



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls

Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in Zambia

Annual Narrative Programme Report

01 APRIL 2025 - 31 DECEMBER 2025



Government of Ireland
International Development Programme



Programme Title & Programme Number			Priority regions/provinces/areas/localities for the programme																				
<p>Programme Title: Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Programme in Zambia.</p> <p>MPTF Office Project Reference Numbers: 00141130, 00141131, 00141132, 00141133, 00141134</p>			<p>Country: The Republic of Zambia Provinces: Easter Province, Muchinga Province Districts: Chipangali, Katete (Eastern Province); Chinsali and Isoka (Muchinga Province); Lusaka for national level activities (capital city).</p>																				
Recipient Organization(s)			Key Partners																				
UNFPA UNDP UNESCO IOM			<p>Government: The Gender Division, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, National Prosecutions Authority, The Zambia Law Development Commission (ZLDC)</p> <p>CSOs: Non-Governmental Organisations Gender Coordinating Council, Cartias Zambia, Young Women's Christian Association, REPSSI, Young Happy Health and Safe, Men's' Network for Gender and Development, Women for Change, Break Free Together Initiative, Chisomo Community Initiative</p>																				
Programme Cost (US\$)			Programme Start and End Dates																				
<p>Total budget as per the Spotlight Initiative CPD¹: 2,128,978 USD</p> <p>Spotlight Initiative funding: 2,029,718 USD of which USD 1,929,718 is a contribution from the Embassy of Ireland to Zambia and USD 100,000 is a contribution from Global Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Fund</p> <p>Agency Contribution : 99,260 USD</p> <p>Spotlight Funding and Agency Contribution by Agency (USD):</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of RUNO</th> <th>Ireland and Global Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Fund Contributions</th> <th>UN Agency Contributions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UNFPA</td> <td>598,826</td> <td>53,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNDP</td> <td>503,256</td> <td>29,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNESCO</td> <td>469,951</td> <td>16,760</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IOM</td> <td>457,685</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>2,029,718</td> <td>99,260</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Name of RUNO	Ireland and Global Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Fund Contributions	UN Agency Contributions	UNFPA	598,826	53,000	UNDP	503,256	29,500	UNESCO	469,951	16,760	IOM	457,685	-	TOTAL	2,029,718	99,260	<p>Start Date: 1st April 2025</p> <p>End Date: 31st December 2027</p>		
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¹ The total estimated budget is 2,128,978 USD of which USD 1,929,718 is a contribution from the Embassy of Ireland to Zambia and USD 100,000 is a contribution from Global Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Fund and USD 99,260 contribution from the UN. This budget includes programme costs and indirect support costs and excludes the Administrative Direct Costs of the MPTFO.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Acronyms List	3
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Contextual Shifts and Implementation Status	5
3. Programme Governance and Coordination	8
4. Programme Partnerships	11
4.1 National Bodies	12
4.2 Civil Society and Women’s Rights Movements	13
4.3 Embassy of Ireland	16
5. Results: Progress toward Ending Violence Against Women and Girls	17
6. Cross-Cutting Results: Results Across Outcome Areas	18
7. Capturing Change at Outcome Level	20
Outcome A: Laws, Policies, Institutions and Data	20
Outcome B: Prevention	21
Outcome C: Response	23
Outcome D: Women’s Movement and Civil Society	26
8. Challenges and Mitigating Measures	28
9. Lessons Learned and New Opportunities	31
10. Contributions to the Evidence Base and Knowledge Management	33
11. Innovative, Promising or Good Practices	34
12. Communications and Visibility	37
13. Sustainability	39
14. Next Steps	40
15. ANNEXES	42

Acronyms List

Acronym

CBO
CDF
CSO
CS-NRG
DDCC
DEB
DMMU
EVAWG
FBO
GEEA
GBV
GD
GEWE
HRH
IOM
L-SHE
MCDSS
MMPR
MNGD
NGOCC
NTC
NSC
NPA
PGO
P-MER
PSEA
RUNOs
REPSSI
TFGBV
SADC
SRGBV
SRH
UN
UNDP
UNESCO
UNFPA
UNICEF
UNSCR
UNSDCF
UN-RCO
VAWE
VAWG
VLOSC
VSU
WfC
WFP
WRO
YWCA
YHHS
ZPS
ZCCB
ZNAP
ZPS

Full Meaning

Community Based Organisation
Constituency Development Fund
Civil Society Organisations
Civil Society National Reference Group
District Development Coordinating Committee
District Education Board
Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit
Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
Faith Based Organisations
Gender Equity and Equality Act
Gender-based Violence
Gender Division
Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
His/Her Royal Highness
International Organisation for Migration
Life Skills and Health Education
Ministry of Community Development and Social Services
Mixed Member Proportional Representation
Men's Network in Gender and Development
Non-Governmental Organisations Gender Coordinating Council
National Technical Committee
National Steering Committee
National Prosecution Authority
Provincial Gender Officer
Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Recipient United Nations Organisations
Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
Technology Facilitated Gender-based Violence
Southern Africa Development Community
School-related Gender Based Violence
Sexual and Reproductive Health
United Nations
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations
United Nations Population Fund
United Nations Children Fund
United Nations Security Council Resolution
United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
United Nations-Resident Coordinators Office
Violence Against Women in Election
Violence Against Women and Girls
Village Led One-Stop Centre
Victim Support Unit
Women for Change
World Food Programme
Women's Rights Organisation
Young Women's Christian Association
Young Happy Healthy and Safety
Zambia Police Service
Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops
Zambia National Action Plan
Zambia Police Service

1. Executive Summary

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in Zambia represents a strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Government of the Republic of Zambia. This multi-year program embodies a renewed and unwavering commitment towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, the promotion of women and girls' rights and gender equality, and the comprehensive empowerment of women across the nation.

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 acted as a powerful, multi-sectoral catalyst, strategically fortifying national institutional coordination, enhancing the quality and reach of survivor-centered services, and deepening prevention efforts at the community level.

In 2025, the programme achieved critical milestones in advancing gender equality and combating GBV through integrated efforts across policy reform, prevention, institutional response, and women's leadership. At the policy level, the program initiated the revision of both the Gender Equity and Equality Act and the Anti-GBV Act to align with evolving global standards, while finalizing and costing the Zambia National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. To drive systemic prevention and cultural change, the Initiative mobilized 238 traditional and faith leaders to champion equitable norms and denounce child marriage, while simultaneously reaching over 24,000 students and 1,600 adolescent girls through targeted educational and mentorship programs. Institutional response mechanisms were actively strengthened by training over 100 frontline border, health, and justice officials in survivor-centered care, alongside providing economic reintegration support to GBV survivors to break the cycle of violence. Finally, looking toward the 2026 General Elections, the program significantly bolstered civil society by equipping 33 Women's Rights Organizations with social accountability tools and preparing aspiring female candidates, ensuring a stronger, more prepared voice for women in local and national governance.

A core principle guiding all facets of the Initiative is the commitment to *leaving no one behind*. This principle translates into a deliberate effort to target women and girls who face intersecting forms of discrimination and vulnerability. This includes women and girls in rural areas, as well as adolescent girls who face unique challenges. The program employs a combination of proactive strategies to reach them, including the aforementioned grassroot level approaches and, crucially, engaging feminist organizations in the program's design, monitoring, and implementation to ensure the intervention is contextually relevant and rights-based.

The success of the program is built upon a platform of robust and synergistic partnerships with the Gender Division, Ministry of Education, National Prosecution Authority, Zambia Police Service, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Recipient United Nations Organisations (under the 'Delivering as One' framework), and a dynamic network of civil society organizations. A specific, cross-cutting focus is placed on directly empowering and strengthening the institutional capacity of women's rights groups, recognizing them as essential drivers of long-term change. In addition, the Initiative in Zambia is a flagship model for the United Nations Development System Reform, demonstrating how a "One UN" approach can deliver high-impact results through integration and shared accountability. By aligning strictly with Zambia's national priorities and utilizing local systems, the Spotlight Initiative embodied the Reform's commitment to repositioning the UN as a strategic partner that bolsters national capacity.



2. Contextual Shifts and Implementation Status

Since the programme approval, the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in Zambia has reached significant milestones both in terms of enhanced visibility and recognition at the national and sub-national level, this is in terms of national Government commitment to the initiative (through the Gender Division) of coordination structures activated and, more importantly, in terms of results on the ground. The Initiative is on track and the positive implementation status is illustrated by the impact registered at the outcome level and recorded in the dedicated sections of this report. From April to December 2025, the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in Zambia occurred against a complex backdrop of socio-political and economic factors, detailed in this section of the report, that shape the prevalence and response to violence against women and girls (VAWG). The programme design has proven to be fit to the contextual challenges in 2025 and has delivered results, as reported in this document. The following paragraphs present an overview of the context within which the Spotlight Initiative results were generated.

2.1 Political and Legal Landscape:

The Republic of Zambia has established a comprehensive legal and policy framework to advance women's rights and address Gender-based Violence (GBV), anchored in nine key instruments: the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025, the Gender Equity and Equality Act No. 22 of 2025, the Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (Amendment) No.16 of 2022. the Penal Code, the Education Act No. 23 of 2011, the Marriage (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2023, the National Gender Policy, the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2026 - 2030, and the National Action Plan (NAP) under the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Collectively, these instruments provide a robust normative foundation for gender equality and the elimination of (VAWG).

Notably the Constitution (Amendment) Act No. 13 of 2025 introduces a Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR) system, which guarantees women approximately 10.6% of parliamentary seats. While this constitutes progress in formal representation, the linkage of proportional representation seats to presidential vote share, coupled with the absence of mandatory gender quotas across the majority of elective and appointive positions, presents a risk of entrenching dominant party influence and impeding transformative gains in women's political participation. Consequently, the achievement of substantive gender parity remains largely contingent upon political will rather than enforceable constitutional obligation.

Zambia has also demonstrated sustained political commitment to gender equality, evidenced by high-level government representation at the launch of Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in May 2025, including the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Permanent Secretary of the Gender Division (GD) at Cabinet Office. However, persistent deficiencies in enforcement and implementation continue to undermine the efficacy of the legal framework. Limited budgetary allocations constrain adherence to service delivery standards, while weak and predominantly manual data management systems particularly within the Victim Support Unit of the Zambia Police Service which hinder timely reporting, coordination, and evidence-based decision-making. These challenges were further exacerbated in 2025 by the USAID Stop-Work Order², which significantly disrupted GBV programming and service provision nationwide.

Furthermore, evolving political dynamics have elevated risks of violence against women in public and political life, encompassing electoral-related violence against women and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). These emergent trends underscore the urgent necessity for reinforced legal, institutional,

² The USAID Stop-Work Order is a directive issued by the U.S. government in early 2025 that immediately halted work on US-funded foreign assistance projects.

and digital governance responses under Spotlight Initiative 2.0 to ensure that Zambia's comprehensive normative framework translates into tangible protection and empowerment for women and girls.

2.2 Socio-Economic and Climate Challenges:

Economic hardship, including high costs of living and persistent poverty, coupled with recurrent climate-related shocks (particularly acute droughts and floods in the period 2023-24), has amplified household stress. These conditions have intensified vulnerabilities for women and girls, especially in rural and climate-affected communities, leading to increased risks of intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, and harmful practices such as child marriage, labia pulling and wife exchange. Concurrently, these pressures restrict survivors' access to essential, quality, survivor-centred services. According to the UNFPA 2024 assessment on the impact of drought on GBV services, access to services varied widely across districts, shaped by socio-economic inequalities and climate-related vulnerabilities, with some areas better served than others. Key barriers including long distances, low awareness, stigma, and restrictive cultural norms were further exacerbated by drought. Informal, community-based referral networks continue to play a critical role in connecting survivors to care, highlighting both resilience and the need for strengthened, integrated service systems. Internal displacements were also a major effect of the drought as IOM's 2024 Displacement Tracking Matrix indicated that over 140,261 individuals had been displaced as a result which further affected their access to basic services.

According to the Zambia Police Service data on GBV cases (both criminal and non-criminal), the total number of reported cases in 2025 was 41,026, with a slight decrease compared to the total 2024 reported cases that recorded 42,178. Overall, the number of GBV cases reported to the Police annually had been growing steadily in Zambia since 2013. While the increase in GBV case reporting has been encouraging and suggests improved public awareness and willingness to seek help, systems remain inconsistent and often overwhelmed. This highlights the critical need for continued investment in integrated and accessible response mechanisms to address VAWG.

Climate change in Zambia has led to unpredictable rainfall, dry-spells, and floods that isolate communities by damaging infrastructure. In 2025, Zambia began recovering from the severe drought that impacted the country during the 2023/2024 rain-season, affecting over 400,000 families in 84 districts. The drought poses further vulnerability to child marriage and teenage pregnancy, as families adopt negative coping mechanisms that impact adolescent girls. The government and partners shifted resources to humanitarian response, focusing on vulnerable children and families. UNFPA, as technical lead of the Spotlight Programme, has played a strategic role in the broader UN system initiatives to mainstream gender equality and GBV. As part of the Protection cluster, led by UNHCR and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), the agency contributed to the protection needs assessments and worked with MCDSS and Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) at the Office of the Vice President to support communities to prevent GBV and with Childline/Lifeline for psychosocial support. UNFPA, in addition, partnered with the World Food Programme (WFP), Ministry of Health (MOH) and Childline/Lifeline to deliver mobile psychosocial and health services, including GBV prevention. In line with the Spotlight Initiative comprehensive approach, efforts prioritized violence prevention, protection mainstreaming, and support to survivors, addressing increased risks of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and domestic violence in affected communities. The After-Action Review of the drought response in Zambia highlighted the need to continue sensitization of affected communities and service providers on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and the local referral pathways.

The Spotlight Initiative has a geographical focus on four rural districts, Chipangali and Katete, located in Eastern Province, and Chinsali and Isoka, located in Muchinga Province. This box highlights data on **Gender Based Violence in Eastern Province and Muchinga Province.**³

Adolescent pregnancies and pregnancies in schools. Nearly three out of ten (28%) women between the ages of 15 and 19 have experienced pregnancy in Zambia in 2024. By targeted provinces, Eastern (43%) recorded the highest proportion of women aged 15–19 who have experienced pregnancy, with Muchinga (34%) ranking third in teenage pregnancy prevalence out of all ten provinces.

In Muchinga Province, 2024 reports indicate that approximately 87 primary school pupils in rural areas were pregnant, in contrast to 7 pupils in urban regions. Furthermore, an estimated 5,193 female students were reported to be out of school.

In Eastern Province, data show that about 1,928 primary school pupils in rural communities were pregnant, compared to 114 in urban areas. In addition, it is estimated that 6,955 female students were out of school. Nationally, the percentage of young women who have ever been pregnant is much higher in rural areas (37%) than in urban areas (18%).

Child marriage. Nationally, 23.9% of young women are married or living with their partner by the age of 18. The median age of first marriage for women is 18.4 years old in Eastern province (youngest median age in the country) and 18.7 in Muchinga province (third youngest age in the country).

Violence against women and girls. Women and girls aged 15-49 who have ever experienced physical violence in Eastern province amount to 24.2% of the total female population, while for Muchinga province this prevalence rate is even higher, at 28.3%. Sexual violence by any perpetrator affected 8.3% of women in Eastern province and 9.7% of women in Muchinga province.

Intimate partner violence. 36.8% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their current or most recent husband or partner in Zambia. About 23.8% of women indicated that their partners had demonstrated three or more types of controlling behaviours in Eastern province, with a slightly lower percentage registered in Muchinga province (18%). Overall, husbands and intimate partners have been reported as perpetrators of sexual violence by 80% of the women who have ever experienced sexual violence, placing intimate partner violence as the highest threat to women and girls.

Low help seeking behaviour. Remarkably, only 4.1% of women who experienced physical or sexual violence sought assistance from medical personnel and only 13.6% sought help from the police.

2.3 Positive Shifts and Opportunities for Change:

The Gender Division, Government Line ministries and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) continue to provide coordinated efforts, including community mobilisation, advocacy by women's rights organisations, engagement with traditional and faith leaders, and national awareness campaigns, are fostering greater recognition of both physical and non-physical forms of violence, including digital and technology-facilitated abuse. Civil society organisations continue to play a vital role in prevention, survivor support, and accountability, despite facing capacity and resource limitations. Overall, the environment reveals opportunities for transformative change through the coordinated, multisectoral, and survivor-centred approaches championed by Spotlight Initiative 2.0.

2.4 Domestic Financing for Child Protection, GBV and SRH in Zambia:

³ Sources: ZDHS 2024, Health Management Information System.

Core funding for child protection in the 2026 National Budget has dropped to just 1.26 percent of the overall Social Welfare programme allocation despite the increasing vulnerability of children across the country, compared to the previous year, risking support for Zambia's 9.7 million children. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services had launched a compelling investment case in March 2025, which led to the government's pledge to recruit 5,000 additional social workers. Debate on adolescent SRH access and the USAID Stop-Work Order disrupted services, but swift action by the Ministry of Health and UNFPA maintained essential supplies especially in rural areas.

Public funding to GBV prevention and response services has remained a challenge too, as the sector remains largely donor-dependent and, being GBV response multi-sectoral in its nature, resources that are supposed to cater for these needs are disbursed in different funding streams and difficult to track. The budget allocated to the Gender Division, the Country's main engine for driving the gender agenda, grew from 2023 to 2025, but was then cut from K70 million in 2025 to K55 million in 2026. Most of the reduction was on the Gender Rights and Protection unit and on GBV coordination, despite persistently high case numbers.

In February 2023, the government, through the Ministries of Finance, Health, National Planning, and Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNFPA to strengthen access to safe SRH commodities. This partnership led to the availability of over USD 11.4 million in local funding, including USD 4.3 million in 2025, ensuring essential supplies. Although the U.S. Government has halted the transport of SRH commodities, Zambia is proactively seeking alternative resources to fill this gap. As a result, the prospects for 2026 remain promising.

3. Programme Governance and Coordination

During the inception phase in 2025, the programme team and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UN-RCO) established the coordination and governance structures in line with the Spotlight Initiative whole-of-society and whole-government approach. The results of this work are reflected in the coordination activities and platforms described below:

3.1 The National Steering Committee:

The National Steering Committee (NSC) for the Spotlight Initiative in Zambia provides high-level strategic oversight, policy alignment, and accountability. Its core function is to ensure the programme remains consistent with national priorities and to embed results for long-term sustainability. The NSC adds critical value by endorsing annual work plans, guiding budget allocations and revisions, reviewing progress reports, and providing strategic direction to enhance national ownership and institutionalize interventions within government systems.

Co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary at the Gender Division and the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the NSC's membership is designed to facilitate strong inter-ministerial coordination, UN coherence, and structured civil society engagement. Key members include:

- Government: Directors and Assistant Directors from the Gender Division, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, the National Prosecution Authority, and the Zambia Police Service; and Principal Gender Officers.
- UN Agencies: Heads of Agencies and technical team members from UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, and IOM.

- Civil Society: Representatives of the Civil Society National Reference Group (CS-NRG)
- Representation from the Embassy of Ireland.

The NSC convened twice during the reporting period, undertaking the following critical actions:

1. April 2025 Meeting (Programme Launch):

Before the official launch, the NSC was convened for the first time and endorsed the Spotlight programme document (design and governance arrangements, confirmed institutional roles and responsibilities), and provided strategic guidance to ensure complete alignment with national frameworks for GBV, gender equality, and EVAWG.

2. December 2025 Meeting (Implementation review and 2026 priorities):

The committee reviewed programme implementation progress, assessed both challenges and opportunities for resource mobilisation, and endorsed the 2026 priority areas. These areas included the gender responsive budgeting and national gender budget analysis, developing the first gender strategy and operational plan for the Ministry of Education (Outcome A), focus on adolescent girls and boys, with both in-school and out-of-school approaches and information dissemination to strengthen the linkage to services and prevention of GBV and harmful practices (Outcome B), support the Village Led OSCs as first respondents, including community outreach activities to rural areas, capacity building of service providers on expedient service delivery and TFGBV (Outcome C), women participation including in political processes, women economic empowerment through savings groups and financial literacy, and the establishment of a grievance and reporting mechanism on Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE).

Through its functions, the NSC will significantly strengthen programme relevance, adaptive management, and long-term sustainability. Its guidance ensures that Spotlight contributions are effectively integrated into national policies, sector plans, and government-led coordination mechanisms at national, provincial and district level. The meeting in December saw a broader representation of stakeholders compared to the first meeting held in April. The meeting, in fact, included the representation of the Civil Society National Reference Group and the Embassy of Ireland.

3.2 The Civil Society National Reference Group:

As part of the inception activities, the country team worked closely together with the Spotlight Initiative team at Global level to set up the Zambian Civil Society Reference Group. National CSRG members are platforms typically composed of committed individuals from the civil society spectrum that serve as partners for the realisation of the programme's objectives, advocate for its objectives and hold the programme accountable to its commitments.

To set up this structure, an open call was disseminated through both digital and hard print media and a 7-member panel Committee was established to review applications. The selection committee in Zambia was composed of two staff members from UN agencies (UNFPA and UNDP) and representatives from the Zambia National Women's Lobby, Action Aid, World Vision International, Zambia National Education Coalition and an independent gender expert. The selection panel reviewed 92 applications of individuals interested in participating in this national structure in early June 2025. The 92 applications were received in April and May 2025, thanks to an open call for applicants and TORs posted on the UN Zambia website and then further disseminated through the agencies' social media pages and through implementing partners. The CS-NRG was officially established in June 2025 through a transparent, civil society-led selection process in which this panel played a central role in the selection process, prioritizing feminist leadership, grassroots engagement,



technical expertise on EVAWG, and representation of less privileged people such as the women, girls, persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The Global Spotlight Secretariat also supported the process so as to ensure diverse representatives of the civil society had the possibility of participating in this highly important national governance structure that will have a key role in guiding the programme further and ensuring women's movements and survivors are at the centre of our work. On Tuesday 17th of June a first induction session took place with the thirteen newly elected members to the Zambian CSRG.

The composition of the selected CSNRG counts thirteen members, including youth, men and women.

The CSRG comprises different kinds of national and sub-national civil society representatives including those focused on feminist/women's rights, youth-led, disability rights, GBV service providers, and involved in groups working with adolescents, rural women, and survivors. Its membership ensures geographic, generational, and broad thematic coverage.

During the reporting period, the CSRG held six meetings and virtual sessions. A formally endorsed budgeted workplan (2025–2026) detailing key functions that includes advocacy, advisory, accountability, and Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (P-MER) and is yet to be supported by a modest operational budget from the Spotlight programme. A cost-reimbursement scheme is being applied to ensure operationalisation of the CS-NRG, this was developed in 2025 in collaboration with the Secretariat. During the inception phase of the programme, foundational mechanisms were established to facilitate the gradual inclusion of CSRG members in key strategic decision-making processes. This approach not only enhances their input on programme reviews and community monitoring but also strengthens connections with feminist, grassroots, and women's movements. By fostering this inclusive environment, the programme aims to elevate the participation and influence of CSRG members in community monitoring efforts in the future, thereby reinforcing accountability and the commitment to the 'leaving no one behind' principle. Future plans include developing a civil society scorecard to independently assess Spotlight's performance. Predictable resourcing and phased implementation are ensuring sustained engagement despite initial start-up challenges.

3.3 Inter-agency coordination, technical committees and other mechanisms:

The Spotlight Initiative in Zambia ensures robust coordination, technical coherence, and accountability by effectively leveraging established national and sub-national platforms. These crucial mechanisms include:

- Existing Gender-Focused Groups: The Inter-Agency Gender Theme Group, the Cooperating Partners Group for Gender, the National GBV Technical Working Group housed at the Gender Division, and Gender Sub-Committees in Muchinga and Eastern Provinces (specifically in Isoka, Chinsali, Chipangali, and Katete Districts).

These platforms bring together government ministries, UN agencies, development partners and civil society for quarterly or ad-hoc meetings to review progress, share data, and coordinate joint interventions. In addition to these existing structures, Spotlight established a National Technical Committee (NTC). The NTC comprises representatives from the Gender Division, the Ministries of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Education, Health, and Community Development and Social Services, National Prosecution Authority and the Zambia Police Service as well as the RUNOs, and the CS-NRG. The NTC's role is to provide technical guidance, monitor programme implementation, and offer advice on operational decisions, this coordination structure met twice in 2025, the first introductory meeting was in June and the second one at the end of

September. In the first meeting the NTC started discussing several aspects of the programme including sustainability ones. During the second meeting, the RUNOs provided thorough updates on their respective programme activities, detailing progress toward the Initiative's goals. The Gender Division, in its national-level coordination role, offered an overview of its efforts to ensure multi-sectoral collaboration, accountability, and alignment. Furthermore, representatives from Muchinga and Eastern Provinces shared reports on their provincial coordination structures, highlighting both achievements and key operational challenges requiring continued institutional and technical support. Several key resolutions were adopted to enhance governance and programme delivery. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference for the NTC would be formally distributed to clearly define its operational framework and mandate in 2026.

The utilization of these multi-layered mechanisms has significantly enhanced multi-partner coordination, technical coherence, and programme alignment with national priorities, specifically the 8th National Development Plan, the 2023-2026 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the National Gender Policy (2023). Furthermore, participation in these structures has strengthened the vital linkages between national decision-making bodies and sub-national coordination platforms, thereby improving programme oversight, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

3.4 Use of UN Reform inter-agency tools:

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 has effectively harnessed UN Reform mechanisms, specifically the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) and the Common Services Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to enhance coordination and operational efficiency among RUNOs. The programme instituted common transport arrangements, utilizing car-pooling for joint field missions. This strategic implementation resulted in reduced operational costs, minimized duplication of efforts, and strengthened joint accountability, thereby aligning with the principles of "Delivering as One." Furthermore, all the RUNOs' offices are part of the common premises of the UN in Lusaka. The application of these inter-agency arrangements has demonstrably improved cost-efficiency, reduced the operational footprint, elevated the coherence of technical support, and reinforced the collective ownership of results, all in support of the broader UN Reform agenda.

4. Programme Partnerships

The Spotlight Initiative programme team works alongside a vast and complex array of partners to advance the elimination of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices. The Initiative collaborates with a range of institutions who include Government departments, development partners, traditional and religious leaders as well as civil society organizations, some of whom constitute the implementation partners to ensure effective, timely, and results-oriented delivery of activities within the framework of the approved Work Plan and Budget.

4.1 National Bodies

The Gender Division is the primary government counterpart with which the Programme is coordinating efforts. That being said other key line ministries are also central for the work that is being done and planned for the Programme. These include: the Ministry of Health, Zambia Police Service, Immigration Department, the National Prosecution Authority, and the MCDSS. These political and technical partnerships underpin all the



four Outcomes by enhancing multisectoral efforts in GBV prevention and response, strengthening legal frameworks, improving service delivery, and bolstering data systems. The focus is on embedding interventions within government structures to ensure sustainability beyond the Spotlight Initiative and advance the principle of “leaving no one behind.” In 2025, direct collaboration and joint implementation with line ministries focused on the Gender Division and the Ministry of Education.

The Gender Division serves as the Government’s principal institution responsible for the coordination, policy development, and strategic oversight of gender equality, women’s empowerment, and GBV prevention and response. Operating from the Office of the President, the Division provides national and sub-national leadership to ensure coherent implementation of gender-related interventions across line ministries, provinces, and districts. The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 supports the Gender Division in strengthening case management systems to address GBV risks faced by all women, girls, boys and men in their diversities, migrants, internally displaced persons, border communities, and other mobile populations. At provincial level, the Initiative works closely with Provincial Gender Officers in Muchinga and Eastern Provinces, the two Spotlight Initiative 2.0 target provinces, who are responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and implementing gender and GBV interventions within their respective jurisdictions. They work with government line ministries, traditional leaders, law enforcement authorities, and NGOs, to address issues like child abuse and early marriages, often spearheading initiatives like the Spotlight Initiative 2.0. At district level, further collaboration was maintained with social welfare officers, health officials, law enforcement agencies, and community-based organizations to operationalize integrated case management systems and enhance access to essential services for vulnerable women and girls, including those on the move.

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 implements Life Skills and Health Education (LSHE) in Muchinga and Eastern Provinces through strategic partnerships with the MoE. This partnership advances objectives related to GBV prevention in schools, gender-responsive education, and institutionalization of LSHE within the national education system. As the custodian of the LSHE curriculum, MoE provides policy leadership, implementation structures, and technical oversight at national and sub-national levels. This partnership strengthens the principle of leaving no one behind by enabling equitable access to age-appropriate, gender-responsive life skills education for learners, particularly girls and vulnerable populations in underserved areas. This collaboration is primarily a technical partnership. While MoE does not provide direct financial resources, its in-kind contributions include personnel, infrastructure, and systems that significantly enhance programme delivery and sustainability. Embedding LSHE within government systems fosters strong national ownership and ensures continuity beyond the programme duration. The partnership with the MoE translates into close collaboration with provincial and district levels of authority, from the Provincial Education Officers (PEOs), to then the District Education Board (DEB) up to the target schools Head Teachers.

4.2 Civil Society and Women’s Rights Movements

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 works with a number of implementation partners and civil society organisations including women-led rights organisations to further the goals of the Initiative. These organisations drive community mobilisation, provide survivor services, lead advocacy efforts, and raise awareness. They play a crucial role in reaching marginalised groups, adolescents, and rural populations, fostering feminist and cross-movement linkages. The Initiative supports these partners through capacity building, technical guidance, and participatory monitoring to enhance community ownership and long-term sustainability. The Spotlight Initiative relies on CSOs partners (national, local, grassroots, women’s rights and feminist CSOs) that contribute to the advancement of its objectives according to their different comparative advantages. In 2025

the programme has laid the foundational work of identifying the CSOs partners that will collaborate to the implementation also in the next years. Details of the funds disbursements to CSOs implementing partners in 2025 can be found in Annex C. For the next two years of implementation, the Spotlight Initiative will focus on a strategy that moves away from having different groups work in separate silos. Instead, the program will make it a priority for women's rights organizations, disability activists, and youth movements to work together. By joining forces, these groups can share their skills and reach more people in the community. This approach makes the movement stronger and more stable. If there are budget cuts or other challenges in one area, the whole network stays active because the organizations are connected and supporting each other. The main partners identified are described below.

4.2.1. Women Led Organizations and Women Rights Organizations:

- a) Women for Change: Women for Change (WfC) is a women's rights gender focused non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works with rural communities inclusive of children and people with disabilities. WfC builds capacities of rural communities, especially women and girls, to contribute to sustainable development and eradication of all forms of poverty. WfC consolidates women and girls' collective voice, action, and agency and works with them as entry points through its practical use of Gender Analysis and Awareness Raising, Asset Based Community/ Citizen Led Development (ABCD), Citizen- led advocacy and Participatory Education Methodologies (PEM). WfC will be part of the activity to strengthen the feminist movements under Outcome D in the next years of implementation.
- b) Young Women Christian Association. YWCA is a Christian NGO dedicated to the empowerment of the community, especially women, youth and children, to realize their potential as human beings and to contribute to a just society, through rights based and sustainable interventions. YWCA has sub-offices in the Spotlight Initiative target Provinces and is a key actor in the GBV referral pathway in Zambia, by providing first response services, including shelter in safe houses, to the survivors. Leveraging their expertise and trusted position in the GBV space in Zambia, YWCA is instrumental to the prevention work pillar (Outcome B), as well as the response work pillar (Outcome C) of the Programme, specifically working on the agency of adolescent girls and on the GBV multi-sectoral coordination.
- c) Non-governmental Gender Organization's Coordinating Council. NGOCC is an umbrella organization that coordinates and strengthens member NGOs, Faith Based Organisations and Community Based Organisation CBOs addressing gender and development through capacity building, networking, communication and advocacy. NGOCC is uniquely positioned to contribute to the Spotlight Initiative's Outcome D work with the women's movement in Zambia and will specifically work on the training of CBOs on social accountability, resource mobilization, and advocacy, as well as on gender-responsive budgeting with the local authorities.

4.2.2 Grassroots and local organizations and networks:

- a) Young Happy Healthy & Safe: Young Happy Healthy and Safe (YHHS) is a grassroots-based organization committed to advancing health, human rights, and social justice. Its mandate is to promote gender equity and equality, and elimination of GBV; addressing cultural norms and traditional practices that perpetuate GBV at community level; preventing and responding to GBV; empowering vulnerable populations particularly, women and girls including children and people with disabilities through community awareness sessions. In 2025 the Initiative established a partnership with YHHS



which will be mainly working with community Village Led One Stop Centres (VLOSCs) and at village level and on economic empowerment activities.

b) Men's Network in Gender and Development. MNGD exists to contribute to addressing a critical gap in Zambia's gender equality efforts: the meaningful engagement of men and boys as allies. While many initiatives focus on empowering women and girls, sustainable change requires transforming male attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate misogyny, harmful norms, and inequality. MNGD work is critical in efforts to end violence against women and girls because it tackles one of the root causes i.e. harmful social norms and male-dominated power structures. By mobilizing men and boys as allies, the Network helps shift responsibility away from women alone and places accountability on those who often hold influence in families, communities, and institutions. In undertaking this work, MNGD endeavours to create conducive environments to build resilient communities ready to challenge, speak out and act against gender inequality practices and abuses including gender-based violence. MNGD work revolves around the following:

- Community leadership: Men are frequently gatekeepers in traditional and cultural settings. Their involvement and full participation in matters of gender, equality, peace, justice and non-violence is critical.
- Mindset change: Violence against women and girls is often accepted. MNGD challenges these attitudes by engaging men in dialogue and activism that promote respect and equality, as well as community action against abuse. Instead of only responding to violence, MNGD emphasizes prevention by reshaping norms and behaviors.
- Youth engagement: By focusing on men and boys the Network, strives to create safe spaces for open discussion on masculinity, GBV and health.
- Partnerships: Collaborating with existing community structures (churches, traditional and local leadership, schools, and local government) MNGD works towards strengthening accountability, resources and visibility for ending gender injustice including gender-based violence. This is done with consideration for diversity ensuring that people living with disability are not left behind.

MNGD prioritizes community engagement with traditional leaders and male gatekeepers to challenge cultural norms and practices that perpetuate GBV Katete, Chipangali, Isoka and Chinsali districts. Recognizing patriarchy, toxic masculinity, and entrenched power imbalances as root causes of women's rights violations, MNGD empowers communities to confront these structures and promote gender-transformative change. MNGD has in fact already facilitated consultative meetings within the Spotlight Initiative sites to explore strategies for male engagement in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. These engagements have already revealed strong community interest and commitment to involving men in promoting positive change, particularly in addressing behaviors and practices that hinder women's advancement.

c) Break Free Together Initiative. Break-Free Together in implementing the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 adopts a community-driven, gender-transformative approach to prevent GBV and advance gender equality in Muchinga and Eastern Provinces. The strategy of having partnered with this CSO prioritizes strengthening the capacity of traditional leadership and community structures as key agents of social

change. Chiefdom traditional leaders and selected community leaders will be equipped through the SASA! Together, a bridged methodology to transform harmful gender norms, strengthen GBV prevention practices, and enhance community mobilization skills. By embedding knowledge and facilitation skills within local leadership, the initiative ensures that change will be locally owned and sustained beyond the life of the project.

- d) Chisomo Community Programme. Chisomo Community Programme is a Zambian community-based organization with a long-standing operational presence in Eastern Province. Their mandate focuses on community empowerment, gender equality, social protection, and grassroots mobilization. The organization is key in leading community mobilization and social norms initiatives, including: community dialogues on GBV, gender equity, and equality; engaging traditional and faith leaders to drive cultural change and promote positive norms; strengthening community anti GBV structures to improve prevention efforts. These interventions directly support the Spotlight objective of ensuring that harmful gender norms, attitudes, and behaviours are transformed at community level especially in migration affected communities.

4.2.3 National CSOs:

- a) Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI Zambia). The partnership with REPSSI Zambia strengthens LSHE delivery through its technical expertise in psychosocial support, child protection, and trauma-informed approaches. This collaboration will contribute to Spotlight outcomes related to GBV prevention, survivor support, and cross-sectoral programming, ensuring LSHE is responsive to the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents. This technical partnership will support training, mentoring, and adaptation of psychosocial tools for school and community settings. The partnership will enhance programme quality and indirectly support resource mobilization by strengthening evidence-based programming. Sustainability is promoted through capacity building of teachers and community structures. Alignment challenges between community-based approaches and formal education systems are mitigated through joint planning and close coordination with MoE.
- b) Caritas Zambia. Caritas is a national Catholic organisation that is an integral structure of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB). The agency aims to improve outcomes for all of Zambian society, specifically targeting the poor and marginalised, through its core programme areas: organisational development, gender equality, HIV/AIDS prevention, sustainable agriculture, emergency response and preparedness, and governance and human rights. Within the Spotlight Initiative partnership, Caritas is instrumental to the prevention and social norms change work, by engaging with and faith leaders to foster dialogue and strengthen their capacity to drive cultural change with an inter-faith approach. Their work with faith leaders focuses on women's participation in public life and specifically in politics, and VAWE.
- c) Lifeline Childline Zambia. This is a GBV and safeguarding helpline which has been operating in Zambia for over 22 years. They operate on a 24-hour basis offering the first line of psychosocial support in English, Swahili and 9 local languages spoken in the target districts. Childline Lifeline Zambia has been working in partnership with other service providers such as the Zambia Police Service and the National Prosecution Authority and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to ensure case management and support to GBV survivors. They have experienced

counsellors and in 2026 they will be part of the grievance mechanism to prevent and respond to cases of VAWE.

4.3 Embassy of Ireland

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Programme in Zambia benefits from the support of the Government of Ireland, through the Irish Embassy in Lusaka. The Government of Ireland has been an influential player in the GEWE space in Zambia since 2013 and has funded three UN joint programmes on GBV and GEWE (UN Joint Programme on GBV phase I and phase II, and the Gender Equality and Women Participation Initiative), before renewing its commitment to the Gender agenda in Zambia at the end of 2024, through the Spotlight Initiative 2.0. The Irish Embassy in Lusaka has been part of all high-level events and appointments of the Programme in 2025, from the Launch in May 2025 to taking the decision of being part of the National Steering Committee. The Programme team has provided progress implementation updates (both financial and narrative details) in July 2025, October 2025 and December 2025. In addition, a technical delegation from the Embassy, including the Head of Cooperation and the Programme Coordinator, conducted a technical monitoring visit to Muchinga Province in November 2025. During the visit, the Embassy's team highlighted the need to focus on sustainability and work with the Spotlight Initiative to pilot sustainable interventions to be handed over to the Government, emphasizing the need to keep a "seed investment" perspective throughout the programme implementation. The visit was also an occasion to increase the donor visibility on social media, leveraging the overlap with the 16 Days of Activism. The programme team provided the Embassy with pictures and content from both the ongoing visit and the programme activities to post on their channels daily.

It is worth noting that the Government of Ireland' support is guided by the Ireland-Zambia Mission Strategy (2023–2027). As a reliable cooperating partner of the Government of Zambia, Ireland contributes to the Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihoods (GEWEL) project, in collaboration with the World Bank. Within the GEWEL framework, Ireland contributes to the Social Cash Transfers programme, to the Supporting Women's Livelihoods (SWL) initiative, that combines the cash transfer with a one-time productivity grant, life-skills training, and mentorship, and to the Keeping Girls in School (KGS) initiative, providing the financial means for adolescent girls from SCT-recipient households to stay in secondary school and advance tertiary education by covering fees and other requirements. These national and sub-national level activities supported by Ireland intersect the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 strategy, and highlight the need for the Zambia Programme to coordinate with the World Bank, through the Gender Division, who are the coordinators of the GEWEL programme in Zambia.

5. Results: Progress toward Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

In 2025, the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in Zambia concentrated on foundational, participatory, rights-based processes to enable sustainable GBV and GEWE outcomes. Strengthened government partnerships, civil society engagement, and closer UN agency coordination are reducing fragmentation and contributing to change.

5.1 Advancing actionable legal frameworks and policies

The collaborative revision of the Gender Equity and Equality Act (GEA) of 2015 was initiated to ensure domestic laws remain compliant with evolving international human rights standards. Concurrently, the Zambia National Action Plan (ZNAP) on UNSCR 1325 was completed and fully costed. By detailing budget

needs and assigning precise accountability mechanisms across government departments through to 2031, the policy transitioned from an ambitious concept to a highly actionable, localized roadmap for women's protection and leadership.

5.2 Transforming social norms and fostering community champions

By engaging traditional and faith leaders, the programme secured concrete commitments to dismantle deeply entrenched harmful norms, translating advocacy into tangible behavior change at the grassroots level. These leaders are transitioning into proactive anti-GBV champions who are now utilizing their influential platforms to denounce child marriage, and eliminate practices such as wife inheritance. Importantly, engagement with traditional leaders in focus districts like Chipangali and Isoka included active government participation and coordinated planning, positioning the work for province-level scalability.

Regarding adolescents, the Initiative launched evidence-informed efforts in schools and communities in Chinasli, Isoka, Chipangali and Katete districts, that improved educators' capacity to address GBV and fostered open dialogues on gender equality among learners. In parallel, safe space programmes increased adolescent girls' confidence in sexual and reproductive health and participation in household decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health and household decision-making.

5.3 Strengthening multisectoral services for all, including migrants

Technical support to inter-ministerial mechanisms is transforming dormant institutional bodies into active, coordinated networks, directly improving the quality and accessibility of survivor-centered services. Capacity building for Gender Sub-committees of the District Development Coordinating Committee's (DDCC) in the high-burden districts targeted in Eastern and Muchinga provinces successfully revitalized these local governance mechanisms. In Chinsali, the newly empowered committee independently mobilized resources and private sector support to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism after years of inactivity.

To ensure safer migration and transit environments, specialized training for law enforcement and immigration officials significantly improved institutional readiness to prevent and respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). This ensures that referral pathways now align with international protection standards, using the Leave No one Behind principle safeguarding vulnerable migrant populations and removing barriers to access for those most at risk. Beyond immediate crisis response, the programme started to focus on long-term survivor resilience and autonomy. By equipping GBV survivors with entrepreneurship skills and livestock, this economic empowerment intervention contributed to the reduction of the vulnerability to repeated violence while fostering profound psychosocial healing.

5.4 Empowering grassroots movements and community leadership

The programme enhanced the internal capacity and collective influence of Women Rights Organizations (WROs) and local women's rights advocates across various community structures, equipping them to demand accountability, drive governance reform, and overcome socio-cultural barriers to leadership. WROs successfully transitioned from passive observers to active accountability monitors. Armed with social accountability tools, they are now directly tracking the equitable distribution of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), demanding better local infrastructure, and asserting their right to participate in local budgeting processes from which they were previously excluded. Through targeted training, grassroots leaders are now better positioned to engage duty bearers through evidence-based advocacy. They are beginning to lead community mobilization efforts to tackle systemic issues like early marriage, and are directly intervening in local GBV cases to support survivors in navigating law enforcement pathways. By deliberately addressing

structural barriers, such as prioritizing the inclusion of women with disabilities through the purposeful selection of organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs) to participate to the activities wherever available, and linking leadership to vital daily issues like climate change resilience in agriculture, the initiative has fostered a more inclusive, resilient, and proactive network of women leaders ready to influence decision-making at all levels of community life.

6. Cross-Cutting Results: Results Across Outcome Areas

The comprehensive approach adopted by the Initiative's team and partners has yielded cross-outcomes results in the following areas:

6.1 Leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first

The initiative worked with the MoE in implementing the LSHE curriculum in Muchinga and Eastern provinces, and kept a deliberate focus on reaching learners and communities that are often excluded. By prioritizing underserved schools, vulnerable learners, and contexts where GBV and harmful social norms are most prevalent, the Initiative operationalised the principle of leaving no one behind. Strengthened collaboration across the education, health, gender, justice, and social protection sectors enabled more coordinated outreach and referral pathways, allowing communities, teachers, and learners to engage more meaningfully with prevention and protection efforts. As a result, LSHE has become more responsive to local realities, improving access to relevant information, support, and safe learning spaces for girls and other marginalized groups.

6.1 Shifts in stakeholders' attitudes, beliefs, and ways of working

Teachers, education officials, and partner institutions increasingly view the prevention of school-related GBV as a shared responsibility rather than a standalone intervention. The training of 400 in-service teachers reaching over 24,000 learners, for instance, has helped normalize open dialogue on respect, equality, and learner protection, with educators reporting greater confidence in addressing sensitive issues and engaging learners empathetically. At the level of systems, stronger inter-ministerial collaboration has fostered more integrated and gender-responsive approaches, reinforcing sustained behavioural and institutional change that extends beyond Outcome B and supports progress towards SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 5 on gender equality.

6.3 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The programme advanced key cross cutting priorities essential to the Spotlight Initiative's aim of ending violence against women and girls, ensuring gender equality remained central to all interventions. Activities were designed to reach those facing intersecting vulnerabilities including migrants, border communities, adolescent girls, and underserved rural groups while reinforcing women's leadership in community structures, local dialogues and prevention efforts. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse continued to be mainstreamed throughout implementation, guided by inter agency SOPs and mission level PSEA priorities. Staff, partners and community actors were trained on reporting mechanisms, survivor confidentiality and zero tolerance standards, addressing barriers such as lack of information, fear of retaliation and uncertainty about complaint pathways. These efforts supported safer reporting environments and strengthened accountability across all engagement points. Climate related vulnerabilities, which increasingly influence exposure to GBV, were noted for consideration into future implementation. Recognizing the impact of the 2024 drought, livelihood stressors and environmental shocks on women and

girls especially in migration affected and rural areas the programme will incorporate climate sensitive risk mitigation into community capacity building and awareness raising initiatives.

6.4 Building Resilience

Through entrepreneurship and business skills training as well as the disbursement of start-up capital in the form of goats and chickens rearing, survivors and communities are building economic resilience. Beyond that, this activity contributes to the psychosocial resilience of communities too, fostering a sense of purpose and restoring dignity. The focus on resilience will be further strengthened in the next two years.

Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (P-MER)

The P-MER group of the Spotlight Initiative in Zambia in 2025 was composed of four UN staff members, one per RUNO, and three members of the CSNRG. The team is co-chaired by UNFPA and IOM. In 2025, the P-MER group's main result is the completion of the Baseline study report. The group worked on the ToRs, then on the revision and validation of the inception report and data collection tools, and finally reviewed the baseline report. Building on that, the P-MER group successfully developed the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, including the establishment of the output indicators and targets of the Results Framework based on the baseline values, as well as considering the recommendations and findings which have oriented the target setting.

Through the P-MER group, the Initiative not only reviewed and refined the baseline measurement tools, but also other essential monitoring and evaluation instruments. This ongoing involvement has strengthened the group's capacity to effectively track progress and ensure that interventions are meeting their objectives.

For the second and third year of the programme implementation, the P-MER group will expand its membership to include government institutions representatives.

7. Capturing Change at Outcome Level

The Spotlight Initiative in Zambia's impact across the four outcomes was significant in 2025, spanning from policy frameworks, faith leaders and community engagement, work with adolescents and women movements. The section below ascribes change to the four outcome areas, or pillars, and showcases the foundational work done in 2025 to lay a basis for the next two years of the programme.

Outcome A: Laws, Policies, Institutions and Data

The Initiative in Zambia includes both gender equality related laws and policies, to be revised or developed. The programme, from October to December in 2025, initiated the revision of the **Gender Equity and Equality Act (GEEA)** by way of drafting a concept note which was discussed with the Zambia Law Development Commission, the Gender Division and other women rights led organisations. The GEEA of 2015 was a landmark piece of legislation, but over a decade later, the conversation around "equality" has shifted significantly. Reviewing is about acknowledging that the world and the understanding of gender equality has

evolved. International standards, such as those set by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) and various ILO conventions (such as Convention 190), have been updated since 2015. Reviewing the Act ensures that domestic law remains competitive and compliant with international human rights obligations. The review of the Gender Equity and Equality Act will lead to identification and addressing of the gaps existing in the Act and thereby contribute to an improved enabling environment for Gender Based Violence mechanisms in Outcomes B and C of the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Programme. This will align with the provisions in the Anti-GBV Act No. 1 of 2011. At sub-national level some of the planned activities involved exchange visits between traditional leaders on good practices and norms for addressing Gender Based Violence at community level, and this will provide opportunities and platforms for sharing and replicating community by-laws aimed at ending child marriages, which have been passed and implemented in certain chiefdoms.

The **Zambia National Action Plan (ZNAP)** under the **United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women Peace and Security (WPS)** is ready to be officially launched and disseminated. The most significant achievement in 2025 was to cost the plan. The final version, in fact, includes a section that details budget needs from 2026 to 2031, as well as a reporting and monitoring structure from the district level up to the international level (UN Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security to the UN Security Council and CEDAW). Although ambitious, the document is intentional on operationalization and in assigning responsibilities to different government departments (Gender Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit, and local authorities). The NAP is a strategic document that will help to advance Spotlight Initiative's objectives in Zambia, and those targeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 5. It sets out Zambia's commitments to ensure women's protection, participation, and leadership in governance, peace processes, and humanitarian response. The focus on the inclusive, effective and meaningful participation and leadership of women in governance, peace and security processes at all levels, as well as the empowerment of WLOs, is particularly relevant in the pre-election context.

During 2025, the Initiative made progress on the submission of the findings and recommendations of the **review of the Anti-GBV Act No. 1 of 2011**. The Gender Division as a co-ordination and mother body of the Act launched a nationwide consultation on the recommendations, involving citizens, CSOs, local government representatives felt there was a need to harmonise the activity with resources from other co-operation partners, such as the World Bank. To avoid duplication of efforts and to identify further gaps in the legal instrument, the Spotlight team has followed the process closely in 2025 and participated in the consultation round that happened in Lusaka. The coordination on this significant piece of legislation will continue in 2026 to see that the process is concluded.

Outcome B: Prevention

The Initiative's approach to GBV prevention involved faith and traditional leaders, teachers, adolescents and service providers. The Initiative has mobilized faith and traditional leaders and established communities of practice to ensure sustained action, ongoing support, and collaboration in driving cultural change. Traditional leaders are actively promoting gender-equitable norms, mediating disputes non-violently, and mobilizing their communities against GBV, demonstrating strong early traction that is promising for lasting behaviour change. The programme has secured commitments from leaders to utilize their influential platforms (homily, community gatherings) to raise awareness, promote women's participation in leadership, and use influential female role models to inspire and mentor potential women candidates. A focus on adolescents and youth as a key target population for GBV prevention has been kept throughout the year, leveraging the LSHE

curriculum in schools and the adolescents safe space model for out of schools youths. The initiative is projected to yield significant results, including increased school retention rates, a reduction in teenage pregnancies, and a contribution to ending child marriage, thereby improving health outcomes for girls and young women.

The Initiative contributed to improved gender-equitable social norms, attitudes, and behaviour change during the period June to December 2025, as four (4) Community Dialogues comprising twenty (20) traditional leaders and twenty (20) community leaders were conducted covering broad themes on gender equality, GBV prevention and social norms in communities and with Chiefdom traditional leaders resulting in more gender-equitable social norms, attitudes, and behaviours change at community and individual levels to increase GEWE and prevent GBV, including through women's economic empowerment interventions. The programme reached a total of 881 community members, comprising 163 girls, 116 boys, 470 women and 132 men.

The programme worked with the Zambia Men's Network for Gender and Development (ZMNGD) in conducting sensitisation sessions on positive masculinity across 4 districts (Chinsali, Chipangali, Isoka, Katete), with 368 beneficiaries (124 men, 120 boys, 124 women). Thirty-five (35) male champions were identified and mentored, so that they will continue with this community level activities in the next years.

The Initiative has further empowered 238 faith and traditional leaders (165 male; 73 female) with the tools, knowledge, and platforms needed to challenge harmful norms and advance gender equality within their communities. Traditionally seen as custodians of cultural practices, these leaders are increasingly adopting proactive roles as anti-GBV champions using their influence to discourage child marriage, promote girls' education, and denounce practices such as wife inheritance, virginity testing, and transactional sexual exploitation. Participants feedback indicates a growing openness among leaders to integrate gender-transformative messaging into religious sermons, initiation ceremonies, and community mobilization events. This shift is catalysing broader behavioural change and fostering community environments that support women's rights and dignity. During these interventions, emerging impacts included: (i) Traditional leaders sustained their commitment to fight GBV; (ii) Communities are questioning entrenched norms and adopting equitable practices and (iii) that male champions are shifting peer influence toward positive masculinity.

To promote local learning from effective prevention efforts to fight GBV through the traditional leadership, the Initiative facilitated two (2) exchange visits between Chiefdom leaders, His Royal Highness (HRH) Chief Chanje of the Chewa People in Chipangali District, and HRH Senior Chief Kafwimbi of Isoka District, on advocacy for GEWE, GBV policy enforcement addressing GBV prevention and social norms, focusing on behaviour change for positive masculinity. The exchange visits took place in November and December 2025. The exchange visits strengthened collaboration between traditional leaders, Government of the Republic of Zambia authorities and stakeholders to amplify GBV response and prevention efforts. The exchange visits have scaled up initiatives where the Chiefs explore joint initiatives and demand replications of successes. In Muchinga Province, senior Government officials such as Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Members of Parliament, District Commissioners all have declared Zambian government's commitment to eradicate GBV and provide an opportunity for Royal Highnesses' the Chiefs to advocate for resources. The exchange learning visits have also led to improved joint coordination and planning on GBV prevention, plans for joint initiatives in Eastern and Muchinga Provinces, and increased visibility for GBV services in the provinces, in addition to adopting good practices on GBV, social norms, and positive masculinity.

Teachers and education officials increasingly view the prevention of school-related GBV as a shared responsibility rather than a standalone intervention. The training of 400 in-service teachers (200 in Eastern Province and 200 in Muchinga Province) reaching over 24,000 learners with the curriculum, has helped normalize open dialogue on respect, equality, and learner protection, with educators reporting greater confidence in addressing sensitive issues and engaging learners empathetically. Specifically, the methodology adopted for the training was the Connect with Respect Tool (CwR). This is a tool which is designed to build teacher capacity in promoting respectful gender relationships, preventing SRGBV, and improving school learning environments, by teaching the skills for respectful gender relationships to learners in schools. Further, the Connect with Respect classroom intervention is designed to increase knowledge, develop positive gender attitudes, and build the skills for respectful and non-violent relationships.

Regarding the out of school prevention with the **adolescents**, 1,649 girls (808 girls aged 10 - 14 and 841 girls aged 15-19) were reached through the safe space programme across various communities in Katete and Chinsali Districts. The impact of this activity was registered by traditional leaders in Mokomaninau (Katete District), where they observed that adolescent girls were showing positive behavioral changes while their parents were appreciative of the mentorship they received through the Safe Space session. In addition, the traditional leadership in Mokomaninau requested that similar sessions be conducted with parents, as many lacked basic information on the prevention of GBV and the mechanisms to address GBV cases affecting adolescents.

Each district had 15 trained volunteers to work with the girls as mentors. Each volunteer facilitated two groups, for a total of 60 groups, covering topics around reproductive health, life skills, gender and GBV, human rights, financial literacy, implications of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, motivation, confidence and self-efficacy. The groups met for three months having a session once per week. During this period, two adolescents in Katete were referred to health facilities for pregnancy testing from safe spaces, and one adolescent in Chinsali was referred to the One-Stop Center after experiencing physical abuse from her partner. These sessions enhanced participants' skills in preventing GBV and increased their awareness of GBV-related issues. During a feedback session, the girls reported that the safe spaces helped build their agency, particularly in decision-making processes that are often culturally restricted, including economic decisions within their households. The adolescent girls noted that they face heightened risks of GBV, social isolation, and limited access to reproductive health services, among other challenges. However, after participating in multiple sessions, they stated that their confidence had significantly increased, as they gained more knowledge on SRH, GBV prevention, and ways to challenge and denounce harmful social norms. In 2025 the programme involved 900 girls in Katete district and 749 girls in Chinsali district. It is worth noting that in Chinsali 8% of the enrolled girls were school drop-outs, 4% were married and 2% already had children. Katete showed slightly better statistics, with 6% of girls out of school (all above 15 years old), 1% of the girls had children and only 3 girls were married.



Above: Girls in from a football club in Chinsali participating to the Safe Space with their mentor

Outcome C: Response

GBV and child marriage continue to pose significant threats to the safety, health, and wellbeing of adolescent girls and young women in Zambia particularly in Eastern and Muchinga Provinces. Deeply rooted harmful norms, poverty-related vulnerabilities, and persistent gender inequalities have sustained high rates of child marriages, teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and GBV-related HIV infections particularly among adolescent girls who remain disproportionately vulnerable. Migrants and other mobile populations face additional risks, including limited access to protection and continuity of services along migration corridors. Moving the first steps for women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices to benefit from available, accessible, acceptable and quality essential service, the Spotlight Initiative provided technical expertise to national coordination platforms and inter-ministerial mechanisms led by the Gender Division. As detailed in this section, it helped to reinforce coherent, multisectoral approaches to GBV response by collaborating with the Division to enhance referral pathways so they are inclusive of migrants' needs and aligned with international protection standards, ensuring that no one is left behind in accessing quality, survivor-centered GBV services.

The Spotlight Initiative 2.0 contributed to strengthening community-level response systems, improving institutional response capacities, and shifting social norms in the high-burden target districts (Katete, Chipangali, Chinsali, and Isoka). Two **multi-disciplinary training on Gender and GBV** were held in the two Provinces, co-facilitated by the Gender Division. The capacity strengthening involved 39 members of the Gender Sub-committees, with 20 participants from Chinsali District (Muchinga Province) and 19 from

Chipangali District (Eastern Province). The training concentrated on the management of GBV cases, incorporating insights from essential stakeholders such as the medical sector, police, National Prosecution Authority (NPA), and community-based response systems. The training also highlighted the necessity of reinforcing referral systems for GBV cases at both district and provincial levels. Participants expressed gratitude for the capacity-building sessions, indicating that before the training, the Gender Subcommittees had been inactive, and members were uncertain about their roles and responsibilities. In Muchinga, the training concluded with the committee scheduling their next meeting, indicating a renewed commitment. In Chinsali district, as a result, the trained Gender sub committee members successfully held one planning meeting to prepare for the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV after many years of the district and province not commemorating the event. The committee was able to commemorate the 16 Days of activism with support from the Gender Division and the Zambia Sugar Company (private sector), which provided branding and logistical support.

Capacity building efforts addressing the service providers also started to cover the topic of Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE). The Initiative collaborated with the Electoral Commission of Zambia, the GD and Childline/Lifeline to conduct a training on the reporting and monitoring of the VAWE cases. In 2026, this will be further expanded to create a referral pathway and ensure that VAWE does not go undetected.

Since the Initiative's inception, 108 frontline officials (58 male, 50 female), including border authorities, law enforcement officers, health workers, and social workers, have enhanced their skills to manage GBV, **PSEA**, and migration-related vulnerabilities with sensitivity and survivor-centred care. Through the pre and post training tests, trainees demonstrated stronger understanding of survivor confidentiality, safe evidence collection, informed consent, multi-sectoral referral pathways, and SEA reporting procedures. This capacity strengthening has directly improved the quality and consistency of GBV/SEA prevention and response services in border communities ensuring that vulnerable women, girls, and migrants receive dignified, rights-based support. Participants also reported increased confidence in implementing institutional safeguards such as gender-sensitive search procedures, group interviews for accountability, and monitoring of high-risk operational environments, contributing to safer and more accountable service delivery practices.

Additionally, under the Spotlight Initiative's focus on evidence-driven programming, the Initiative conducted a **comprehensive community needs assessment** in Chinsali and Isoka, revealing deeply entrenched GBV patterns, low reporting rates due to fear and stigma, and limited trust in formal justice systems. The assessment highlighted harmful practices including child marriage, elopement, wife inheritance, and the trafficking of young women and boys. These insights have already guided the refinement of community awareness approaches, improved design of service delivery interventions, and strengthened collaboration with gatekeepers including faith and traditional leaders, civic authorities and justice actors. With clear, community-grounded evidence, the Initiative and partners are better positioned to tailor interventions that respond effectively to local realities, improve reporting pathways, and expand survivor support networks.

The staff drawn from the immigration department, law enforcement institutions and post GBV care service providers in that were trained on PSEA were drawn from these different categories conforming to the following criterion and objectives:

- Law enforcement personnel: to strengthen their ability to identify, prevent, and appropriately respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, ensure they uphold the highest standards of protection, professionalism, and accountability while safeguarding the rights and dignity of vulnerable individuals.

- Immigration personnel: to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and ethical guidance needed to prevent, identify, and respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, ensuring the protection of migrants, strengthening institutional accountability, and promoting safe, right-based migration management.
- Service providers: to strengthen their ability to safely identify, prevent, and respond to cases of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, promote survivor-centered and trauma-informed care, and reinforce accountability within service delivery systems to ensure that those seeking help are protected from further harm.

Finally, the Initiative also considered the longer-term recovery and autonomy dimension of the GBV response. Selected GBV survivors were enrolled for **economic self-sufficiency**. In collaboration with Young Happy, Healthy and Safe (YHHS), the project mobilised 50 GBV survivors (4 male; 46 female) and trained them in entrepreneurship and business skills and thereafter provided them with start-up support for goat rearing and poultry farming (goat and chicken livestock distributed). These economic empowerment initiatives contributed to reduced vulnerability by GBV survivors to repeat violence and fostered psychosocial healing resulting in survivor resilience.



Above: Chipangali Women Savings Group showing off their goats - after being trained in poultry and goat rearing

Outcome D: Women's Movement and Civil Society

The Spotlight Initiative implemented interventions leading to strengthened women's movements, increased women's readiness for leadership and political participation and enhanced accountability at the community level. From April to December 2025, the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 made significant strides in strengthening the capacity, coordination, and influence of WROs and women leaders at the local level. The activities on women's leadership held in the targeted districts targeting women aspiring for elective positions in the 2026 General Elections and those already in various spaces of influence at local level directly contributed to national, regional, and global commitments, including SDG 4, 5 and 10, the Southern African Development

Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development particularly the target of gender parity in decision-making by 2030 as well as the Zambia's Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), Pillar 5, which promotes a conducive governance environment.

In 2025, the Initiative engaged members representing 33 WROs in the capacity strengthening activities. Among these, 3 are organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs), 14 are grassroots organizations, and 16 are local sub-section of organizations that are also active and represented at the national level. Out of the 33 organizations, 12 were based in Muchinga Province and 21 in Eastern Province. The selection of the organizations for their involvement into the activities is done by the partner NGOCC based not only on their membership to the umbrella organizations but also on their operational presence on the ground.

The impact of the Initiative on the way the WROs operate, both internally and as a network, has been registered by different changes in the field, as illustrated below:

- Participants demonstrated **increased capacity to apply social accountability tools** to promote gender-responsive governance. After the training, participants were requested to model how the members will be better positioned to engage relevant authorities, including selected chiefs such as Chief Mbangombe and Chief Kathumba in Chipangali District, and all the town councils through structured dialogue, evidence-based advocacy, and follow-up actions. Participants committed to conducting community mobilisation and sensitisation initiatives, monitoring service delivery, and collectively responding to emerging governance and service delivery gaps. Detailed WROs Action Plans were developed for each district, which will be implemented and supported by the Spotlight's CSOs partners in 2026.
- The **WROs identified concrete advocacy priorities**, particularly addressing discrimination in the allocation and disbursement of the CDF and improving women's access to these resources. Participants agreed to undertake sustained follow-up on key community issues, including the prevention of early marriage, inadequate maintenance of maternity wards, poor service delivery at some clinics such as Tamanda and Nyauzi clinics in Chipangali and Katete respectively, unequal distribution of CDF grants, and poor road infrastructure, especially the Chamamongwe Road leading to the clinic in Chipangali districts. Importantly, women highlighted their exclusion from local budgeting processes and resolved to take collective action to secure meaningful participation in planning and budgetary decision-making at both community and local government levels.
- WROs collectively supported the **reporting of GBV cases** to the Zambia Police on behalf of women and girls who had experienced various forms of abuse, including physical violence by spouses. In Chandamali Village (Chinsali district, Muchinga Province) the WROs conducted community awareness activities that led to the withdrawal of a child from a child marriage and the reporting of the case to the Victim Support Unit (VSU) in accordance with the Children's Code Act. Additionally, a woman who had been physically abused by her spouse was assisted, and the case was reported to the VSU. Given the nature of the case, the couple received counselling and reconciliation support. Follow-up reports from WRO members indicate positive behaviour change, with the husband having ceased the abuse and demonstrating improved conduct towards his wife. This shows collaboration with law enforcement agencies acting against perpetrators.

These significant changes were activated by capacity building interventions, follow-up and monitoring, mentoring and remote support. Seventy-five participants (58 female and 17 male) drawn from the WROs were trained to strengthen their knowledge and skills in gender-responsive programme design, advocacy,

and community mobilisation. Participants represented organisations operating in Chipangali (18), Katete (19), Isoka (18), and Chinsali (20) districts.

The topics covered included: gender concepts, women's rights, advocacy and leadership, resource mobilisation, women's movement building, and climate action. Other sessions focused on EVAWG, advocacy, using participatory methodologies in community mobilisation and engagement, leadership skills, gender mainstreaming, and the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PwDs) in governance and decision-making processes. Despite operating with limited resources and largely voluntarily, the participating organisations demonstrated a strong commitment to driving positive change in their communities. Participants pledged to address gender inequality and to cascade the knowledge acquired to other members within their organisations to strengthen ongoing advocacy and programming efforts. The implementing partner (NGOCC) collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture to facilitate discussions on the impacts of climate change and mitigation, the topic was deemed very relevant to women's daily life as they are mainly farmers and in charge of the food needs of their families.

Social accountability was introduced to the WROs through a specialized training that involved 42 participants (32 females and 10 males). The focus was on strengthening women's participation in holding duty bearers accountable for commitments made, the management of public resources and the promotion of women's leadership and in decision-making processes. The training targeted WROs operating in Isoka (10 participants), Chinsali (12), Chipangali (10), and Katete (10) districts. The training enhanced participants' knowledge and practical skills to engage, question and demand accountability from duty bearers, including traditional leaders, political actors, and local government authorities.

Regarding women's participation in leadership, the resources of the Spotlight Initiative have been fundamental in reaching aspirant candidates from remote districts, with a specific focus on preparation for the 2026 General Elections.

A targeted leadership training programme was implemented in Chipangali and Katete Districts to strengthen the leadership capacity of women aspiring for elective office and those already holding leadership roles within community and civic structures. The intervention aimed at enhancing women's meaningful participation in governance and political decision-making at the community, local, and national levels. The programme also sought to build the leadership and organisational capacity of women leading Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), cooperatives, and district women's associations. Fifty-six women (30 in Chipangali and 26 in Katete) were trained, mentored (in groups) and a few were selected to be by the NGOCC media team. During the training, participants critically examined structural and socio-cultural barriers to women's leadership, especially political participation and deepened their understanding of gender concepts, harmful norms, GBV and VAWE. Child marriage emerged as a significant concern across communities, highlighting the link between harmful social norms and the exclusion of women and girls from leadership opportunities.

The participants were further equipped with practical political strategy and campaign planning tools, including stakeholder mapping, networking, identification of gatekeepers and allies, financial preparedness, constituency engagement and visibility strategies. Aspiring candidates were supported to develop clear political visions and draft manifestos and were given opportunities to present and refine their ideas through peer and facilitator feedback. The training deliberately profiled diverse leadership pathways, including the experience of a woman with a disability, reinforcing inclusive political participation.

In Chipangali District, among the 30 women leaders who participated, 5 are now aspiring area councillors. This number is significant considering that currently there is only one sitting female councillor, and she is seeking re-election. In Katete District, 25 women participants comprising 6 aspiring candidates for the 2026 elections (including two aspiring Members of Parliament and three aspiring Area Councillors) and one serving Area Councillor aspiring to contest as a Member of Parliament. All participants were women, representing diverse leadership levels and spheres of community influence.

8. Challenges and Mitigating Measures

During the reporting period, the implementation of Spotlight Initiative 2.0 activities encountered several operational, contextual, and institutional challenges. While these challenges affected the pace and modality of implementation in some instances, adaptive management approaches and strong collaboration with partners enabled the programme to remain on track in delivering results aligned with the Outcomes. The key challenges and corresponding mitigating measures are outlined below and are consistent with the risks and mitigation strategies presented in the Risk Matrix (Annex B).

Challenge	Summary of Impact	Mitigating Measures
Operational Challenges		
Capacity and operational constraints among local, grassroots, and partners civil society organisations	<p>At the selection of implementing partners, the programme faced delays in engaging implementing partners, and struggled to identify CSOs with the required capacity to deliver in the target areas. CSOs submitted incomplete or late documents, causing repeated clarification requests and reminders, which extended the review timeline and delayed partner selection and related workplan activities, including community mobilization and joint missions.</p> <p>Uneven institutional capacity and literacy levels among Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) at the grassroots level and limited human and financial resources available to WROs are a challenge for cascading and sustained follow-up.</p>	<p>Adopted a phased and supportive capacity-building approach, combining formal training with mentoring, follow-up, and simplified tools. Conducted refresher discussions (in Isoka, Chinsali) and supported WROs to develop realistic, context-specific action plans. Collaboration among CSOs implementing partners leveraged existing tools and experienced facilitators.</p>

<p>Infrastructure and digital connectivity constraints</p>	<p>Poor internet connectivity and network failures in Chinsali, Chipangali, Katete and Isoka districts affected the effectiveness of virtual coordination meetings, leading to delays and reduced representation from some WROs. On the other hand, in-person meetings and mentorship are costly and the distances to be covered are vast.</p>	<p>Adopted flexible implementation modalities, including postponing activities, prioritising in-person engagements, and sharing key meeting outcomes with absent organisations. Future planning for 2026 was informed to emphasise hybrid and decentralised coordination mechanisms with realistic resourcing for rural digital engagement.</p>
<p>Contextual Challenges</p>		
<p>Contextual and institutional challenges affecting service delivery and sustainability</p>	<p>The withdrawal of USAID funding led to the exit of skilled personnel (police officers, paralegals), significantly impacting the functionality of One-Stop Centres and reducing access to integrated GBV response services, posing risks to the sustainability of survivor support and referral pathways.</p>	<p>Measures included advocating for greater government ownership, engaging traditional leaders in interim survivor support mechanisms, and exploring the integration of CDF to support after-care and economic empowerment.</p> <p>There has also been greater scrutiny with more consideration for sustainability plans when admitting new development programmes.</p>
<p>Climate and environmental challenges</p>	<p>Climate variability and environmental stressors, particularly in agriculture dependent rural communities, affected women’s livelihoods and indirectly limited participation in programme activities from October to December 2025.</p>	<p>Climate justice and climate-responsive programming were integrated into WROs capacity-building. Training facilitated by District Agricultural Officers enhanced understanding of the intersection between climate change, gender inequality, and GBV, equipping WROs to incorporate climate considerations into advocacy and resilience-building.</p>

<p>Ensuring "Leaving No One Behind" principles</p>	<p>Reaching groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g., women with disabilities, elderly women, women in remote areas, migrant and mobile populations) required additional resources and tailored approaches.</p>	<p>Disability inclusion, youth participation, and gender-responsive approaches were proactively mainstreamed (e.g., mandatory participation of Persons with Disabilities in WRO training). Targeted profiling of marginalised women leaders reinforced the "leave no one behind" commitment.</p>
<p>Staffing and Sustainability of Core Agency Support</p>	<p>The limited allocation of financial resources to direct coordination costs raises concerns about reliance on agency core resources to support staff working on the Spotlight implementation, potentially impacting sustainability and dedicated programme focus.</p>	<p>Agencies have designated dedicated technical focal points to lead implementation, ensuring accountability. The programme model relies primarily on CSOs for delivery, supporting sustainability and localisation. To pursue the same objective, the Gender Division has also formally appointed a Spotlight Initiative Focal Point and an Alternate Focal Point.</p> <p>Flexibility in resource allocation towards direct coordination costs by country offices will be required for 2027. There will be a need for further reprogramming of both programme and operational funding during 2027 based on implementation experiences at both national and sub-national levels in Muchinga and Eastern Provinces (for example re-allocating resources from one Outcome to another to come ensure quality deliverables).</p>
<p>Activities implementation challenges</p>		

<p>Challenges in identifying and supporting women aspiring for political leadership</p>	<p>Only a limited number of women willing to come forward as aspiring candidates, particularly in Isoka and Chinsali, slowed progress toward political participation targets. Deep-rooted socio-cultural norms, fear of violence/backlash, and limited financial capacity discouraged open expression of interest in elective positions.</p>	<p>Intensified community sensitisation and confidence-building efforts through trained advocates, WROs, and traditional leaders. Engaged chiefs and opinion leaders to legitimise women's political participation. Expanded leadership training to include women in broader spaces of influence (CBOs, cooperatives, FBOs) to build a future leadership pipeline.</p>
<p>Deep-rooted cultural beliefs slowing behaviour and norm change</p>	<p>Entrenched cultural beliefs and attitudes among some teachers and community members slowed acceptance of gender-responsive approaches and delayed positive shifts in norms. Entrenched harmful norms and habits include child marriage, alcohol abuse, peer pressure among youth (drug abuse, abusive relationships).</p>	<p>The CSOs implementing partners adopted training approaches that create safe spaces for dialogue and reflection, enabling stakeholders and influencing actors (teachers, faith leaders, community leaders, activists) to critically examine and gradually transform deeply held beliefs and practices. This was coupled with sustained sensitisation and community dialogues, enactment of local by-laws, integration of youth-focused mentorship.</p>

9. Lessons Learned and New Opportunities

Several lessons emerged that are informing the direction and delivery of Spotlight Initiative 2.0 going forward. They are summarized below:

Integrating migration-sensitive and survivor-centered approaches into GBV prevention and response systems at all levels. Work with government stakeholders including the Gender Division, Provincial Gender Officers, and district coordination structures demonstrated that sustained technical support is essential for strengthening case management, improving referral pathways, and ensuring that vulnerable groups such as migrants, border communities, and mobile populations are not left behind. This has highlighted the need for continued capacity development, harmonized tools, and simplified coordination mechanisms that can be easily applied by frontline actors even in resource-constrained settings.

Role of community engagement, particularly through civil society and women-led organisations. Evidence from community dialogues, outreach activities, and partnerships with local actors showed that

interventions are most impactful when they are grounded in community realities and when community actors actively shape and lead the process. This has reinforced the importance of strengthening CSO capacities, supporting grassroots advocacy, and investing in approaches that foster long-term behavioural and social norm change. Furthermore, meaningful involvement of traditional leaders, youth groups, and community structures has proved essential in addressing harmful practices, preventing child marriage, and enhancing local ownership of GBV prevention efforts.

Role of media partnerships in scaling awareness and influencing public perceptions on GBV, PSEA and migration. Collaboration with journalists and media houses showed that ethical reporting and coherent messaging can significantly strengthen national prevention efforts. However, it was also evident that media actors require ongoing technical support to ensure accuracy, survivor safeguarding, and avoidance of harmful stereotypes. This has informed plans to deepen journalist training, enhance coordination with media bodies, and expand the use of community radio and digital platforms to reach underserved populations.

In terms of contextual adaptation, the Initiative learned that flexibility is essential to respond to evolving socio-economic conditions, migration patterns, and community dynamics. Programmes had to adapt to shifting priorities at provincial and district levels, including changes in staff, movement patterns, and local incidents of GBV. These experiences demonstrated the value of maintaining flexible planning processes, strengthening early-warning mechanisms, and ensuring regular communication across RUNOs, government partners, and CSOs.

Embedding GBV prevention in traditional structures ensures sustainability. Strengthening government ownership particularly through the Gender Division, Cabinet Office, and subnational structures has proved vital for embedding Spotlight practices into long-term national systems. It has been noted that sustainability is best achieved when interventions build institutional capacity, align with national policies, and empower local leadership. As a result, future programming will continue prioritizing government-led coordination platforms, integrated case management systems, and multi-stakeholder partnerships that support long-lasting change.

Addressing judgmental attitudes requires sustained, hands-on support. While progress was made during the reporting period, judgmental attitudes and behaviours among some teachers towards LSHE and SRH discussions persisted and, in some cases, limited young people's willingness to adopt positive behaviours and access services. A key lesson was that one-off training is insufficient. Continuous technical support through follow-up sessions, mentoring by college hub-trained teachers, and the provision of practical LSHE materials at school level proved essential in deepening teachers' understanding, confidence, and non-judgmental engagement with learners.

Community engagement strengthens acceptance and reduces resistance. The use of multiple platforms such as school open days, Parent Teacher Association meetings, and learner assemblies to share LSHE information improved parent teacher understanding and strengthened teacher learner relationships. The active involvement of traditional leaders emerged as a critical success factor, as their participation enhanced community mobilisation and helped address initial resistance from parents and caregivers who viewed LSHE negatively. This demonstrated that meaningful community dialogue is central to shifting norms and building local ownership.

Inclusive programming must move beyond policy intent to practical action. Although national policies acknowledge learners with disabilities and special needs, limited operational guidance initially constrained their inclusion in LSHE delivery. The programme's decision to deliberately include teachers of learners with disabilities highlighted the importance of translating policy commitments into concrete implementation strategies. This lesson underscores the need for clearer guidance and capacity-building to ensure LSHE is accessible to all learners.

In terms of **new opportunities**, the Initiative has identified the following to be leveraged in 2026:

Gender Transformative Budgeting. In 2025, UNFPA implemented the SDG Localization Programme in 5 Districts, among which Katete district, one of the two Spotlight target districts in Eastern Province. The SDG Localization Programme's implementation included the training on Gender Transformative Budgeting at the Ward level. The implementation of this other UN Joint Programme in one of the Spotlight districts has developed an approach that in 2026 will be taken forward in the remaining three Spotlight districts, benefitting from the lessons learned and the capacity built in the implementing partner (NGOCC). This was a first step in acquiring domestic financing for GBV services and gender equality measures in the Spotlight provinces that can be leveraged in the next two years.

Opportunities for LSHE implementation. With growing acceptance and reduced resistance to LSHE implementation at the national level, in 2025 a new opportunity has finally emerged to scale up teacher training and deepen community engagement in Muchinga and Eastern provinces. Increased demand from schools and communities creates favourable conditions to strengthen learner retention, reduce school-related gender-based violence, and address harmful gender and social norms. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Spotlight Initiative is well positioned to deliver improved health, protection, and education outcomes for both girls and boys, while reinforcing sustainable, community-owned change.

Momentum Ahead of the 2026 General Elections. Growing visibility of trained women leaders offers a strategic chance to intensify mentorship and media engagement to consolidate political participation gains.

CDF as a domestic financing mechanism. Increased openness to utilizing CDF for EVAWG and women-led initiatives offers a pathway to reduce donor dependence and enhance sustainability.

10. Contributions to the Evidence Base and Knowledge Management

In 2025 the Spotlight Initiative has expanded the available knowledge base on GBV and gender equality, specifically focusing on the programme intervention areas. As part of the Spotlight Initiative's evidence-driven approach, a community needs assessment was conducted in Chinsali and Isoka (8-12 September, 2025). The study identified persistent GBV patterns, low reporting rates due to fear and stigma, mistrust in the justice system, and harmful practices like child marriage, elopement, wife inheritance, and trafficking. These findings shaped targeted community awareness strategies, improved service delivery, and strengthened work with local leaders and authorities. Backed by this evidence, through the project and partners interventions have been better adapted to fit local needs, enhance reporting mechanisms, and broaden survivor support networks.

In addition, the Initiative has commissioned a Gender Representation and Leadership Audit, to obtain a comprehensive analysis of women's and men's representation in key high leadership positions across

Zambia's public and private sectors at national and local levels. This study was concluded at the end of the year and is yet to be launched and published. However, it will be hosted on the NGOCC website once launched. The gender audit reveals pervasive underrepresentation of women in leadership across most sectors, despite exceptions like the Judiciary, where women hold over 50% of superior court judgeships. Women make up just 18% of the Cabinet, 12% of the National Assembly, and 7% of local ward councillors. Furthermore, there is 0% female representation among security and defense wing heads, parastatal board chairs, and university Vice-Chancellors, while the private sector sees similar deficits, such as only 5 out of 14 sampled banks having female CEOs. Although many institutions have established gender-responsive policies, poor implementation and deep-rooted structural barriers, like patriarchal norms and a shallow talent pipeline—continue to block the path to achieving true gender parity.

As explained in the previous section of this report, implementation with civil society partners and government partners generated critical programmatic, operational, and technical lessons that inform future adaptive management and sustainability strategies. In the next two years, the programme will consolidate evidence on what works in addressing judgmental attitudes, strengthening community engagement, and advancing inclusive programme delivery, for instance through structured teacher reflection tools, mentoring reports from college hub-trained teachers, and routine monitoring and learning notes.

11. Innovative, Promising or Good Practices

The Spotlight Initiative in Zambia is actively exploring the documentation of innovative and promising practices as implementation moves forward. Initial steps have already been taken toward this goal, including the recognition of the need to further document lessons learnt from different aspects of ongoing interventions, some of which are considered innovative in the country context, some of which may also be of further interest and scalable for ERAW practitioners in the region and other contexts. Eventually as more data is collected the Programme is committed to contributing to different learning platforms from which it participates at a global scale like the Compendium of Innovative and Good Practices and Lessons Learned | Spotlight Initiative.

Below follows a preliminary identification of some of the practices that we will continue to further document and on which more details are provided in Annex D.

11.1 *Innovative Practice*. Resilience Circles: Embedding Mental Health and Psychosocial Support within LSHE and Connect with Respect (CwR)

Under Spotlight Initiative 2.0, *Resilience Circles* integrate Life Skills and Health Education (LSHE), *Connect with Respect (CwR)*, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into a unified school-community model for preventing and responding to school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV).

Unlike previous approaches that implemented these components separately, this model combines knowledge, behaviour change, emotional resilience, and survivor support within structured peer groups, enabling a more holistic and impactful response.

Piloted in 2025 and implemented in Isoka, Chinsali, Chipangali, and Katete, the model targets adolescents (10–19 years), teachers, and communities through bi-weekly peer groups (15–20 learners). These circles promote safe spaces for dialogue, social cohesion, and positive behaviour change.

Key features include:

- Integrated delivery platform: Combines LSHE, CwR, and MHPSS through peer-led sessions, trauma-informed facilitation, and strengthened referral pathways.
- Behavioural transformation through CwR: Promotes consent, healthy relationships, gender equality, positive masculinity, and bystander intervention.
- Peer-based resilience building: Uses role plays, reflection dialogues, emotional literacy, and coping skills to reinforce learning and shift norms.
- School-based response capacity: Teachers and counsellors provide psychological first aid, identify SRGBV cases, support safe disclosure, and activate referrals.
- Community engagement: Extends impact through parent–teen forums, community dialogues, and youth-led advocacy to address harmful norms.
- Adaptive learning: Utilizes simple monitoring tools and monthly reflections to track progress and continuously improve implementation.

By embedding prevention and response within schools and communities, Resilience Circles create safer, more supportive learning environments and position schools as hubs for gender equality and violence prevention.

Expected results include:

- Reduced SRGBV through norm change
- Improved adolescent relationship and resilience skills
- Increased engagement of boys as allies
- Reduced stigma around reporting violence
- Strengthened school-based protection and referral systems

11.2 Innovative Practice. Engaging faith leaders in theological reflections on GBV

Although faith leaders are often the first point of contact for families in crisis, a significant gap in practice undermines their potential as community protectors. Religious guidance frequently suffers from inconsistent, and stigmatizing messaging that frames victimization as moral failure leading to silence and isolation. Moreover, a systemic disconnection exists where faith entities lack knowledge of national protection frameworks, resulting in a failure to refer survivors to essential professional services. To bridge this gap, the CSOs partners of the Spotlight Initiative have worked with faith leaders on the response to GBV in their communities, and on framing women participation and gender equality in theological terms. As a result, a “*Reflection on the fight against GBV and Violence Against Women in Elections*” was developed, to guide Catholic priests in the development of their homilies and teachings to their constituencies.

This approach represents a **highly innovative and strategic practice for engaging faith leaders**. Traditionally, anti-GBV advocacy relies on secular human rights language, which can sometimes feel unfamiliar. This document innovates by anchoring the fight against GBV and electoral violence within scripture and Catholic Social Teaching. By framing women’s dignity as a divine truth rather than a cultural concession, it bridges the gap between global human rights standards and deeply held religious values. This approach transforms faith leaders from passive observers into mandated champions of women's safety,

using their own spiritual texts to advocate for equitable political participation and the eradication of violence. The reflection serves as a comprehensive guide for faith communities to understand, condemn, and actively fight GBV, with a specific focus on the vulnerability's women face during electoral periods, and it leverages core Christian teachings to mandate action against GBV.

This approach represents a profound paradigm shift because it abandons the external sensitization model in favour of a theological approach to gender equality and human rights, using the very scriptures they preach from daily. Finally, the document issues a practical mandate for communities and leaders to respond to electoral GBV. It calls on faith communities to raise awareness by educating themselves through forums and discussions, and to support survivors by creating safe spaces and offering essential resources and counselling. Furthermore, it urges leaders to advocate for change by pushing for laws that protect women and hold perpetrators accountable, to promote peaceful elections by cultivating a culture of non-violence in political discourse, and to actively empower women to participate freely and safely in the political and social spheres.

11.3 Innovative Practice. Village-led marriage registers

This is an innovation and self-initiated mechanism that significantly improved community-based surveillance and timely referrals also strengthened community governance and localized records to ensure that every marriage is properly documented thereby promoting legal recognition, protecting underage children, spousal and inheritance rights and building a reliable foundation for accurate demographic planning within the village. This is an innovation at community level that has the potential of becoming a good practice to be promoted in other Chiefdoms.

11.4 Innovative Practice. Exchange visit between Traditional Chiefs

The Project has further strengthened collaboration between traditional leaders, Government of the Republic of Zambia authorities and stakeholders to amplify GBV response and prevention efforts. The exchange visits that took place between Chiefs Chanje of Chipangali and HRH senior Chief Kafwimbi of Isoka have scaled up initiatives where the Chiefs explore joint initiatives and demand replications of successes. In Muchinga Province senior Government officials such as Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Member of Parliament, District Commissioner all have declared Zambian government's commitment to eradicate GBV and provide an opportunity for His Royal highnesses' the Chiefs to advocate for resources. The outcome of the exchange learning visit in Muchinga among others has been Strengthening coordination on GBV prevention, plans for joint initiatives in Eastern and Muchinga Provinces and increased visibility for GBV services in Isoka and Chinsali districts in Muchinga Province are underway. In Chipangali district, GBV prevention and response activities at the Village Led One Stop Centre have been linked to the CDF for capacity building resource mobilisation purposes.



Above: Seated - (second from right) Senior Chief Kafwimbi of Isoka during an exchange visit to Chief Chanje of Chipangali (Seated - (second from right) - posing for a photograph.

12. Communications and Visibility

The communication and visibility activities of the Spotlight Initiative in Zambia are carried out in strict collaboration with the United Nations Information Center (UNIC), and the activities are amplified through the United Nations Zambia profiles and channels. Despite limitations in budget and human resources for a dedicated Communications focal point, the Programme in Zambia successfully conveyed key targeted communication messages that were identified and articulated during the development of the Communications Plan with support from the SI Global Team. In addition, it successfully conducted important visibility events and initiated key communication activities that were strategically planned in relation to Violence Against Women in Elections. The major visibility events, as well as the collaboration with the media, are described below.

In 2025, the **Programme Launch** on May 23rd was the highest-level event organized by the programme, with the participation of the Director of Public Prosecution, the Permanent Secretary of the Gender Division, the Embassy of Ireland Head of Cooperation and representatives from the UN agencies. On that occasion, the Director of Public Prosecution made a declaration of zero-tolerance approach to GBV and his office's commitment to evidence-based prosecutions, also known as victimless prosecutions. This approach allows cases to be presented in court without the victim testifying⁴ and does not allow the withdrawal of GBV cases.

Later in the year, the Spotlight Initiative held a hybrid **webinar on Technology Facilitated GBV**, in collaboration with the UNFPA HQ and the Spotlight Secretariat. On 13 November 2025, UNFPA Zambia and the Spotlight Initiative convened a hybrid webinar that drew more than 100 participants for a focused

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/ZAMBIADAILYMAIL/posts/director-of-public-prosecution-dpp-gilbert-phiri-says-his-office-will-no-longer-/1102868221874802/>

discussion on ending digital violence in Africa and strengthening programmes to prevent and respond to TFGBV. The event was organized in response to rising cases of TFGBV affecting activists, politicians, journalists, schoolgirls, and service users, underscoring the urgent need for scaled-up, coordinated action. Featuring opening remarks from the Head of Cooperation and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Ireland to Zambia, the webinar brought together UNFPA practitioners and TFGBV advocates who shared emerging best practices, innovative legislation, institutional approaches, prevention strategies, digital response services, and support models for women's movements and civil society across the continent. Held in the lead-up to the 16 Days of Activism, the session offered a timely platform for technical exchange and cross-sector learning aimed at accelerating efforts to end digital violence.

A key element of the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 communication for development effort is **leveraging media as a strategic partner** in transforming social norms and amplifying accurate information on GBV and migration. The UN Agencies worked with national and local media houses to strengthen responsible reporting on GBV, harmful practices, and migration-related protection issues, while also supporting journalists through training on ethical, survivor-centered reporting that upholds the safety and dignity of migrants and survivors of violence. In addition, the RUNOs developed joint communication products with media partners to raise awareness of GBV risks faced by migrant women and girls and to promote positive behavioural change across communities. Through the use of radio, television, digital platforms, and community radio stations, the Spotlight Initiative in 2025 ensured that prevention messages reach remote areas and high-mobility populations who are often at greater risk of exclusion from mainstream information channels.

The collaboration with local radio stations and TVs at the end of 2025 focused on VAWE and women in leadership, the aim was to raise awareness of gender-equitable norms, initiate community mobilization efforts to promote the VAWE reporting mechanism for 2026, and effectively reach local audiences by designing and delivering campaign messages tailored to local contexts. The topic of VAWE was introduced, defining it as any act or threat designed to silence women and restrict their democratic participation. The broadcasts educated listeners on the multifaceted nature of this issue, explaining that VAWE extends beyond physical assault to include psychological, sexual, digital, economic, institutional, and socially sanctioned abuse. Crucially, the programming highlighted that these tactics target a wide array of women, from voters and candidates to election officials and journalists, and ultimately harm society as a whole. By detailing how VAWE inflicts severe personal trauma, prevents female representation, and erodes foundational democratic values, the partner's work underscored the urgent need to protect and empower women throughout the electoral process.

Links to Photos:

[Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Zambia Photos Part I](#)

[Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Zambia Photos Part II](#)

[Spotlight Initiative 2.0 Zambia Photos Part III](#)

Link to success story: [Safe Spaces support girls to take charge of their future](#)



13. Sustainability

Sustainability planning began early in the programme cycle of the Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in Zambia and has been reinforced through ongoing coordination and technical engagements. Sustainability was integrated into inception-phase activities, including the mission conducted by the Spotlight Global Team.

The initiative strengthens governance, coordination, and service-delivery systems through: embedding multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms in government structures, including support to district and national systems; leveraging joint UN efforts and the RC-led donor engagements to attract new funding streams, consistent with communications referencing resource mobilisation commitments from the Embassy of Ireland and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. During 2025, the Spotlight Initiative programme team has strengthened partnerships with the Government institutions at national and subnational levels, with WROs, media actors, traditional leaders, youth groups, and border communities, laying the foundation of the programme's outcomes sustainability in the future. The main coordination structure where sustainability was discussed and planned this year was the National Technical Committee, which commenced to develop a sustainability plan draft during the first meeting co-chaired by UNFPA and the Gender Division. As previously mentioned in this report, domestic financing opportunities will be at the heart of both the programme delivery (linkages with CDF, Gender budget analysis and tracking, Gender transformative budgeting training) and the higher-level advocacy efforts promoted by the RUNOs in the next two years. In addition, the programme will endeavour to involve the Ministry of Finance and National Planning in the National Technical Committee in the next years to advance the conversation on the sustainability of the VAWG interventions.

It is important to note that the current Spotlight Programme does not place a heavy emphasis on service delivery investments. While sustainability and the risk of unintentionally disrupting support to survivors remain critical concerns and will be carefully monitored, the focus of this phase of the Programme is less service-oriented. The more significant sustainability challenge lies in ensuring the continuation and impact of prevention work, particularly efforts aimed at shifting social norms and promoting behavioural change at both the local and national levels. These require long-term commitment and systematic integration across sectors. In 2026, Zambia will develop the Ninth National Development Plan that will run from 2027 to 2031, and subsequently, the Districts will also design their plans. These processes provide an opportunity for the programme to hand-over interventions to the local authorities.

On the other hand, some core actions under this Programme are already anchored within existing and budgeted government initiatives, which provides an important sustainability advantage. This is especially the case for the collaboration with the Ministry of Education to roll out the LSHE curriculum, which is already institutionalized. The implementation of LSHE in Muchinga and Eastern provinces has placed sustainability at the centre of programme design and delivery, ensuring that results can be sustained beyond the programme cycle. To track sustainability across interventions, the programme has embedded LSHE within existing Ministry of Education systems, including teacher professional development structures, school-level planning processes, and routine monitoring mechanisms. Sustainability indicators are monitored through follow-up school visits, teacher mentoring reports, and periodic joint reviews with the Ministry of Education and implementing partners, allowing the programme to assess whether LSHE approaches continue to be applied, adapted, and owned at school and community levels. By positioning the Ministry of Education as the lead implementer and strengthening coordination with health, gender, justice, and social protection sectors, the programme has built political will and institutional accountability for preventing SRGBV. The Spotlight

Initiative has also prioritised resource mobilisation and strategic engagement to sustain Spotlight achievements. While primary financing has been provided through the Spotlight Initiative with support from the Embassy of Ireland in Zambia, the programme has actively engaged government counterparts and partners to explore opportunities for continued financing and integration of LSHE into national budgets and ongoing education programmes. These discussions have strengthened alignment with existing government investments in teacher deployment, school infrastructure, and learner welfare, helping to leverage public resources to support LSHE implementation. Engagement with development partners has also laid the groundwork for future collaboration and potential co-financing to scale and sustain effective approaches.

14. Next Steps

After the inception phase in 2025 and the initial impact recorded in the field by the Initiative, 2026 will see sustained efforts on prevention (continued work in the school and focus on adolescent boys; focus on VAWE), GBV services at the local level (Village-led One Stop Centers), and more importantly, sustainability and domestic financing for GBV. The paragraphs below provide more details on these areas of work:

In 2026, the Spotlight Initiative will focus on the sustainability of GBV prevention and response measures by investing in the capacity of the Zambian system (social movements, CSOs, local government, traditional authorities, national authorities) to mobilize **domestic financing** for the sector. This will be done by scaling up the gender transformative budgeting training for both local government officials and CSOs, on the one hand, and structuring the collective advocacy actions and the accountability mechanism on the other hand. This whole-of-society approach will involve stakeholders, duty-bearers and influencing actors.

In the coming year, Spotlight Initiative, working in collaboration with MoE and REPSSI, will consolidate and scale the implementation of LSHE building directly on lessons learned and emerging opportunities identified during the reporting period. Priority will be given to deepening sustained, hands-on support for teachers to address remaining judgmental attitudes, expanding community engagement where acceptance of LSHE has increased, and strengthening inclusive approaches for learners with disabilities. During the first half of 2026, the programme will focus on three key areas of work. First, additional in-service teachers will be trained and mentored, with an emphasis on practical application of LSHE and non-judgmental engagement with learners, contributing to improved classroom environments and learner protection. Second, community dialogue platforms such as PTA meetings, school open days, and engagements with traditional leaders will be expanded to reinforce local ownership, reduce resistance, and support positive norm change. Third, targeted support will be provided to strengthen inclusive LSHE delivery, including the participation of teachers working with learners with disabilities, with the aim of improving access and relevance of LSHE for all learners. From a programmatic and operational perspective, a key next step will be to further strengthen inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination to reinforce the “new way of working” promoted under the UN Reform. The Spotlight Initiative will continue to support joint planning, monitoring, and review processes with other UN agencies, CSOs and other relevant government line ministries, as well as implementing partners, to improve coherence and efficiency in programme delivery.

The work on adolescent agency promotion commended in 2025 through the girl’s safe space model will expand to include the **boys** as well. The target group will be boys aged 10-14 and 15-19 to become active allies for gender equality. Boys face their own unique set of risks, such as peer pressure, alcohol and drug abuse, pressure to engage in risky behaviors to prove their manhood. In addition, the male population in

Zambia has recorded poor health seeking behaviour and a limited access to health services. The partners will work with the boys to strengthen access to SRH services.

Zambia will have General Elections in August 2026. The lead time to the elections and the following months will see the operationalization of the **VAWE reporting mechanism** in partnership with Childline/Lifeline. Quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2026 will focus on the VAWE referral mechanism in collaboration with the Gender Division, Zambia Police Service, NPA, legal aid clinics and organization, and the Conflict Management Committees and voters education sector of the Electoral Commission of Zambia.

In line with the baseline study findings, in 2026 the Initiative will maintain a strategic focus and address **service gaps**, enhancing the capacities of frontline workers and partners, and fostering coordinated action among UN agencies and stakeholders to prevent and respond to GBV, especially in mobile and hard-to-reach communities. The Initiative will expand access to essential services using Village Led One Stop Centres (VLOSCs), invest in specialized training for GBV prevention, and streamline service delivery through collaboration and harmonized frameworks. On social behaviour change communication, we will continue the collaboration with the media personnel to document and share the successes of the Spotlight Initiative, aiming to institutionalize best practices and strengthen partnerships for long-term impact. These priorities are designed to create a more responsive, coordinated, and sustainable support system for vulnerable groups, with a strong emphasis on GBV prevention and response.

In terms of partnership with donors, the RUNOs and the RCO will continue the close engagement with the Embassy of Ireland in Lusaka to review progress, share emerging results and lessons, and explore opportunities to sustain and expand effective LSHE interventions beyond the current programme cycle. These next steps will reinforce mutual accountability, strengthen donor–UN collaboration, and support the long-term objectives of Spotlight Initiative 2.0 in advancing gender equality and ending violence against women and girls through education.

15. ANNEXES

Annex A: Zambia Results Framework

Indicator Statement	Baseline	2025 Milestone	2025 Annual Results	Cumulative Results	Target	Reporting Notes
Pillar A: Laws & Policies, Institutions, and Data						
Indicator A.1.1: Number of draft or revised laws and gender equality policies reviewed, strengthened, and harmonized to address gender-based violence and promote gender equality in alignment with international standards.	National					In 2025, Spotlight continued to the finalization of the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) and the School Re-entry Policy.
	0	2	2	2	5	
	Sub-national					
	—	—	—	—	—	
Indicator A.1.2 Number of draft laws or policies addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG), gender equality, and non-discrimination that have incorporated substantial input from women's rights advocates within the past year	0	0	0	0	4	In 2025, the Spotlight Initiative started the capacity building of the WROs. Substantial input from these actors will be incorporated into laws and policies in the future.
Indicator A.2.2 Number of women's rights advocates with strengthened capacities to draft and cost action plans on ending VAWG and accompanying M&E frameworks	Total					75 participants (58 females and 17 males) drawn from various Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) were trained to strengthen their knowledge and skills in gender-responsive programme design, advocacy, and community mobilisation. Participants represented organisations operating in Chipangali (18), Katete (19), Isoka (18), and Chinsali (20) districts. The training was for two days in each respective district.
	0	80	75	75	240	
	Age 0-17					
	—	—	—	—	—	
Age 18+						
	—	—	—	—	—	
Indicator A.5.1: Number of national and/or sub-national multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism meetings held	National					Three meetings were recorded in 2025, two at the national level and one at district level in Chinsali.
	0	4	3	3	12	
	Sub-national					
	0	0	1	1	34	

Indicator Statement	Baseline	2025 Milestone	2025 Annual Results	Cumulative Results	Target	Reporting Notes
Pillar B: Prevention						
Indicator B.1.1 Number of women, girls, young men, and boys who participated in school and community-based programs over the past year, promoting gender- equitable norms, attitudes, behaviours, reproductive rights, and women economic empowerment.	Total					Learners in schools where teachers were trained in LSHE; Girls enrolled in safe spaces;
	0	25500	25649	25649	126500	
	Female (Age 0-17)					
	0	13500	13769	13769	64000	
	Female (Age 18+)					
	—	—	0	0	—	
	Male (Age +18)					
	—	—	—	—	—	
	Male (Age 0-17)					
	0	12000	11880	11880	62500	
Other Sex (Age 0-17)						
—	—	—	—	—		
Other Sex (Age 18+)						
—	—	—	—	—		
Indicator B.1.2: The number of national and/or sub- national programs developed in the past year to support educational curricula that promote gender-equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours.	National					2 (Connect with Respect; Safe spaces,); The programme will work with these 2 programmes throughout the whole programme duration, so the end-of-programme target will be 2.
	0	2	2	2	2	
	Sub-National					
—	—	—	—	—	—	
Indicator B.2.1 Number of men and boys who regularly attend gender transformative programmes addressing violent masculinities and men’s violence towards women and girls in	Total					
	0	500	492	492	1500	
	Age 0-17					
0	250	236	236	750		

Indicator Statement	Baseline	2025 Milestone	2025 Annual Results	Cumulative Results	Target	Reporting Notes
community centres, schools and other relevant spaces within the last year.	Age 18+					
	0	250	256	256	750	
Indicator B.2.2 Number of campaigns challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotyping, including of women and girls, sex workers, migrants, facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, developed and disseminated during the past year	0	0	0	0	1	The communication campaign is planned to occur in 2026 and 2027.
Pillar C: Response & Services						
Indicator C.1.1 Number of government service providers who have increased knowledge and capacities to deliver quality and coordinated essential services to women and girls' survivors of violence within the last year	0	50	51	51	210	39 (GBV multi-disciplinary training, M13; F26); and 12 (2M; 10F on VAWE).
Indicator C.1.2 Number of government service providers who have increased knowledge and capacities to better integrate PSEAH and VAWG response into sexual and reproductive health, education and migration services, within the last year.	0	110	108	108	340	108 (F50; M58)
Pillar D: Women's Movements and Civil Society						
Indicator D.1.2: Number of women's rights groups, networks and relevant CSOs with strengthened capacities to network, partner and jointly advocate for progress on ending VAWG and Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE) at local, national, regional and global levels, within the last year	0	30	33	33	30	In 2025, the Initiative engaged members representing 33 WROs in the planned capacity strengthening activities. Among these, 3 are organizations of people with disabilities (OPDs), 14 are grassroots organizations, and 16 are local sub-section of organizations that are also active and represented at the national level.

Annex B: Risk Management Report

Risk Assessment			Risk Monitoring: How (and how often) did your programme monitor the risk(s) during the reporting period?		Addressing the Risk: Please include the mitigating and/or adaptation measures planned for/taken	Responsible Person/Unit
Risk	Likelihood: Almost Certain – 5 Likely – 4 Possible – 3 Unlikely – 2 Rare – 1	Impact: Extreme – 5 Major – 4 Moderate – 3 Minor – 2 Insignificant – 1	Periodicity	Source for monitoring		
Contextual risks						
The withdrawal of USAID funding led to the exit of skilled personnel (police officers, paralegals), significantly impacting the functionality of One-Stop Centres and reducing access to integrated GBV response services, posing risks to the sustainability of survivor support and referral pathways.	5	3	This happened at the beginning of implementation period	Gender Division, CSOs partners	Advocate for domestic financing and continue to do resource mobilization	All RUNOs
Limited capacities of CSOs, WROs and grassroots organizations	4	3	Quarterly monitoring	Partners reports and field monitoring	Close monitoring; joint planning.	All RUNOs with respective partners
Programmatic risks						

Staffing and sustainability of core agency support reliance on agency core resources to support Spotlight staff, potentially impacting sustainability and dedicated programme focus.	5	4	Monthly	RUNOs meetings	Agencies have designated dedicated technical focal points to lead implementation, ensuring accountability. Head of agencies have been engaged in ensuring that the staff is able to cover Spotlight's related responsibilities. Flexibility in resource allocation towards direct coordination costs by country offices will be required for 2027.	All RUNOs
Reliance only one donor (the Government of Ireland) for funding for programme activities and an ambitious programme structure	5	3	Discussed 2 times in 2025	HoAs meetings	RCO committed to RM for Spotlight.	RCO
Tight timelines, donor expectations vs. implementation readiness. Need to balance donor expectations for timely delivery with systems building and inclusive planning.	5	4	Every 2 months	RUNOs meetings	We adopted an acceleration plan and followed up implementation; provided updated to the Embassy of Ireland as requested to show progress in implementation.	UNFPA
Delays in national level activities led by the Gender Division	4	4	Every 2 months	Meetings with GD	Involve Heads of Agencies and PS directly.	All RUNOs per respective activities
Assumptions (if applicable): Embassy of Ireland maintains the committed level of funding throughout the whole programme duration.						

Annex C: CSO Financial Engagement Report



Country Programme: Zambia

Reporting Period: CUMULATIVE REPORT SINCE THE START OF IMPLEMENTATION UNTIL 31 DECEMBER 2025

Total budget for Civil Society Reference Group's (CSRG) workplan since programme start: \$7,500.00

Related Pillar	Donor	RUNO	Name of Civil Society Organisation (CSO)	Total Award Amount (USD)	CSO Geographic Level	Type of CSO	If Type is Constituency-led, Affiliation of Constituency-led CSO	Modality of Engagement	New or Existing CSO	% of Award as Core/ Institutional Support	Vulnerable or Marginalized Populations Supported	Award Sub - Granted or Contracted	% of award to Sub-Granted/ Contracted
B: Prevention	Ireland	UNFPA	Young Women Christian Association	\$30,370.28	National	Woman-led, Women's rights organisations, Constituency-led, Other	Adolescent girls, Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls	Implementing Partner (IP)	Existing	6.50%	Adolescent girls, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls	No	
B: Prevention	Ireland	UNDP	Break Free Together	\$12,000.00	Local/ grassroots	Other		Implementing Partner (IP)	New	7.00%	Adolescent girls, Elderly Women, Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls, Other marginalized groups relevant in national context	No	
B: Prevention	Ireland	UNDP	Young Happy Healthy and Safe (YHHS)	\$19,708.00	Local/ grassroots	Other		Implementing Partner (IP)	Existing	7.00%	Adolescent girls, Elderly Women, Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls, Other marginalized groups relevant in national context	No	
B: Prevention	Ireland	UNDP	Zambia National Men's Network for Gender in Development (ZNMN)	\$17,000.00	National	Women's rights organisations, Other		Implementing Partner (IP)	Existing	7.00%	Adolescent girls, Elderly Women, Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women	No	

											and girls, Other marginalized groups relevant in national context		
D: Civil Society Movements and Organizations	Ireland	UNFPA	Non-governmental Gender Organizations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC)	\$54,845.15	National	Woman-led, Women's rights organisations, Feminist organisation		Grantee	New	10.00%	Adolescent girls, Migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker women and girls, Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls	No	
B: Prevention	Ireland	UNFPA	Caritas Zambia	\$40,190.91	National	Women's rights organisations, Constituency-led, Other	Adolescent girls, Elderly Women, Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls	Implementing Partner (IP)	New	10.00%	Adolescent girls, Elderly Women, Women and girls with disabilities, Rural and remote women and girls	No	

Annex D: Capturing innovating, promising and good practices and knowledge production

Section A: Innovative, Promising and Good Practices

As a **Demonstration Fund**, the Spotlight Initiative aims to demonstrate how a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) and gender equality can make a lasting difference in the lives of women and girls and in the achievement of all SDGs. It is thus critical that innovative, promising and good practices, in the field of EVAWG and in the context of implementing a “new way of working”, have the **potential for adaptability, sustainability, replicability and scale-up**. This is both within the UN system and with various stakeholders to maximize the transformative potential of the Initiative. It is critical that these practices are documented and shared widely for uptake and continuous improvement to contribute to the evidence base and eliminate violence against women and girls.

This brief guidance and template ensures a common understanding of “**Innovative, Promising and/or Good Practices**” in the Spotlight Initiative. It provides a set of criteria to determine whether a practice is innovative, promising, or good, as well as a template for documentation. Please see the definitions just below / on the next page for further clarification.

Definition of an Innovative Practice

An **innovative practice** is a **new solution** (method/idea/product) with the **transformative ability to accelerate impact**. Innovation can entail improved ways of working with new and diverse partners; can be fuelled by science and technology; or can involve new social and business models, behavioral insights, or path-breaking improvements in delivering essential services and products, among other solutions. It does **not** have to involve technology; most important is that **innovation is a break from previous practice with the potential to produce significant positive impact**.

Definition of a Promising Practice

A **promising practice** has demonstrated a **high degree of success in its single setting**, and the possibility of replication in the same setting is guaranteed. It has generated some quantitative **data** showing positive outcomes over a period of time. A promising practice has the **potential** to become a good practice, but it doesn't yet have enough research or replication to support wider adoption or upscaling. As such, a promising practice incorporates a process of continuous learning and improvement.

Definition of a Good Practice

A **good practice** is not only practice that is good, but one that **has been proven to work well and produce good results** and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience that has been **tested and validated**, in the broad sense, has **been repeated and deserves to be shared**, so that a greater number of people can adopt it.

<p>Title of the Innovative, Promising or Good Practice</p>	<p>Innovative Practice</p> <p>Life Skills & Health Education (LSHE) Results/Resilience Circles with Connect with Respect (CwR) Integration</p>
<p>Provide a description of the innovative, promising, or good practice. What pillars/principles of the Spotlight Initiative does it address? (When did the activity begin? When will it be completed or is it ongoing?)</p>	<p>This innovative practice proposes the establishment of Life Skills & Health Education (LSHE) Resilience Circles integrated with Connect with Respect (CwR) as a transformative, school-community model that combines Life Skills and Health Education (LSHE), School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) prevention, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) into one cohesive prevention-and-response ecosystem.</p> <p>This innovation represents a break from previous practice, where LSHE delivery, SRGBV awareness, and psychosocial support were implemented as separate or loosely connected activities. Instead, the model integrates knowledge, behaviour change, emotional resilience, and survivor support within structured peer platforms inside schools accelerating impact by addressing risk factors, shifting norms, and strengthening response systems simultaneously.</p> <p>This innovative practice contributes directly to Outcome B and Outcome C of Spotlight Initiative 2.0, strengthening both Prevention and Response to gender-based violence. Initiated in October 2025, the intervention remains ongoing and is delivering integrated and gender-transformative actions that address root causes of violence while enhancing coordinated response mechanisms.</p>
<p>Objective of the practice: What were the goals of the activity?</p>	<p>The primary goal of the LSHE Results/Resilience Circles with Connect with Respect (CwR) integration is to establish a gender-transformative, school-based prevention and response ecosystem that reduces School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) while strengthening adolescent resilience and survivor-centred support systems.</p> <p>Specifically, the activity aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent SRGBV through structured norm transformation among adolescents. • Strengthen respectful relationships, consent awareness, and positive masculinity using CwR. • Build emotional resilience and coping skills among learners through peer-led Resilience Circles. Establish on-site, trauma-informed first response capacity within schools. • Improve referral pathways between schools and community-based protection services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce prevention efforts at household and community levels.
<p>Stakeholders involved: Who are the beneficiaries or target group of the practice? Describe how all relevant stakeholders were engaged.</p>	<p>Primary Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adolescents aged 10–19 in Isoka and Chinsali (Muchinga Province), and Chipangali and Katete (Eastern Province). ● Girls at heightened risk of SRGBV. ● Boys and young men engaged as allies in prevention. <p>Secondary Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers and guidance counsellors. ● Parents and caregivers. ● School administrators. ● Community leaders (traditional and faith leaders). ● Surrounding communities. <p>Stakeholder Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teachers and Guidance Counsellors will be trained in trauma-informed LSHE and CwR delivery, psychological first aid, and referral activation. ● School Leadership supported institutionalisation of Resilience Circles within school timetables. ● Parents and Caregivers participating in parent–teen dialogue forums to reinforce gender-equitable norms at home. ● Traditional and Faith Leaders were engaging in community dialogues to address early marriage and rigid gender roles. ● Adolescents are not only participants but peer facilitators and youth advocates. ● District-level education authorities were engaged and will continue providing coordination and integration into district planning.
<p>What makes this an innovative, promising, or good practice? Identify distinguishing feature(s) that make this</p>	<p>The LSHE Results/ Resilience Circles with Connect with Respect (CwR) integration stands out as innovative in the fight to End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and within the broader United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform landscape for several key reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full Integration of Prevention and Response Within One Delivery Platform

<p>an innovative, promising or a good practice in the efforts to EVAWG and/or in the context of the UNDS reform.</p>	<p>A distinguishing feature of this model is its simultaneous operationalization of Pillar 2 (Prevention) and Pillar 3 (Response) within a single school-based ecosystem.</p> <p>Unlike traditional approaches that separate awareness activities from survivor services, this innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforms norms through CwR and LSHE sessions • Builds emotional resilience through structured peer circles • Establishes on-site trauma-informed first response • Activates referral systems for survivor-centred care <p>This dual-function model reduces fragmentation and closes the gap between knowledge, behaviour change, and protection which is a critical advancement in EVAWG programming.</p> <p>2. Schools as Gender-Transformative Protection Ecosystems</p> <p>Rather than treating schools merely as education delivery points, the innovation repositions them as protection institutions and engines of gender equality.</p> <p>This systems-level shift:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embeds Psychological First Aid within schools • Strengthens safeguarding mechanisms • Engages boys and young men as prevention allies • Institutionalizes safe disclosure pathways <p>By strengthening internal school capacity rather than relying solely on external actors, the model enhances sustainability and systemic resilience.</p> <p>3. Norm Transformation Anchored in Peer Accountability</p> <p>The structured Resilience Circles provide a distinctive mechanism for peer-led norm change. The model moves beyond curriculum delivery to structured, bi-weekly Safe Spaces where adolescents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on gender norms • Practice bystander intervention • Commit to peer accountability • Develop emotional regulation skills <p>This sustained peer engagement is critical for shifting social norms that drive violence, particularly during adolescence which is a pivotal developmental stage.</p> <p>4. Operationalization of UNDS Reform Principles</p> <p>Within the context of UNDS reform, the practice embodies key reform principles:</p> <p>Integrated programming: Education, protection, mental health, and gender equality are delivered cohesively rather than through siloed interventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems strengthening over parallel service delivery: The innovation builds capacity within government structures (schools and district education systems).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National ownership and sustainability: The model is embedded within existing LSHE structures under government leadership. • Multi-sector coordination: Education, child protection, health, and community actors are linked through referral pathways. <p>5. Survivor-Centred, Trauma-Informed Education Programming</p> <p>Embedding trauma-informed facilitation and psychosocial first response directly into LSHE delivery is a distinguishing innovation. It recognises that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention efforts must account for lived trauma. • Survivors require immediate, dignified support within trusted spaces. • Emotional resilience is foundational to empowerment. <p>What makes this practice particularly innovative in EVAWG efforts is not only its content, but its architecture is an integrated, school-based ecosystem that transforms norms, builds resilience, strengthens response systems, and institutionalizes protection.</p> <p>Within the UNDS reform framework, it exemplifies how coordinated, system-strengthening, government-led approaches can deliver sustainable impact at scale and advancing gender equality while operationalizing prevention and response in a unified model.</p>
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<p>What challenges were encountered and how were they overcome?</p>	<p>a) Resistance to Gender Norm Discussions</p> <p>Some stakeholders initially expressed discomfort discussing consent, relationships, and gender stereotypes.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Community sensitization meetings and engagement of trusted traditional and faith leaders helped build buy-in. Framing discussions around safety, dignity, and child protection reduced resistance.</p> <p>b) Teacher Capacity Gaps</p> <p>Not all teachers initially felt confident delivering SRGBV or trauma related informed sessions.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Continuous mentoring, supportive supervision, and structured facilitation guides strengthened confidence and consistency.</p> <p>c) Stigma Around Reporting</p> <p>Learners feared retaliation or shame when disclosing violence.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Establishing Safe Spaces (Resilience Circles), peer accountability pledges, and confidential reporting pathways increased trust and safe disclosure.</p>
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<p>Outputs and Impact: What have been the results thus far? Do they contribute to long-term impact?</p>	<p>Early results demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased participation of boys as prevention allies. ● Improved learner understanding of consent and healthy relationships. ● Increased safe disclosures of SRGBV cases. ● Strengthened school-level response capacity. ● Reduced tolerance for harmful gender norms within peer groups. ● Improved emotional regulation and coping skills among learners. <p>These outcomes contribute to long-term impact by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shifting social norms during adolescence (a critical developmental stage). ● Building institutional response capacity within schools. ● Reducing risk factors associated with future intimate partner violence. ● Embedding survivor-centred approaches into education systems. <p>The combination of prevention and response strengthens sustainable change rather than short-term awareness gains.</p>
<p>Adaptability (Optional) <i>In what ways can this practice be adapted for future use?</i></p>	<p>The model can be adapted by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrating digital or hybrid learning tools for LSHE and CwR reinforcement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding age-specific modules for upper secondary learners. • Tailoring content for out-of-school adolescents. • Embedding the model into teacher training colleges for pre-service education. • Aligning Resilience Circles with national school club structures. <p>The modular design allows scaling without losing core integrity.</p>
<p>Replicability/Scale-Up (Optional) <i>What are the possibilities of extending this practice more widely?</i></p>	<p>The practice has strong scalability potential because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It builds on existing LSHE curriculum frameworks. • It leverages existing teachers and school infrastructure. • It uses structured peer group models that require minimal additional resources. • It strengthens rather than duplicates existing referral systems. <p>With government endorsement, it could be integrated into national LSHE implementation guidelines and expanded to additional districts under phased roll-out.</p>
<p>Sustainability <i>What is needed to make the practice sustainable?</i></p>	<p>Sustainability requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalization within Ministry of Education policy and annual workplans. • Budget allocation for teacher mentoring and supervision. • Continued capacity building for trauma-informed facilitation. • Strengthened district-level monitoring systems.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing community engagement to sustain norm change. • Integration into national education monitoring frameworks. <p>Embedding the model into government systems rather than maintaining it as a parallel project is key.</p>
<p>Validated (for a good practice only): Has the practice been validated? Is there confirmation from beneficiaries/users that the practice properly addressed their needs and is there expert validation?</p>	<p>Not applicable since this is an early stage innovation.</p>
<p>Additional details and contact information: Are there any other details that are important to know about the innovative, promising, or good practice? <i>Please provide contact details of a focal person for this practice as well as any additional materials including photos/videos.</i></p>	<p>Henry K Mwanza- REPSSI Acting Country Director. henry.mwanza@repssi.org</p> <p>REPSSI is an implementing partner national CSOs that is part of the Spotlight Initiative in Zambia.</p>
<p>Knowledge Product on the Innovative, Promising or Good Practice: Please include a knowledge product, web story or report related to that activity that provides additional details</p>	<p>Not available at this stage.</p>

Section B: Knowledge Production

Title of Knowledge Product	Product type	Brief Description & Purpose	Date completed/ published or expected to be	Target Audience	Uptake of the knowledge product
Spotlight Needs Assessment in Chinsali and Muchinga	Assessment	The needs assessment was conducted in Chinsali and Isoka Districts, Muchinga Province, to identify gaps, challenges, and priorities regarding gender equality and social services in these communities. Its primary purpose was to gather data that would inform the development and implementation of targeted interventions aimed at improving the well-being and empowerment of vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls.	The assessment was conducted in September, and preliminary findings have been provided; however, the full report has not yet been shared.	The target audience includes: government partners such as the Gender Division in the Office of the President, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and UN agencies	The preliminary finding helped to prioritize interventions in the districts prior to the baseline
Gender Representation and Leadership Audit	Study Report	The goal was to conduct a multi-sectoral Gender Representation Leadership Audit to assess the extent of gender parity and mainstreaming in key high and influential positions within selected institutions and governance structures at national and local levels.	December 2025, pending publication	WROs, Government counterparts	Not available at the moment as publication is pending



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To eliminate violence against women and girls



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