

# ZIM MEN CONNECT

## BACKGROUND

Zimbabwe has made significant progress in gender equality, but negative cultural attitudes and practices mean that Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is still a critical issue. GBV, including child marriage has increased in the past two years because of the pandemic and associated lock-downs as well as regressive norms and values that condone violence and have little respect for gender equality.

The 2020 SAFE report on Violence Against Women and Girls during the pandemic in Zimbabwe showed that there was a 38.5% overall increase in reports of violence since the beginning of the lockdown. Cases of physical violence increased by 43%, and cases of emotional abuse by 80%. The most common types of abuse highlighted in the SAFE Report are Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and child marriages, largely driven by economic insecurity and negative social norms.

There is growing concern about cases that are not reported through formal reporting channels, and the potential that many might be suffering in silence. It is culturally taboo in Zimbabwe for men to report abuse, and consequently, sufficient support has not always been available to support male survivors of GBV. Zim Men Connect seeks to rectify this situation by providing a safe space for men experiencing GBV to access support through their smartphone application

The initiative aims to empower men experiencing GBV, providing resources, support, and a safe space for men to seek help and assistance. Amidst the challenges posed by negative cultural attitudes and the impact of the pandemic, the concerted effort of civil society, government and individuals is hoped to foster a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone can live free from violence and discrimination based on their gender. Raising awareness, changing attitudes, and promoting gender equality at all levels of society remain crucial in building a safer and more just Zimbabwe, for all its citizens.



## State of innovation



Ideation and piloting ✓



Validation



Scaling

## WHAT IS THE INNOVATION ABOUT?

The innovation involves the development of a smartphone application to provide information on GBV. The application will be both informative and interactive for men experiencing GBV and abuse, allowing access to services and referral pathways for assistance. The development of the application will bring the Mastercard Foundation and different stakeholders in the gender and protection sector in Zimbabwe, ensuring the application reflects the needs of our target population and the resources and referral pathways are endorsed by all stakeholders. The concept is still at the ideation stage and a key objective is to host a national consultation which will help to define the problem and fine tune the objectives for the application.



Credits: GOAL Zimbabwe

## POTENTIAL TO SCALE

The application has potential for scale within Zimbabwe and in other countries. Once the information on available services and referral pathways is developed, the application can be promoted by any of GOAL's projects and/or by other organisations. The involvement Cluster at the ideation stage will ensure that any programmes run by these organisations will use the same application for awareness raising. Further, IEC materials developed in-country by GOAL projects will link to the application, so that other partners showing an interest in using the application can follow the same path. The application also complements Government efforts to reduce GBV amidst an increase in GBV against men and boys and associated requests for health services.

After the launch, the application will be handed over to Government, as part of the national drive to scale GBV prevention and response. GOAL formed a technical working group that comprises male engagement related organizations who have been playing a key role in the Zim Men Connect initiative. The partners will continue supporting the cause as they seek to increase the number of men and boys who access their services. After the pilot phase, there is scope to develop the application into an interactive platform where users can interact with the different actors offering required services.

It is anticipated that the application will be pioneered by GOAL Zimbabwe but replicated in other GOAL countries where possible. Integrating a health component in the innovation will be a launch platform for GOAL Zimbabwe to amplify health programming for adolescents.



Credits: GOAL Zimbabwe



The intervention is set to be implemented in 10 provinces in Zimbabwe but will be piloted in **Harare, Manicaland and Matabeleland provinces.**

## NEXT STEPS

The further development of the application will involve several initiatives to promote and market it. One such effort is a series of radio shows. In addition, a national workshop will be organized in collaboration with the GBV Subcluster and Protection Cluster to officially launch the application.

Regarding health-related aspects, rapid formative research will be conducted to gather information on health, focused on building upon the existing GBV research. This new research will specifically explore the obstacles that adolescents, particularly adolescent males, encounter in accessing reproductive health and GBV services. To facilitate effective communication with adolescents, various activities will be employed, such as intergenerational dialogues and peer-to-peer education through dialogue sessions.

Advocacy activities will centre around promoting access to youth-friendly and confidential services, spearheaded by peer educators. The inclusion of health components is expected to enhance knowledge on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), increase adolescents' utilization of services, and ultimately contribute to the overall well-being of young individuals.

## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

If you are interested in supporting our innovation with financial contributions or providing technical guidance, please feel free to contact:

Email  
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Contact  
Nomthandazo Jones

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Zimbabwe





### Innovating to Overcome Humanitarian Crisis

The GOAL Programme Innovation Lab is a dynamic and collaborative unit established by GOAL to foster innovation within GOAL's programmes and to promote this work both internally and externally with the wider development and humanitarian community.

To get involved or find ways to support our innovations, please visit [goalglobal.org/innovation](https://goalglobal.org/innovation) and/or contact: [innovationlab@goal.ie](mailto:innovationlab@goal.ie)



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The GOAL Humanitarian Innovation Fund is designed as a dynamic collaborative process through which strategic partners can engage and provide support to foster innovations which have the potential to enable marginalised populations to overcome humanitarian crisis.

The Innovation Fund is a vehicle for strategic partners who are passionate about how innovation can be applied to overcome humanitarian crisis to support efforts to move communities from Crisis to Resilience. Partners from across the full spectrum of society are invited to engage, including from the those from the private sector, philanthropy, civil society, academic institutions and government bodies.

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