

Irish Consortium on  
Gender Based Violence

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2017–2020:

Leaving no one behind, tackling gender based  
violence where the needs are greatest



Irish Consortium  
on Gender Based  
Violence



[www.gbv.ie](http://www.gbv.ie)

“Gender based violence is a universal outrage rooted in many factors including poverty, conflict, and climate change, and while some achievements have been made, violence and coercion are increasing at global level, in particular in zones of conflict. The eradication of gender based violence remains a great ethical and global challenge of our age.”

– Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, ICGBV Patron

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“GBV is rooted in deeper societal norms of gender inequality, driven by factors such as traditional and religious norms, conflict, insecurity and poverty.”

## Introduction

### A Worldwide Problem

The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV) is a diverse group of humanitarian and development organisations that have come together to work towards the end of all forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV). GBV is the most pervasive human rights violation in the world. Though undeniable progress has been made in recent decades in advancing the struggle for gender equality, GBV remains a uniquely global scourge, present in all corners of the world. While some of the most devastating forms of GBV are particularly prevalent in humanitarian emergencies and contexts affected by conflict, GBV is rooted in deeper societal norms of gender inequality, driven by factors such as traditional and religious norms, conflict, insecurity and poverty.

### Diverse Perspectives

The ICGBV was established in 2005 in response to horrific sexual violence and abuse that was occurring in Darfur at the time. Bringing together thirteen diverse organisations including humanitarian and development NGOs, academic institutions, Irish Aid and the Irish Defence Forces, the Consortium is a unique entity with a broad spectrum of experience and perspectives. With operations in over forty-six countries, the Consortium has a powerful evidence base for our work to address GBV, maximising the potential for global impact and influence.

### A More Volatile World

Twelve years on from Darfur, significant changes have taken place across the globe. The triple threat of climate change, conflict and deepening inequality is having a huge impact globally, causing the suffering and uprooting of millions of people, with more people displaced now than at any time since the Second World War. Conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises bring with them new and escalated risks of GBV targeted at women and girls and other vulnerable communities.

### GBV is Deeply Rooted in Society

While GBV in humanitarian settings often becomes more prevalent and intense, it is also widespread during ‘peaceful times’, especially at the hands of an intimate partner or family member. This is evidence of how deeply rooted GBV is in broader gender inequality, power imbalances and patriarchal norms within a society. The normalization of GBV, whether in ‘peaceful times’ or during a conflict or emergency, is the context in which the Consortium and its members are operating. A key challenge in seeking to end GBV is addressing the cultures of silence, stigma and shame associated with it, which act as barriers to survivors seeking support and allow GBV to continue with impunity. As the drivers of GBV are so varied and often deeply rooted, effective responses to GBV must be similarly holistic.



## The ICGBV- Aligned to a Global Vision

Though GBV remains prevalent worldwide, the development of policy frameworks and guidelines has accelerated the drive towards eliminating GBV and serves to frame the context in which the Consortium works. All of these developments have consolidated international efforts at combatting GBV, and are complemented by more specific practical guidelines such as the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence (of which Ireland is a partner), and the United Nations Women, Peace and Security Agenda. The Consortium is informed by and aligned to the vision of these frameworks, and is driven by the experience and organisational mission of its individual members.

Today, the issue of GBV has greater presence and visibility in international humanitarian and development programming. In recent years, Ireland has demonstrated its commitment and leadership on efforts to eradicate GBV through diverse global frameworks and fora including its second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, its chairing of the Commission on the Status of Women, and in the promotion of gender equality in Agenda 2030 as co-facilitator of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Now is no time for complacency. GBV continues to remain a problem in every country in the world and in a world beset by dramatically increased levels of conflict and displacement, the need to address GBV with a renewed urgency is greater than ever.**

## A Road Map for Action

Building on Ireland's commitment to continuously prioritise efforts to eradicate GBV and with the support of our new patron, President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, the ICGBV will continue to strive towards the eradication of GBV. Together we will learn, innovate and amplify the voices of those affected by GBV and ensure their needs are reflected in the design of humanitarian and development programmes. The Consortium will effectively engage with relevant organisations, both domestic and internationally focused, to promote shared learning and solidarity in working towards the elimination of GBV.

This strategy represents a road map for the Consortium's work with its member organisations over the lifetime of the plan. It does not seek to reflect all of the work being done by member organisations in addressing GBV, its aim is to identify specific areas of work where collective action will be crucial for progress over the next four years. Framed against a context of greater global need for effective expertise in addressing GBV, but also increased coordination and solidarity amongst Consortium members, this strategy will serve to provide a timely updated vision of how we can contribute to the struggle for a world free of GBV.



# Vision & Mission

## ICGBV Vision:

The vision for the ICGBV is a world free of Gender Based Violence.

**Mission Statement:** The Consortium believes GBV is a key manifestation of gender inequality and a violation of human rights. As a diverse network of Irish-based organisations, we work collectively and with others in striving to eliminate GBV in humanitarian and international development contexts. Through shared learning, capacity building and supporting quality programming, we seek to prevent GBV, to mitigate against its risks and effects, and to ensure that survivors of GBV have access to appropriate services.

The Consortium also seeks to communicate our experience and knowledge of working on GBV to Irish and international audiences in order to support best practice and the prioritisation of GBV within the wider development/humanitarian agenda.



## Definition of Gender Based Violence:

The Consortium understands the term Gender Based Violence to mean: Any act of violence that arises from or is driven by inequalities, discrimination, roles, disparities or expectations based on gender. It includes any act that results in, or is likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering for an individual or group of people, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

**Root causes of GBV:** GBV derives from unequal gender power relations in society, particularly in situations where the subordinate status of women and girls can leave them vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

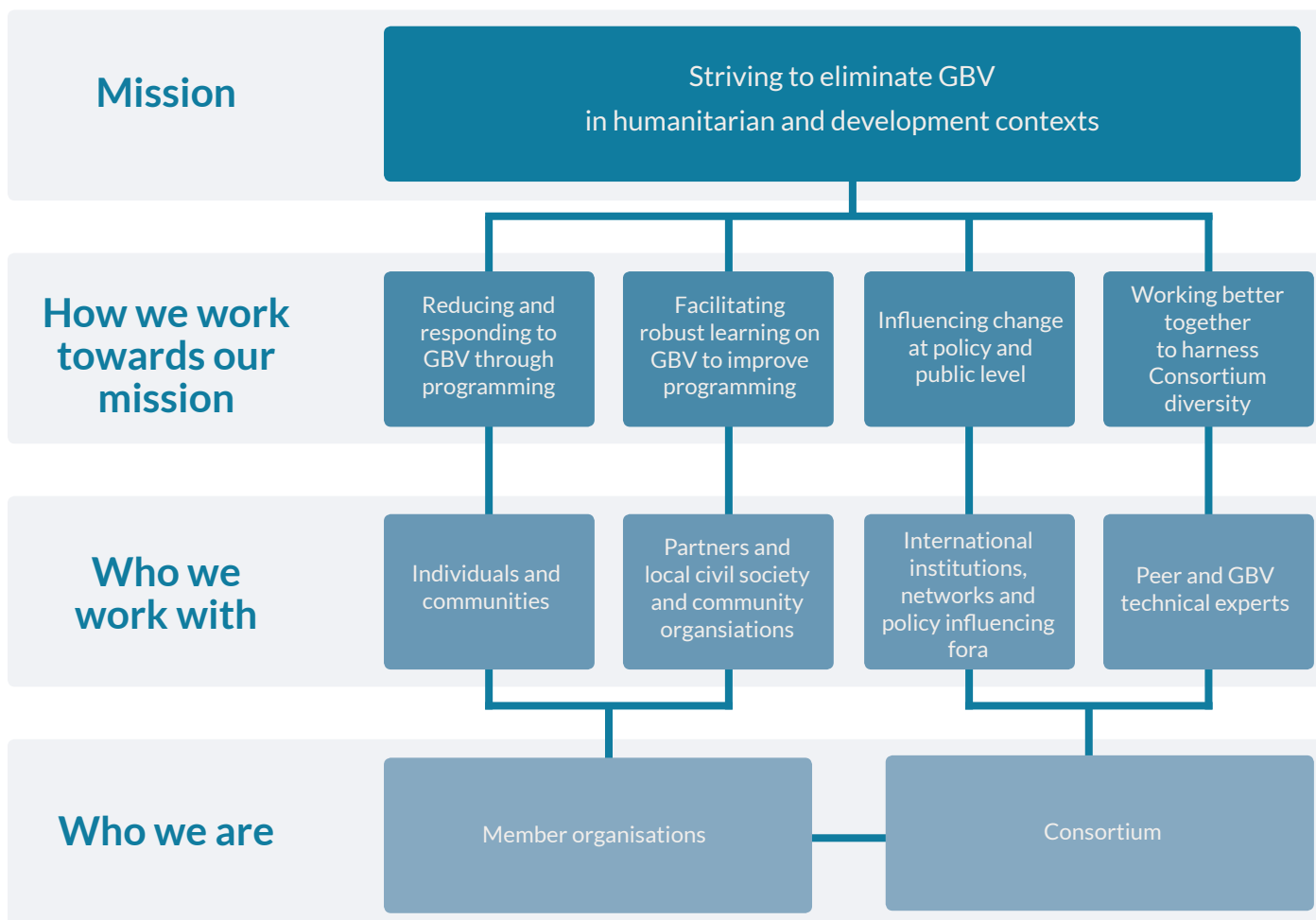
**What GBV includes:** GBV is a fundamental violation of human rights. GBV includes sexual violence (including sex trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment); physical violence; emotional and psychological violence; socio-economic violence; harmful traditional practices (including female genital mutilation/cutting, forced or early marriage, honor killings) and intimate partner violence. GBV should be addressed at all levels from individual to institutional.

**Who is affected by GBV:** All sections of society can be affected by GBV but certain groups can be more vulnerable; particularly women and girls. We further acknowledge that LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people) populations and other sexual and gender minorities also experience and can be the targets of GBV precisely because they do not conform to and/or challenge prevailing gender norms and expectations. GBV against men and boys is often hidden and can be particularly prevalent in conflict settings. We believe that every person, regardless of their gender or sexuality, has the right to live free from violence.

## Six Guiding Principles:

The Consortium will be guided by the following six principles:

- 1. Focus on women and girls:** The primary focus of our work is on preventing, mitigating and responding to GBV against women and girls, while recognising the needs of other groups. This reflects the disproportionate impact and prevalence of GBV that is directed at women and girls. The voices of women and girls in the communities where we work are central to informing all aspects of our work.
- 2. Holistic understanding of GBV:** We will continue to focus specifically on addressing GBV, while remaining fully cognizant of the impact of gender inequality as a primary driving force behind GBV and the consequent need for our members to address broader gender inequality issues in their work.
- 3. Concentrate on humanitarian and development contexts:** While noting that GBV is prevalent worldwide, we will maintain our focus on addressing GBV in developing countries and humanitarian contexts where the needs are greatest.
- 4. Collaboration for effective programming:** Through knowledge sharing, internal learning and collaboration, we will continue to support the capacity building of member organisations, aiming to achieve ever more effective programming.
- 5. Influencing for change:** We will use our credible voice, organisational connections and global networks to influence positive change amongst policy makers and influencers.
- 6. Experience and credibility:** Our credible voice and thought leadership will be rooted in the knowledge, expertise and learning from our member organisations' programming addressing GBV and gender inequality.

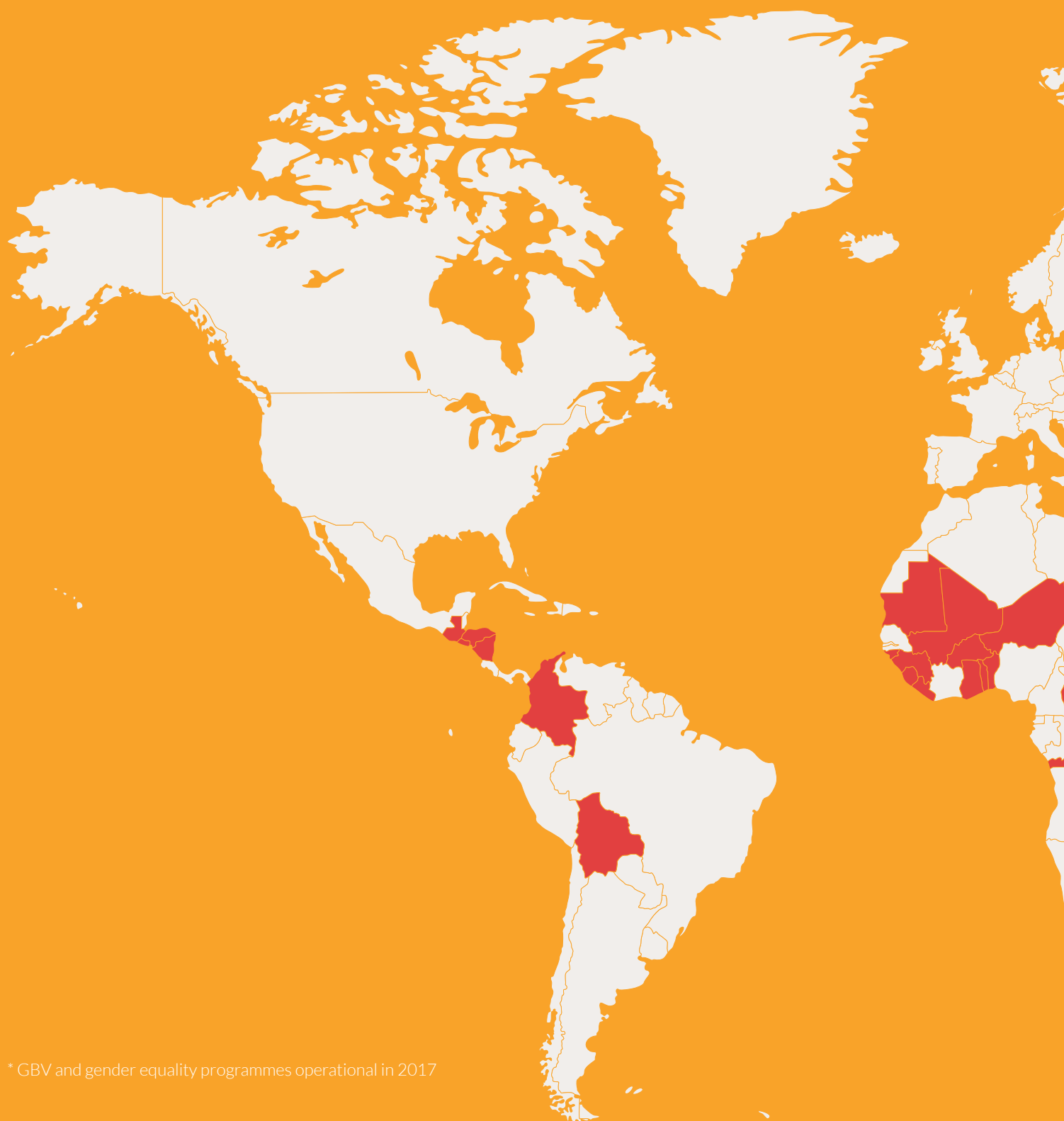


# Where we work

The countries highlighted here show the geographic dispersal where ICGBV members work on programmes aimed at addressing gender inequality and include the following countries\*:

Afghanistan  
Bangladesh  
Benin  
Bolivia  
Burundi  
Burkina Faso  
Central African  
Republic

Colombia  
DR Congo  
Egypt  
El Salvador  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Guatemala  
Guinea



\* GBV and gender equality programmes operational in 2017



Guinea Bissau

Honduras

Indonesia

Israel & the OTPs

Kenya

Lebanon

Liberia

Malawi

Mali

Mauritania

Mozambique

Myanmar

Nepal

Nicaragua

Niger

Pakistan

Rwanda

Sierra Leone

Somalia

South Africa

South Sudan

Sri Lanka

Sudan

Syria

Tanzania

Togo

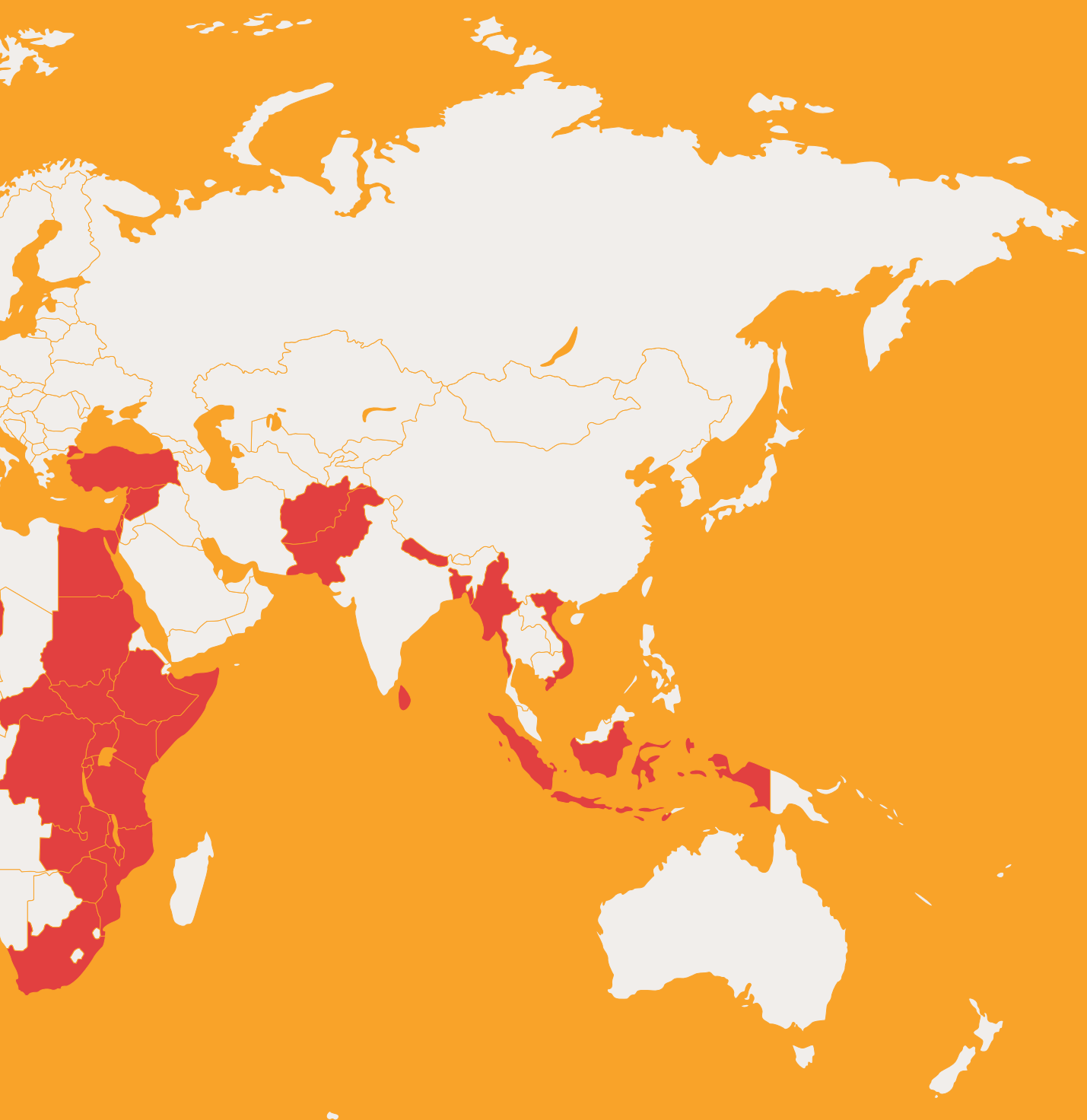
Turkey

Uganda

Vietnam

Zambia

Zimbabwe







## Strategic Goals of the Consortium:

### Goal 1: Empowering for Change: Reducing and responding to GBV through more effective programming

The primary aim of the Consortium is to strive for a reduction in the incidence of GBV, an increase in support for survivors and to empower those aiming to change the conditions which lead to GBV.

The Consortium recognises that promoting the individual and collective agency of targeted communities, particularly women and girls, is an effective strategy to progressively change societal structures and norms that perpetuate the incidence of GBV. Consortium members aim to help communities who are affected by or are vulnerable to GBV to understand its drivers and influencers, to know where they can go for help, to feel empowered to take action, and to feel better protected as a result of our interventions.

Consortium members also work to ensure survivors of GBV have access to appropriate services.

### Objectives and Activities

#### i. Target populations are safe, secure, protected and more resilient to GBV

The Consortium's member organisations will improve capacity building of personnel, partners and field workers, strive to deepen understandings of GBV, its drivers and manifestations, and promote best practices on prevention, mitigation and response in-country.

- **Building in-country capacity through member organisations:** Partners and field workers will be empowered and have increased capacity to lead change in their communities.
- **In-country collaboration:** The Consortium will facilitate the creation of networks and spaces in-country to promote shared learning and potential collaboration in members' efforts to support local empowerment and reduce GBV.
- **GBV in emergencies:** Following membership training on the IASC Guidelines on Integrating GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Action member organisations will have implemented these Guidelines in all humanitarian responses.

#### ii. Women's movements/groups are supported through the work of member organisations

Ending GBV requires the transformation of attitudes, mindsets and beliefs about gender norms and roles within society, institutions, and families. It also requires empowering women's movements for equality and justice. Programmes rooted in community led efforts are essential to ensure accountability, local alignment and sustainability.

- **Programming informed by experiences of women and girls:** By listening to and accurately documenting the experiences of women and girls, an effective cycle of listening, sharing and informed programme design and implementation will be facilitated.
- **Supporting community-led efforts:** Our programming will support community-led efforts by local women's groups and movements who work with key stakeholders, such as traditional and religious leaders, parents and families, teachers, youth, and men and boys to champion women's rights and equalise gender disparities.
- **Local government and relevant protection authorities will also be supported** in their efforts to address GBV and encouraged to adopt more gender equal policies and laws.





## Goal 2: Quality through Learning: Creating robust technical learning environments

Since its formation, the Consortium has provided a robust hub for enhancing understanding of GBV in humanitarian and development contexts and has created a space for discussion of best practice. However, there are still some significant research and data gaps in the understanding of practical measures to address GBV.

Enhancing the focus of the Consortium's internal learning function while also creating greater opportunities for academic collaboration will be key strategies in moving towards more robust, programme-focused internal capacity building and ultimately, facilitating a reduction in GBV.

### Objectives and Activities

#### i. Robust technical learning & peer support spaces to improve GBV programming

Building the capacity of key parts of the membership by learning from one another helps to ensure that all members are empowered, and feel engaged and encouraged through a shared sense of support and solidarity. The Consortium's Learning and Practice Group provides an integral space for shared learning and will continue to do so while increasing the Consortium's technical learning and practical skills capacity.

- **Peer review & learning:** The Consortium will continue to share member organisations' experiences and will collaborate to develop a common understanding of effective programming approaches, facilitating the development of best practice and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- **Engagement with experts:** Building on existing relationships with humanitarian and other programmatic experts, the Consortium will deepen its engagement in the sector to critically reflect on and improve programming.

#### ii. Practical research undertaken

Rigorous research, both practical and academic, will form a central component of strategies aimed at enhancing internal capacity within the Consortium, and expanding the quality and scope of the Consortium's contribution to broader efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV.

- **In-country research opportunities:** The Consortium will explore options for deeper, more ambitious collaborative research projects, aimed at improving programming and informing the Consortium's messaging.
- **Academic partnerships:** The Consortium will seek partnerships with academic institutions and global networks in an effort to further systemise practitioner capacity-building and research around GBV, and to explore opportunities for innovation in programming.





### Goal 3: Raising our Collective Voice: Amplifying the issue of GBV at policy and public level

GBV is present in every corner of the world, domestically and in public life. Yet despite its prevalence, in the majority of countries where data is available, a very low percentage of individuals affected feel confident enough to seek help and perpetrators are not held to account. The complexities of the issue, its roots in cultural norms and a lack of prioritisation, particularly in humanitarian emergencies, are significant factors that have contributed to inadequate GBV response and prevention resources.

The Consortium will continue to build and amplify its collective voice on the issue of GBV, harnessing the unique dynamic of the Consortium membership to advocate for the needs and rights of those vulnerable to GBV at sectoral, institutional and public levels.

#### Objectives and Activities

##### i. Greater impact through effective use of our credible voice

The Consortium has a unique, broad well of evidence and expertise from which to draw, and our diverse composition means we are poised to deliver balanced, informed and holistic messaging on GBV with authority.

- **The Consortium's advocacy and communication messages will be informed by the experience of survivors** and needs of women and girls in our programming communities. This will include the development

of flagship publications to make a contribution at a policy level.

- **Increase public awareness and understanding of GBV in Ireland** as a foremost international development issue. The Consortium will increase its visibility by working together and with other stakeholders, including national organisations in order to raise awareness and understanding of GBV in development and humanitarian contexts, amongst the Irish public.

##### ii. Deepened engagement with international institutions, networks and policy influencing fora

to ensure that GBV, gender equality, and women's empowerment are given the highest level of priority.

- **Leveraging Ireland's leadership** through Irish Aid, and our patron, President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, in working through global networks at membership organisation and Consortium level, striving to ensure that GBV is prioritised at the highest institutional levels.
- **Engagement with key international policy influencing fora** and global development and humanitarian frameworks, such as: the Commission on the Status of Women; the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 5 (which is aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls); the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence; and Ireland's Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.







## Goal 4: Strengthening Leadership and Accountability

Though united in this mission, the Consortium is also a collection of diverse organisations, with different perspectives and mandates. This unique diversity is perhaps the foremost strength of the Consortium, and the Consortium will continue to strive to maximise the benefits of complementarity, inclusivity and diversity, working in concert with increased focus and consistency to achieve its strategic goals.

### Objectives and Activities

#### i. Strengthened 'whole of organisational' approach to GBV

Facilitating methods to help membership foster an increased 'whole of organisational' approach to GBV, and exploring opportunities to achieve increased symbiosis between membership

organisations and the Consortium, will be key strategies in the effort to maximise impact, influence and effectivity.

- **Further integrating GBV across member organisations:** Consortium members will demonstrate strong leadership on the issue of GBV within their organisation at all levels, ensuring that: all staff understand the linkages between gender inequality and GBV; codes of conduct and zero tolerance policies on sexual exploitation and abuse are implemented and effective training conducted.
- **Increased Consortium internal efficiency:** Building on the work of the Consortium since its inception, the Consortium will seek to more accurately measure progress in relation to GBV within membership programming as well within the Consortium itself, including the development of systemised tracking and reporting.

# Measures of success



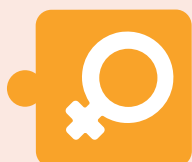
Increased collaboration between member organisations at field level



Research driven by coordinated Consortium analysis and informed by our strategic goals



Strengthened connections with other networks, including academic institutions to improve programming and share best practice



Member organisation programmes increasingly informed by experiences of women and girls, and those affected by GBV



A deeper, clearer connection between Consortium learning and on-the-ground programming



Deeper engagement with international institutions, networks and policy influencing fora



Consortium has facilitated member organisations efforts to measure impact of GBV and gender equality programming







## Photo captions

**Page 1:** Top: Irish Naval Service, Operation Pontius, Humanitarian Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean. Photo: Irish Defence Forces.

Middle: In Jordan, a vocational training centre run by Jordanian Red Crescent, empowers women and girls with skills that enable them to create better jobs to improve their family income. Photo: International Federation of Red Cross, Jordan

Bottom: Farmer supported by GOAL Programmes, South Sudan, 2016. Photo: GOAL, South Sudan, 2016

**Page 2:** Girls take part in a competition as part of a project designed to give children and young people and their carers a space to enjoy themselves and relieve some of the distress they have witnessed. Photo: Christian Aid, Gaza, 2014

**Page 3:** People wait in line to receive food, water, and basic household items from humanitarian organizations in Tamping, South Sudan, a UN base that is now housing people who were forced from their homes when violence broke out. Displaced women and girls face increased vulnerability to GBV. Photo: Concern, South Sudan

**Page 4:** Nansy Faziri (14) from Nkhotakota, Malawi. She takes part in Concern Worldwide's Skillz program in Nkhotakota, Malawi. Using the established Grassroots Soccer curriculum, the program is designed to engage young people through the medium of soccer and to help educate them in matters of gender, reproductive health, and relationships. Funding for the program comes through Merck.

**Page 8:** In Niger, Irish Red Cross is working with rural communities on improving availability and providing safer access to clean water. The programme which constructs water points closer to households are provided with storage tanks, stand taps and a solar system for pumping. Photo: Irish Red Cross, Zinder Region, Niger.

**Page 9:** Stephanie who has received psychological counselling after being abused by her father lives with her mother (Esterline) who has received help to set up a business in Port au Prince, Haiti. \*names have been changed. Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Panos Pictures for Concern, Haiti, 2014

**Page 10:** School Clubs drama skit on gender. UMC Primary School, Masengbeh Community. Photo: Michael Duff/Concern, Sierra Leone, 2014

**Photo 11:** A woman carries jerry cans through mud and contaminated water at the entrance to the displacement camp on the UN base in Bentiu, South Sudan. Photo: Crystal Wells/Concern, South Sudan, 2014.

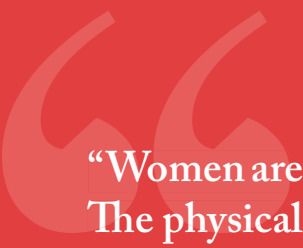
**Page 12:** Participants in Trocaire's protection project for displaced communities in Peshawar, UNMEED Foundation, Photo: Trocaire, Pakistan.

**Page 13:** Community leaders involved in Trocaire's protection project for displaced communities in Peshawar, UNMEED Foundation, Photo: Trocaire, Pakistan.

**Page 14–15:** Kalkidan Kiflu (11), Tiliyi Gerbi Kebele, Lume Woreda District, Ethiopia. Photo: Christine Redmond/Gorta-Self Help Africa, Ethiopia.


## Consortium Members





“Women are dying two types of death – a physical and an emotional death. The physical death is when you are no longer alive to walk the earth, and the emotional death is when you no longer see signs of hope and are dead inside. Rape is used by militia groups and soldiers as a weapon of terror that destroys not only individuals but whole communities. So often, women and girls are raped, mutilated, and kept as sex slaves, and then they are turned away from their families and left without hope for their future. Without this hope, they cannot survive.

But I’ve learned that no matter how hopeless a situation may look, change is possible, and leadership makes that possible. This leadership is not about one individual – it is about the collective.”



– Christine Karumba, Women’s Rights Advocate, DRC





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