

# CommCare for Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global issue that refers to physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm resulting from discrimination against a person on the basis of gender. The majority of people who experience GBV are women, and approximately 70% of women worldwide encounter violence in their lifetime. While the most common form of GBV experienced by women is inflicted by an intimate partner, GBV can also occur in a variety of practices, such as early (childhood) marriage, female feticide, violence during pregnancy, female genital mutilation, honor killings, dowry murder, human trafficking, prostitution, and sexual violence in conflict, including using rape as a weapon of war (UNiTE, 2009).

In order to reduce GBV prevalence, governments and organizations around the world are leading efforts to prevent and respond to GBV. Legal frameworks to protect against common forms of GBV now exist in many countries, while public fervor following high-profile GBV cases has also driven forward legislative and social action. Yet even with widespread support, implementing anti-GBV initiatives has been fraught with challenges. Private and public sector entities are actively seeking innovative responses to effectively prevent and address GBV in various countries around the world.

## Benefits of Dimagi's Technology In Addressing Gender-Based Violence

### GBV Programs and Organizations

Outreach to the broad population is difficult and data is sparse on the prevalence and knowledge of GBV.

- **SMS campaigns** can be **broad-reaching** for GBV prevention, helping to engage men and boys, and those who do not see GBV as an issue relevant to them.
- Increased use of **data-generating technology** builds foundation for policymaking and development.

### Frontline Workforce

Frontline workers may miss cases of GBV due to social stigma or lack of knowledge of how to screen patients.

- **Interactive SMS messaging** can be used by health workers to help **convey key messages**.
- Applications used in health centers increase **adherence** to tested, standardized protocols that accurately screen for GBV, thereby enabling health workers to **correctly identify** cases of GBV.
- Applications assist frontline workers in referrals by **streamlining services** available to place survivors with most appropriate service.

## Beneficiaries

Survivors of GBV are afraid to speak up and seek help due to being associated with this issue. Information is not freely circulated due to social stigmas.

- SMS interactions and interactive voice recognition (IVR) offer the capability of **anonymity**.
- Anonymous discussion can help **reduce barriers** of social stigma and shame.
- Anonymous interaction **minimizes interviewer bias** because user can share information more freely and directly.
- SMS interactions and IVR convey information about referral facilities when available.
- Mobile technology enables **wider access** to services to those in rural areas or those who cannot visit GBV centers after initial outreach.
- IVR empowers low-literate populations to participate in GBV information sharing and counseling.

## Highlighted Projects

### **USAID Innovative Uses of Mobile Technology to Improve GBV Services, India**

Since Sept 2013, Dimagi has been collaborating with its partners St. John's Research Institute to apply CommCare to help auxiliary nurses and other health workers identify and manage cases of GBV. CommCare helps the health workers follow tested, standardized protocols and inform survivors of their rights and options, provide counseling messages, and facilitate support services. CommCare reduces the burden of paper-based reporting and increases adherence to tested protocols that accurately screen for GBV.

### **UNICEF Community Survivor Support Unit Teams, Malawi**

In an effort to improve access to woman and child protection services and reduce the impact of HIV on women and children, UNICEF worked with the government of Malawi established a Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU) in each of the 300 authorities in the country. CVSUs provide psychosocial support, mediation, and referral services for women and children survivors of abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect. CommCare has been used to strengthen monitoring and support the activities and information systems of CVSUs.