

Violence Prevention for Peaceful & Inclusive Communities

Strengthening structural conditions for evidence-informed, gender-responsive early violence prevention interventions

Project name	Violence Prevention for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities (VPPIC)
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Political Partner	Department of Basic Education
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At the same time, the implementation and effectiveness of strategies to early violence prevention have fallen short of public expectations and the range of quality support services and structures are inadequate. According to the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Census in 2021, 165,000 educators are employed in more than 42,000 state centres for ECD. Alarming, more than 50% have either no training or inappropriate training and only 45% of children participating in early learning programmes are developmentally on track.

The Challenge

Research has shown that children frequently exposed to violence, especially in the early years of life, are more likely to become perpetrators or victims of violence in adulthood. Simultaneously, parents and caregivers affected by interpersonal violence are less able to provide their children with a socially, emotionally and physically secure environment. Moreover, patriarchal gender norms and roles are primary contributors to gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa. The prevalence of GBV underscores the acceptance of violence as a means of conflict resolution among significant segments of the population. Addressing this deeply ingrained acceptance of violence and gender inequality, and specifically instilling positive gender norms and a healthy conception of masculinity, are crucial components of children's development.

By implementing gender-responsive interventions within childcare environments, the risk of children becoming survivors/victims or perpetrators of gender-based violence both in their childhood and later in life can be mitigated. These approaches can bolster awareness of equitable gender norms, thus fostering a safer and more inclusive society for future generations.

Our Approach

The VPPIC project focuses on early violence prevention, addressing intergenerational cycles of violence within caregiving environments for children, early childhood development centres and school settings. It also examines the intersections between violence against women and children. The project targets children aged 0-12 and their caregivers, including parents, relatives, educators, community workers and their structures such as schools, ECD or extracurricular programmes.

Adopting a life cycle approach to violence prevention is essential for early intervention and achieving long-term impact. The project's objective of gender-responsive early childhood violence prevention will be primarily achieved through the implementation of three focal areas:



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Outlook

Effective prevention of GBV necessitates the involvement of government, local NGOs, development partners, and research institutions. The National Strategic Plan for Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSPGBV) and the Integrated Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS) call for a whole-of society approach.

However, conditions for evidence-informed knowledge sharing and collaboration among these stakeholders and localised implementation remain inadequate. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships the VPPIC project aims to strengthen the implementation of evidence-informed, collaborative, and gender-responsive strategies in communities active in early violence prevention in South Africa.

VPPIC will adopt an intersectional and gender-responsive approach, addressing historic and current inequalities in South Africa. It will actively challenge patriarchal systems to reduce gender-based violence and work to mitigate intergenerational violence patterns through intervening in families and the broader environment of children holistically. The project will also apply core principles of non-violent conflict resolution emphasising trauma sensitive interventions. In alignment with the national policy frameworks, it also seeks to enhance collaboration, evidence-based practices, and learning exchange aligning with national policy frameworks such as the NSP GBVF and ICVPS and apply feminist development principles while encouraging a life cycle approach.



1 Localised implementation, aimed at the development of evidence-informed and integrated models to enhance early prevention across a range of care services in a comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable manner at the local level of municipalities or neighbourhoods. These examples and models can offer practical, tangible inspiration for expanding early prevention efforts and strengthen children’s self-efficacy and resilience.

2 Improved multistakeholder coordination between different ministries and civil society networks for gender-responsive early violence prevention, considering learnings from Output 1. This will lead to enhanced use of synergies, potential funding and targeted lobbying and coordination of relevant stakeholders.

3 Strengthened institutional capacities of state and civil society actors responsible for early violence prevention. This will improve the capacity for planning, implementing and monitoring approaches for early prevention services, ensuring more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Through these outputs, and in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and other relevant state and non-state actors in the field, VPPIC aims to support sustainable and comprehensive early violence prevention approaches. These efforts are intended to create safer and more inclusive communities and contribute to mitigating GBV in South Africa.

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