

# Strategy Summary | Reducing Gender-Based Violence by 2030

## Our mandate and mission |

Gender-based violence (GBV) violates the human rights and dignity of individuals, communities and whole societies. It poses significant social, economic and public health challenges and contradicts The Episcopal Church’s baptismal covenant “to love one another and seek and serve Christ in all persons.” Episcopal Relief & Development considers gender equity and social inclusion integral to all programs, including in reducing GBV.

## What is Gender-Based Violence?

GBV is any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially constructed norms around masculinity and femininity (Source: US Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence)

## Global context |

GBV is pervasive globally. Although individuals of all gender identities may experience GBV, **women, girls and gender non-conforming individuals face a disproportionate risk**. Globally, 1 in 3 women experiences physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by any perpetrator. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual + other people whose identities are not heterosexual and cisgender (LGBTQIA+) people are four times more likely to experience violent victimization compared to non-LGBTQIA+ people.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, an increase in climate-related disasters, conflict and human displacement is driving further GBV.<sup>2</sup> Gender-based violence is a key barrier to achieving gender equality, women’s empowerment and even food security. Investing in gender transformative approaches and eliminating GBV is vital to human thriving.

## Objective of the strategy |

Our strategy to reduce GBV<sup>3</sup> fosters attitudes, beliefs and norms that **advance gender equity and social inclusion**, and prevents and condemns GBV. By 2030, Episcopal Relief & Development will strengthen the linkages between community, faith and state actors, equipping 100,000 change agents to effectively speak out against, prevent and respond to GBV. **Half a million women, girls and other at-risk groups will experience decreased intimate-partner and non-partner violence (i.e., non-partner sexual violence) as a result.**

## Our approach to reducing GBV |

Our approach draws from 80 years of experience and expertise in engaging faith leaders and faith actors in advancing social inclusion and economic development. We recognize social inclusion that ultimately reduces GBV and fosters empowerment requires engagement with multiple areas of society, including faith systems (regardless of the faith itself).<sup>4</sup> We promote gender analysis, an intersectional lens and feminist inquiry. We foster learning platforms for collaboration, peer engagement, dialogue and learning. We apply trauma-informed practices and center the voiced priorities and agency of survivors of violence. Our approaches are based both in the sector’s wider evidence and rooted in our own design and implementation experiences.<sup>5</sup>

DESIGN	Rigorously planned, with robust theory of change, rooted in knowledge of local context, including role of faith traditions as stewards of certain norms and catalysts for specific changes.	Address multiple drivers of GBV, such as gender inequity, poverty and access to services	Especially in highly patriarchal contexts, work with multiple actors, women, men, faith and community leaders, and state actors.	Center theories of change within gender and social empowerment processes, engage behavior change as a collective rather than individual process, while fostering positive interpersonal relations
	Use group-based participatory learning methods for adults and youth that emphasize empowerment, critical reflection, trauma-informed communication and conflict resolution skills building	Develop age-appropriate activities with faith, community leaders and youth that are <b>co-designed</b> . Foster inter-generational dialogue where possible.	Produce carefully designed, user-friendly resources based in behavior science to support intervention components	Integrate support for survivors of violence, including livelihood support
IMPLEMENTATION	Optimal intensity: duration and frequency of sessions and overall program length should enable time for faith engagement and include space for reflection and experiential learning		Staff and volunteers are proactively supported and supervised through all the activities to promote gender equity, non-violence and safeguarding	

(Table adapted from What Works: Ten Elements of the Design and Implementation of More Successful What Works Interventions to Prevent VAWG)

<sup>1</sup> 2017 National Crime Victimization Survey, UCLA School of Law

<sup>2</sup> Gender Based Violence and its intersection with Climate Change, Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence

<sup>3</sup> Types of Gender Based Violence include but are not limited to violence against women, girls, children, vulnerable populations (VAWG/C/V) in various forms: child marriage and forced marriage; human trafficking, intimate partner violence, reproductive coercion, and other forms of violence. See USAID, US Department of State.

<sup>4</sup> UN Women and Social Development Direct (2020) Transformed Attitudes, Beliefs and Norms, RESPECT: Preventing Violence against Women Strategy Summary; and *On the Significant of Religion in Violence Against Women and Girls* citation of Te Harr’s “religion” as ideas and beliefs, practice, organizations, and experiences.

<sup>5</sup> A Comprehensive Endline Evaluation for the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Program “Scaling Up Faith Leaders’ Engagement to Prevent and Respond to VAWG”

## Ways of working |

We understand how religion and culture steward social norms and can drive norm change in both positive and negative ways. Our theory of change ensures we work together with the **local** faith and community leaders as potential and positive change agents from the very outset of an initiative. We co-design together. We accompany faith, community and youth leaders to mine their context and traditions, to understand and challenge barriers, and to promote norms of gender equity and social inclusion. We use behavior change science to support these leaders to reflect on themselves, their faith and belief systems, to engage any cognitive dissonance they see with reality, and to make choices to speak out and improve support services for survivors. We invest in improved access to services, and improved economic and financial inclusion for specific populations.



**Episcopal Relief & Development invests in expertise-inspired programs as a priority**, co-creating long-term highly scalable initiatives based on differentiated capabilities. Our core program pillars for reducing GBV are usually applied together in a common geography or population and are mutually reinforcing. These pillars are:



**Finally, our programs invest in linkage, building bridges between community leaders as change agents and state actors** (e.g., police, legal, medical) as appropriate. Programs accompany caregivers and survivors to increase access to services, such as safe houses, legal and health services, counseling and mediation, and case management. And we equip local committees with resources to sustain activities, and build/strengthen referral systems longer term.

## Theory in Practice | Reducing VAWG in Liberia

From 2015–2022, Episcopal Relief & Development and its partner Episcopal Church of Liberia Relief & Development implemented the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls program in Liberia (Rivercess, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh and Bong counties) and reached more than 60,000 women and girls and over 14,000 men and boys. The program mobilized and equipped nearly 1,200 faith (Christian & Muslim) and community leaders, including youth, with the skills and tools to effectively engage their communities using social and behavior change communication strategies to reduce VAWG. [An external quasi-experimental, mixed-methods study](#) was conducted of the program in 2022 and found that the program led to a range of positive impacts, with improvements in participants' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors:

- **Decreased intimate partner violence (IPV)** experience by women from 41% to 33% on average across the four counties
- **Decreased men's IPV perpetration** in 3 of the 4 counties; decreased adolescent boys' perpetration across all counties
- **Improved anti-VAWG and gender-equitable attitudes** for all congregant groups (i.e., men, women, adolescent boys and girls). For instance, the percentage of boys rejecting rape myths increased from 47% at baseline to 75% at endline.
- **Increased knowledge of available VAWG survivor services:** women who reported knowing about VAWG services increased from 48% to 86% and the percentage of girls with knowledge of VAWG services nearly doubled, from 41% to 79%.

## Measuring our impact | high level indicators of change by 2030

### All participants in this portfolio of programs should:

- Demonstrate increased gender equitable views and behaviors, reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic and political resources and opportunities
- Demonstrate trauma-informed sensitivity about the causes of GBV and support for lived trauma
- Demonstrate increased income
- Experience reduced intimate partner violence
- Experience reduced non-partner sexual violence, including early or forced marriage

### Faith and community leaders (men, women, youth) should:

- Speak out against harmful gender norms and promote social inclusion
- Speak out against violence
- Act as change agents in reducing violence in their communities and areas of influence

### All participants have increased voice and decision making power

### All participants have increased access to services

## Our tools & resources to combat GBV |

We invest in co-creating tools and resources with our partners, ensuring that anything we create is meaningful, contextualized and appropriate. Tools get shared in gatherings, trainings and supportive supervision sessions with staff and volunteers.



- **GBV Prevention & Response Toolkit** with theological and trauma-informed resources for use with Christians, Muslims, traditional leaders
- **Gender environmental scans, GBV risk assessments & dialogic resources** for adapting and targeting interventions appropriate to context
- **Community committee toolkits** for promoting change within and building linkages to wider social systems
- **Youth & adolescent engagement tools and support** for social marketing campaigns, drama performances, radio programming, etc.
- **FAMA Cards<sup>6</sup>** that facilitate social and behavior change dialogues and can be integrated into all the toolkits and social behavior messaging
- **Targeted social behavior change messaging** rooted in behavior science

## Episcopal Relief & Development

For over 80 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has worked with partners and supporters to fight poverty, hunger, disaster and disease in marginalized communities around the world. Annually, our programs impact nearly three million people. We, by design, play a facilitative role with local partners—convening and connecting them with networks and resources and providing technical assistance and other capacity strengthening supports that enhance their ability to reach and provide services to the most marginalized. Our efforts are guided by an Asset-Based Community Development Approach that affirms the gifts and resources that local institutions and people already possess, fostering long-term solutions. Moreover, our methodologies embrace community-driven strategies that are inclusive, sustainable and empowering, such that they and communities work side-by-side to address their most pressing concerns, and promote and sustain social change.

To learn more about Episcopal Relief & Development, visit our [website](#) or contact [Emily Bloom](#), Vice President, Business Development & Innovation

<sup>6</sup> FAMA (Facts, Association, Meaning, Action) cards are pictorial codes that present different practices and behaviors in context and are used by facilitators to guide participants through a process of self-discovery, moving them from reflection to action.