

# HEALTH POLICY PROJECT



Photo by: Guillaume and Pauline

## Gender-Based Violence

### Overview

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a challenge of epidemic proportions. It is one of the most pervasive and widespread human rights violations in the world and has grave consequences for health and development.

Stemming from persistent gender inequalities, GBV manifests itself in various forms of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial abuse and discrimination, including intimate partner violence, sexual abuse, intimidation and threats of violence, human trafficking, and harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and female genital cutting. While GBV predominantly affects women and girls, it also affects boys, men, and sexual minorities.

The harm caused by GBV extends far beyond the physical injuries inflicted. GBV is linked to a wide range of long-term physical and mental health problems. It helps fuel the spread of HIV, and women who have experienced violence are up to three times more likely to be infected with HIV than those who have not. GBV also reduces access to family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) services and increases risk of unintended pregnancy.

High rates of GBV during pregnancy endanger the health of both mother and child and contribute to maternal and child mortality. GBV also undermines progress toward broader development goals, reducing women's ability to take an active role in social and economic development and inflicting costs in the form of higher health expenditures and lost educational achievement and productivity.

### What We Do

The Health Policy Project (HPP) works with a broad range of stakeholders to address the linkages between GBV, HIV, maternal health, and FP/RH. Our partners include male and female advocates, civil society organizations, policymakers, and community and religious leaders. We

- Raise awareness of the connection between GBV and other key health priorities
- Encourage civil society engagement on GBV issues

- Strengthen key capacities, such as social participation, coalition building, advocacy, and policy monitoring to enhance government and civil society responses to GBV
- Promote the adoption of supportive policies to address GBV
- Facilitate the integration of GBV strategies into government and civil society programs and plans
- Work to reduce the occurrence of GBV in facility-based maternal care
- Strengthen capacity to integrate GBV strategies into HIV policies and programs

HPP works to strengthen the capacity of key host-country stakeholders, including civil society organizations and local and national government bodies, to incorporate GBV and gender strategies into their HIV programs. These efforts include raising stakeholders' awareness of linkages between GBV and HIV, integrating GBV and gender into HIV prevention and orphans and vulnerable children programs, mapping community services to strengthen GBV referral networks, and addressing the unique GBV vulnerabilities of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

## How to Work with Us

For over 40 years, Futures Group has managed large and complex international health and development projects for a range of major development players, achieving significant results on the ground in more than 100 countries. Host-country partners with interest in receiving project assistance should contact their USAID Mission. All Missions may participate through field support. For information on how to work with the Health Policy Project please contact:

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## GBV Prevention in Jamaica

Through work with civil society organizations, such as Woman Inc., HPP Jamaica has tested innovative approaches to promoting integrated HIV and GBV services.

Woman Inc. adapted a GBV screening tool and referral process within the context of an HIV service delivery setting, to increase access to both HIV and GBV services. Healthcare providers reported that the integrated approach to client intake improved providers' confidence in discussing both issues with their clients, especially key populations. The healthcare providers and the referral agencies involved in the effort were better equipped to work together for more gender-sensitive and cohesive HIV and GBV services that responded to clients' needs. This innovation has the potential to improve service quality and access for marginalized populations.

## Contact Us

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