - Eastern Cape Province; the flagship uses peer to peer education to promote schools as safe environments utilizing the whole of society approach (school management, educators, parents, learners, community leaders) towards a culture on non-violence. The flagship also works towards introducing GBV prevention into education (curriculum/extra-curricular) by supporting local civil society organisations in enhancing their GBV prevention in schools focus. This translates into the establishment of learner driven movements in schools under the theme **“I initiate” on GBV prevention and LGBTI discrimination**. The intervention is accompanied by a comprehensive media

strategy—including a learner-driven Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/pg/I-Initiate-Youth-Uniting-Against-GBV-110287480448199/posts/?ref=page_internal). Selected learners; who are now driving the campaigns in their respective schools have been capacitated in different topics such as: how to conduct a campaign, facts about GBV, positive masculinity and Alternative to Violence. These trainings are conducted by the local NGOs, who also serve as their mentors. GBV prevention needs a whole society approach, therefore, the intervention has specific activities targeted at educators, parents and the police. In 2019 alone, the project has reached over 670 beneficiaries in schools, NGOs and the community through 18 peer learners (Ambassadors). First observations from the educators in the pilot schools indicates that female learners are beginning to show an improvement in being more assertive and learning to **say no** to any form behavior that can be characterized as being abusive and offensive.

Furthermore, in the Eastern Cape, PfP replicated the ‘Strong Together: Stopping violence in its tracks’ methodology which was implemented by the GIZ regional programme ComVoMujer - Combating Violence against Women in Latin America. This is a GBV prevention intervention which utilises various techniques to engage learners (between the ages of 6 and 9 in creative, playful and experience-oriented activities which promote gender-sensitive aspects for both boys and girls.

In Gauteng, the flagship intervention is based on a narrative approach, implemented in cooperation with the national organization FAMSA (Families South Africa) and other partners from civil society and government. The narrative approach addresses attitudes and deconstructs power by challenging stereotypes and taken-for-granted beliefs. Social norms which may be harmful, especially in a GBV context, are questioned. The narrative approach is implemented in the form of the “Tree of Life” that has been developed in Southern Africa and is used for identity building as well as community-building in more than 30 countries worldwide. **The Tree of Life approach** has been further developed to explicitly include gender identity which is crucial for addressing gender-related stereotypes that contribute to gender-based violence. The **“Tree of Life”** aims to strengthen identities of learners and supports them within their



Example: Tree of Life drawing of a grade 8 learner at a school in the Mamelodi township in Pretoria, Gauteng

peer group. The interventions consist of initial full-day workshops with selected learner participants, followed by a series of follow-up sessions. The approach has been piloted in three schools in the province and broader roll-out is currently underway through a multi stakeholder partnership.

2. Gender as a quality feature of our work

The Eastern Cape province displayed the second highest discrimination rate with 70%. The types of discrimination in schools in Eastern Cape included the following:



verbal insults directed at the learner (65%); threatened with physical violence (52%); objects thrown at learner (36%); personal property or possessions damaged or destroyed (23%), punched, hit, kicked or beaten (28%); as well as sexually abused or raped 12%.¹ Core reasons for the existing discrimination are the heteronormative and conservative culture in South Africa as well as the lack of information on LGBTI issues. A special component of the Port Elizabeth school flagship is therefore dedicated to the reduction of discrimination of LGBTIQ+ learners in schools. In addition, LGBTI organizations are mainstreaming in all activities of the LGBTI aspect of GBV. Acknowledgement has been particularly given by the Provincial and District Department of Education, which has been identified as champions of the flagship project. Advocacy both at local and national

level brings the learnings of the project to a broader public and supports to improve the cooperation between government and civil society actors as well as alignments to the national policies and strategies.

The narrative approach in the Gauteng province focuses on peoples' identities and takes the multiplicities of peoples' identities as a starting point. Narrative work provides methodologies to "re-author" peoples' lives and therefore provides an antidote towards any form of discrimination. Partners from NGOs and government departments, including the National Department of Basic Education and Provincial Department of Education as well as Provincial Department of Social Development have shown a keen interest in being trained in the approach.

3. Gender and result-based monitoring

Two important partners, namely, the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) on local level in Port Elizabeth as well as a specifically contracted GIZ PfP Research Consortium, ensured that the flagship project was closely monitored in 2019. The PfP Research Consortium works towards ensuring that a sustainable implementation is guaranteed and that the findings and lessons learnt will be documented and shared among practitioners in Southern Africa (research uptake).

4. Cooperation

"Power in collaboration": the heart of the project is the formation of a multi-stakeholder platform for GBV Prevention in Schools flagship project. Local stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) jointly



¹ Available at: www.lovenothate.org.za/2016/11/29/majority-of-lgbt-south-africans-live-in-fear-of-discrimination/.

implement the flagship interventions by creating a platform, which activates the conditions for change in the mindset/attitude of young persons and the community.

In the Eastern Cape, much work in (school) safety has been conducted especially in Port Elizabeth. PfP had built on the experience of already existing platforms:

- NMB Safer Schools NGO Forum which consists of a variety of expertise in violence prevention.
- OASIS, community of practice - Organising after school and in school activities through the Nelson Mandela University (NMU)

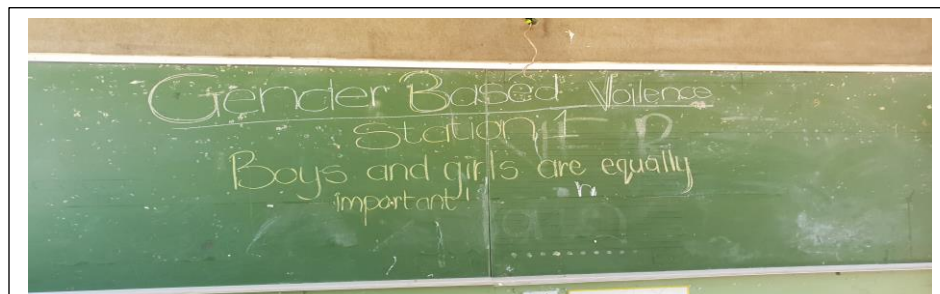
The multi-stakeholder process has started with the creation of the “core container” with local practitioners of NGOs (REVIVE, Masifunde, DOXA, AVP EC) which are all members of the NMB Safer Schools NGO Forum), the District Department of Education (DoE), Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Transformation Unit of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) have jointly designed the flagship project. It must be noted that the composition of the core group is flexible, according to who is needed at each stage of the programme. In a second phase, meetings with a “bigger stakeholder container” are planned, to get the necessary buy-in of important stakeholders, which could guarantee a sustainable implementation of the project also in future. The “bigger stakeholder container” helps the partners of the “core container” to implement the projects. For example, it helps to further shape the project and gives advice for the future implementation, making contacts for upscaling etc.

In the Gauteng province, GIZ closely cooperated with FAMSA, in the development of the approach and the piloting of interventions. In parallel, a multi-stakeholder platform was established to create a forum for exchange and to launch coordinated activities of a broad range of partners from government and civil society. The multi-stakeholder partners include the Department of Basic Education, Provincial Department of Education, Provincial Department of Social Development, Provincial Department of Community Safety, AGAPE Youth Movement, Sonke Gender Justice as well as People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA). The narrative approach was identified by the partners as a promising joint starting point. The platform and the narrative will assist in bringing relevant actors together and aligning activities in a coordinated joint effort. This helps to address the highly fragmented structure of actors in GBV prevention in South Africa that continues to pose a critical challenge to GBV prevention work in the country.

Our Key Success factors:

Whole community approach: Before even starting in schools with the capacitation of peer learners, it was important to get the buy-in from the community and the parents. Special capacitation was also directed to the teachers. With the buy-in of the community, it was possible that the learner activities were accepted by all other players.

Peer education: One big success factor was to allow the learners choose their own leaders, who will



'Boys and girls are equally important!'. Statement written on a chalkboard in a school in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape

implement the project. This has guaranteed to capacitate those learners, who have the most acceptance from their peers and therefore can easily spread the message in the school.

Multi stakeholder approach: The continuous exchange amongst various stakeholders

from government and civil society enables a concerted effort and synergies and ensures a coherent and consistent approach.