

# Establishment of One-Stop Centres to counteract violence against women



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



## Fast Facts

**Country:** South Africa

**Duration:** May 2008 to August 2012

**Implementing UN Agencies:** UNODC; OHCHR

**Other Implementing Partners:** UNIFEM; UNAIDS; UNV; Department of Health and Social Development; national justice and security sectors; local courts; community health centres; local NGOs

**Budget:** \$1,499,850

**Key Words:** Prevention of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV); women

## BACKGROUND

Gender based violence remains a serious threat to human security. In 2008, South Africa's rate of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) was one of the highest in the world, with more than 50,000 cases of rape reported annually. In urban low-income neighbourhoods where unemployment was rampant, many poor rural women would arrive in the hope of

finding employment only to end up without a job, impoverished and vulnerable to crime, drugs and prostitution. The sheer magnitude of the problem together with the lack of preventative measures and its linkage to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other health and social concerns, made violence against women a critical human security issue in the country.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project was designed to offer multidisciplinary services to both the victims and the offenders of SGBV in the communities of Vryburg in the North West province and Sunnyside in the Gauteng province. To this end, the project (i) established One-Stop Centres to provide concrete, sustainable and effective services to victims of SGBV; (ii) conducted

awareness raising and educational campaigns on SGBV; (iii) implemented perpetrator therapeutic programmes for offenders of domestic violence that aimed to reduce the incidences of domestic violence; and (iv) strengthened the understanding of the needs of victims through research, training and public events.

### BENEFICIARIES

The One-Stop centres targeted women and children who were victims of rape or abuse, as well as perpetrators who were supported through the centres' perpetrator programmes. In addition, health-care

workers, service providers and other stakeholders benefitted from medical skills training and institutional capacity-building activities.



## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

(i) The project's main achievement was the establishment of One-Stop centres where victims of violence or abuse were provided with legal aid, shelter, health care, referral assistance and post-traumatic counselling. This comprehensive model enabled stakeholders to address the multiple needs of vulnerable women by bringing together experts and specialists from different sectors into one centre. Moreover, through the 'perpetrator programmes', the centres offered counselling and rehabilitation services to the offenders. In this way, the project was able to not only increase the security of women but also to change the behaviour of the perpetrators and thus reduce the incidences of violence against women.

(ii) Simultaneously, the project bolstered the empowerment of the victims by producing awareness raising campaigns and supporting women's economic opportunities. Through the use of campaigns at schools, hospitals and other public spaces, people

became aware of the scope of domestic violence and grew more determined to confront its damaging impact on their communities. Meanwhile, victims of rape or abuse were encouraged to rebuild their lives through vocational skills training and access to financing mechanisms.

(iii) To better coordinate the activities of the different stakeholders and partners in the development of the project, the project established steering committees at the national and provincial levels. This ensured multi-partnership implementation and input, as well as a systematic overview of the operations of the One-Stop centres. Furthermore, the steering committees helped build networks among various organizations and government departments. This ensured greater effectiveness of the project's activities, streamlined the use of resources and enhanced the sustainability and the spread of the project's achievements into other locations.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The project highlighted the added value of the protection and empowerment framework in fighting violence against women. While top-down protection measures aimed at shielding women from violence through the establishment of One-Stop centres, bottom-up empowerment activities focused on building local capacities through awareness raising and increasing women's economic opportunities. Together, these interventions provided for effective and integrated responses to SGBV, as well as strong ownership by the affected communities. In particular, the project demonstrated the added value of targeting both victims and offenders by providing counselling

and rehabilitation to perpetrators and their families. This family- and people-focused approach provided for long-term responses to violence against women and produced a more harmonious environment for families and communities to flourish. Lastly, the joint collaboration between UN agencies, the Government and the communities forged partnerships between different actors and provided for efficient management of the One-Stop centres. In this regard, establishing steering committees proved particularly valuable in optimizing existing resources and ensuring synergies between the activities of the different partners, both during the project and into the future.