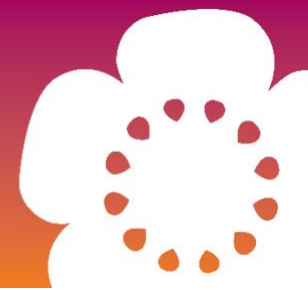


Ensemble

A Regional Initiative to Support the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence in West and Central Africa



“A single actor on their own cannot end sexual and gender-based violence, no matter the resources.”

Abiba Ouattara, UNFPA

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most widespread human rights violations globally and is a major public health concern. Born out of EngenderHealth’s ICPD+25 and Generation Equality Commitments, *Ensemble* is a bold, multiyear GBV prevention and response initiative in West and Central Africa. Ensemble, which means “together” in French, recognizes that forging partnerships and supporting local actions are key to preventing, responding to, and ultimately eliminating GBV. Ensemble brings together partners committed to addressing GBV so that we can learn from each other, improve coordination, and strengthen relationships to accelerate action in the region.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread forms of GBV and negatively impacts women’s and girls’ physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health. Its persistence presents a major obstacle to achieving gender equality, United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, and other human rights treaties and obligations (such as the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women General Recommendation No. 35). Intersections with age, economic status, and other social characteristics are pronounced. Data from Francophone West Africa shows the prevalence of GBV across the region (see Table 1).

Ensemble aims to promote multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, survivor-centered GBV prevention and response. Eliminating GBV requires long-term and strategic approaches, and we envisage facilitating a long-standing initiative through this initial effort. EngenderHealth secured seed funding for the first phase of Ensemble and will collaborate with partners to mobilize additional resources to support the initiative more broadly. Ensemble aligns with and complements national and regional GBV strategies for greater and more sustained impact. By working with civil society organizations (including those led by survivors and by youth), local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), national and local governments, UN agencies, bilateral development partners, and other donors, our impact will be greater than the sum of our individual efforts.

Table 1: Prevalence of GBV by an Intimate Partner in Select Countries*

Country	Lifetime	Last Year
Benin	26%	15%
Burkina Faso	19%	11%
Côte d’Ivoire	27%	16%
Guinea	37%	21%
Mali	29%	18%

* Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018: global, regional, and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. Geneva: World Health Organization. 2021. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

“We are sharing an invitation—an invitation for us to join together, because together we can be more than the sum of our parts. By joining together, we can amplify our successes, learn from each other, and increase our combined impact.”

Traci L. Baird, EngenderHealth



Ensemble's Aims and Strategies

Ensemble is an ambitious initiative, co-designed with collaborators to encompass geographic and thematic objectives. Ultimately, all initiative participants are working toward eliminating GBV and responding to the needs of survivors. Ensemble aims to work across three intersecting pillars: (1) survivor-centered agency and support, (2) prevention, and (3) systems-level responses for scale, impact, data, and sustainability. In addition to national governments and local organizations, Ensemble is collaborating with the Call to Action for Protection from GBV in Emergencies, the Economic Community of West African States, the Ouagadougou Partnership, the Spotlight Initiative, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) regional and country offices, the UNFPA-United Nations Children's Fund Partnerships to End Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage, and other regional and country initiatives to coordinate GBV interventions for multi-sectoral response and community engagement.

Through these partnerships, Ensemble aims to:

- Enhance survivor empowerment through programs and activities that are unequivocal in supporting survivor agency and inclusion, ensuring survivor dignity and non-stigmatization, and supporting survivor access to high-quality, multi-sectoral services.
- Build and advance positive social norms and gender equality so that everyone can live free from violence.
- Increase access to comprehensive, confidential, nondiscriminatory, respectful, and safe support for survivors and their families through multi-sectoral collaboration at national and subnational levels.
- Identify and foster regional collaboration to promote cross-country interventions, approaches, and sharing of data and lessons learned.

Ensemble in Action

EngenderHealth launched Ensemble in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on May 16, 2022, with an event that brought together representatives from more than 25 local, national, and international institutions, including several embassies (including Canada, France, and Great Britain); international NGOs; local civil society organizations; the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children of Côte d'Ivoire; and UNFPA. More information on the launch is available in [English](#) and [French](#). Following the Côte d'Ivoire debut, Ensemble officially launched in Burkina Faso on December 1, 2022.

Stakeholder Consultations

Ensemble began discussing and co-developing a regional strategy and regional and national interventions through multi-stakeholder consultations. Ensemble facilitated national consultations with key stakeholders in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea (see Table 2). Ensemble also identified at least 10 local feminist organizations in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Mali committed to supporting the initiative. Through ongoing planning processes and landscaping discussions, we are actively working to define roles and responsibilities with these organizations through memoranda of understanding.

Table 2: Stakeholder Consultations to Date

Benin	Burkina Faso	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvif-Centre d'Aide et de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes* Famille Nutrition et Développement* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association d'Appui et d'Eveil Pugsada Embassies of Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, and Sweden Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme* Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene Ministry of Solidarity, Humanitarian Action, National Reconciliation, Gender, and Family UNFPA GBV Area of Responsibility World Health Organization Health Cluster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Akwaba Mouso Association of Women Lawyers GBV Platform in Cocody-Bingerville, under the leadership of the Ministry of Family, Women, and Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition Nationale de Guinée pour les Droits et la Citoyenneté des Femmes* Les Mêmes Droits pour Tous*

* NGOs that have agreed to collaborate with Ensemble.



Consultation with the Ambassador of the Netherlands in Burkina Faso, November 24, 2022



Consultation with the Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme in Burkina Faso, November 24, 2022

Regional and National Participation

Ensemble is actively engaging in national and regional dialogues on GBV. For instance, we presented Ensemble at the Women Empowerment Leadership Agora, the first international exhibition on women's leadership and empowerment in Côte d'Ivoire, in September 2022. Other key events that Ensemble participated in 2022 include a workshop on the Generation Equity Accountability Moment in September, a national workshop on teenage school pregnancy in Côte d'Ivoire in September, a regional dialogue on the right to safe abortion in Abidjan where Ensemble co-facilitated a panel in October, as well as various regional and national activities convened in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire as part of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign in November and December.

Next Steps

In 2023, Ensemble will prioritize survivor-centered multi-stakeholder consultations with local organizations and groups representing GBV survivors to understand their perspectives on GBV prevention and response. The multi-stakeholder consultations will include representation from other key actors, such as NGOs working on GBV prevention and response, relevant national government

ministries and departments, related regional government bodies, and UNFPA. Building upon learning from these consultations, Ensemble will convene workshops with feminist organizations and groups representing survivors to co-create and co-design GBV prevention and response initiatives and co-develop a 10-year joint roadmap for GBV elimination with yearly milestones. The co-creation workshops will ensure we define GBV response services from a survivor-centric lens and identify key focus areas for GBV response and referral mechanisms. We will convene these survivor-centered multi-stakeholder consultation workshops at regional, national, and subnational levels in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire first; we plan to expand these efforts in Guinea and Mali, pending funding and partner capacity.

The GBV elimination roadmaps and GBV response services will also inform the development of joint proposals that Ensemble partners will co-develop to mobilize additional resources. Together with our partners, and with additional support from generous institutional funders, Ensemble will generate the momentum and co-create the response necessary to eliminate GBV in West and Central Africa.



A feminist forum in Benin, convened as part of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV on November 26 under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance and with the support and participation of the Dutch Embassy.

Acknowledgments and Citation

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