

Leveraging Technology to Tackle Gender Based Violence

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Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global issue that affects millions of individuals, particularly women and girls. To address this pressing issue, efforts from multiple players at many levels that involve innovative and out of the box thinking approaches are essential. One such approach is the use of digital tools to raise awareness of existing support services to survivors and map GBV service providers, ensuring that survivors of sexual exploitation abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) have access to quality support and care. This blog explores how digital tools are playing an important role in combating gender-based violence, drawing insights from initiatives led by the Geo-Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision (GEMS) team within the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group of the World Bank.

Mapping Services for Survivor-Centered Response:

The heart of the strategy lies in mapping SEA-SH service providers in project areas. The World Bank relies on external service providers to deliver these services, and it's crucial to ensure that survivors reporting cases can be referred to appropriate support. With the support of the GEMS capacity building program, government agencies and project teams are enabled to independently host their databases. These databases extend beyond simple contact details; they encompass detailed information on a wide spectrum of services offered, spanning from health and psychosocial support to legal assistance, thereby creating a holistic and responsive network of resources. Bringing technology to leverage existing databases for a wider public good, the World Bank not only bridges the potential information gap between service providers and survivors, but also provides access to critical resources that can help address immediate health and social-emotional impact experienced after the violent act, and provide critical coping mechanisms. This shows how the use of technology can help in addressing complex social challenges and enhance the safety and well-being of individuals.

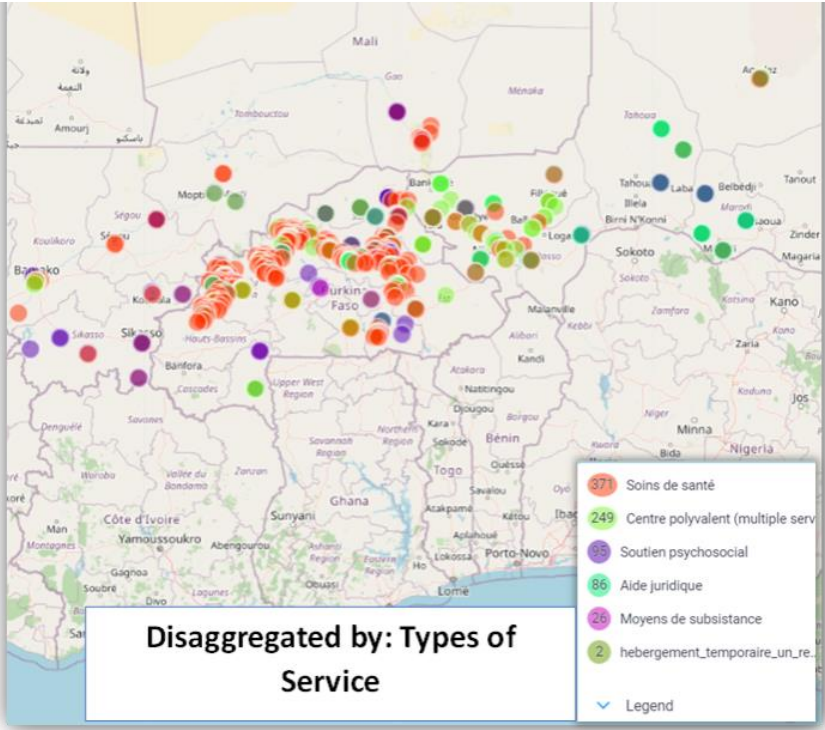
Real-Time Spatial Referencing:

Traditionally, GBV service mapping was conducted on a project-by-project basis and many of the referral forms and service providers were not digitized and accessible. GEMS, in collaboration with the Social Sustainability and Inclusion team at the World Bank, has revolutionized this approach. Since 2020, the respective GEMS focal points have supported these mapping exercises across the Sahel, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Pakistan. Leveraging simple, cost-free technology, they have focused on building local stakeholders' capacity. Digital tools were developed in collaboration with local and national authorities, ensuring government ownership of the data collection process.

As a result of this collaborative effort, databases housing detailed information on over 12,000 GBV Service Providers have emerged across various countries. These databases typically are accompanied by a Grievance Redress Mechanism reference guide, establishing a clear referral pathway for GBV survivors to access essential support services, including healthcare, psychosocial support, and legal assistance.

Africa:

In Nigeria alone, over 10,000 GBV Service Providers have been mapped across the country, with key information on available services for survivors. This is the first time that a national database provides such up-to-date and detailed information, surpassing the quality and quantity of the information held by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. The team has focused on building the Ministry’s capacity in developing a national database that can serve not only Bank projects, but all survivors and parties involved that can benefit from this information.



Excerpt: Sahel GBV service provider mapping platform

In the four Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Niger), over 2,000 GBV service providers have been mapped in a similar way. There is a lot more to be done, and GEMS is collaborating with World Bank’s internal teams to expand this effort.

Pakistan:

Emerging from a decade of violence and instability, Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province presented a dire situation for women and girls. In Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, over 100 Service Providers were mapped in granular detail in a consolidated database. This data will help the government make informed decisions to identify areas and sectors for further capacity-building and technical support. The Department of Social Welfare proposed extending this method across the nation in partnership with UNEP.

Long-Term Impact:

Service mapping is not an end in itself and is only valuable when used to assist survivors in making informed choices. These digital tools not only serve short-term needs by ensuring quick referrals for survivors but also contribute to long-term planning and coordination of GBV service provision. The data can be used to identify gaps in quantity and quality of services, prioritize interventions, and improve access. This approach is cost-effective, simple, and focuses on government ownership. The hope is that this innovation can be used to support vulnerable populations worldwide. Digital tools are transforming the landscape of addressing gender-based violence. As we move forward, it's essential to continue leveraging digital tools to tackle gender-based violence and create a safer, more equitable world for all.