

Implementation of the Socioecological Model: A Flexible Response to Prevent and Address the Needs of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Survivors during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background & Intervention / Activity

- COVID-19 mitigation measures **increased the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** around the world. Similarly, the number of confirmed rape cases and instances of domestic violence since COVID-19 in Ethiopia has increased by 25% to 30%.
- Our Rights-Based Approach for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights project sought to **protect and support SGBV survivors during the pandemic** in 121 districts and the Addis Ababa city administration.
- We implemented and **assessed the effectiveness of several project activities** that aligned with the socioecological approach, working across the individual, community, systems, and policy levels.



Methodology

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- Mobilized and trained an **SGBV prevention committee** comprising community stakeholders and legal/law enforcement and health sector representatives
- **Piloted a community-based capture and referral system** to support survivors
- Developed a **helpline for SGBV survivors**
- **Trained journalists and media experts** to disseminate SGBV-related information, emphasizing the importance of using sensitive language and protecting the identities and dignities of survivors
- **Tracked key data** to measure progress and inform project planning
- Worked with the government to **capture data and promote data use** to ensure effectiveness and foster sustainability



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Results / Key Findings

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- We trained **445 SGBV committee members**, 36% of whom were female.
- The SGBV community-based prevention committee played a significant role in **identifying and referring 788 survivors of SGBV** aged 0 to 25, 92% of whom were female.
- Between July 2020 and December 2021, the **helpline responded to calls from 298 SGBV survivors**, all of whom were female.
- Our **radio programming reached an estimated 2.5 million** in Addis Ababa.

“*The unusual number of reported SGBV cases were very few in sub-cities like Kolfe and Nifas Silk. But after the committees started operating, cases that were kept hidden in the community were brought forward and the SGBV incidence rate was found to be higher in these areas.*”

Ato Tsehaye Berhanu, Director for Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion at the Bureau of Addis Ababa Women, Children, and Social Affairs



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Program Implications / Lessons

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- **Multiple interventions** at individual, community, institutional, and legal and policy levels **are key** to addressing the needs of SGBV survivors.
- **Community-based interventions are critical** to increasing awareness, identifying cases and supporting service uptake, and fostering community engagement and accountability.
- **The media plays a critical role** in disseminating key information.
- **Partner coordination, system-strengthening support, and routine monitoring are key** to ensuring prioritization of SGBV prevention and response efforts.



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