



Making disability inclusive prevention meaningful: Lessons from SAFE Zimbabwe

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October 2024



Answering tomorrow's challenges today



SAFE Program

- ❑ SAFE is an integrated economic and social empowerment plus GBV response program piloted in Zimbabwe over a four-year period to prevent GBV, specifically IPV, and child marriages.
- ❑ Central to the SAFE approach is the synergetic effect of **economic empowerment and gender transformative activities** benefitting **couples** where a new income stream is used to create an impetus for families to engage in **joint visioning and planning**.
- ❑ SAFE works at **individual, relationship and community level** and is publicly framed as a **family wellbeing** programme.
- ❑ The SAFE GBV response approach acknowledges that economic and social empowerment have the potential to create demand for GBV services.

Toose The Brand!

- ❑ The Toose name and brand was derived from the word Tose- (together in Shona).
- ❑ The Toose approach aims to bring everyone together (from intimate partners in the household, as well as children and the wider community).
- ❑ The brand captures the essence of the family well-being approach - a family focused identity that men and women love to belong and take pride in.
- ❑ The colour and feel of the brand is meant to be fun and appealing like a lifestyle of choice.
- ❑ Embodies freshness, innovation, positive energy and designed to be attractive to both men and women.



Disability Inclusion: Primary Focus

- ❑ Global evidence suggest that women with disabilities are two-to-four times more likely to experience IPV.
- ❑ Children with disabilities are three times more likely to experience sexual abuse.
- ❑ The primary focus of the Toose Leave No One Behind (LNOB) strategy is disability inclusion.
- ❑ Disability inclusion was the value that the program was seeking.
- ❑ The program maintained a strategic and empowerment focus to disability inclusion in both prevention and response interventions.
- ❑ The approach sought to understand how women and girls with disabilities experienced GBV, the barriers to help seeking and risks associated with different impairment.

Toose Design Innovations

- ❑ Rapid disability assessment of the Toose program design documents from an international disability expert informed our inclusive intervention design.
- ❑ Consultations with organisation focused on support to People With Disabilities (PWDs) to understand how the program could best embed disability inclusion in its design.
- ❑ Selection of a national disability technical partner to provide context specific technical support to the program and to implementing partners (IPs).
- ❑ Development of a Toose disability inclusion strategy informed by the first cohort (C1) implementation experiences, monitoring data and available national resources and evidence.
- ❑ GBV service assessment using the AAAQ framework to identify barriers faced by survivors with disabilities.
- ❑ Regular reviews of Toose manuals and training curriculums to make them disability inclusive.

Inclusive Preparatory Steps

- ❑ Training of IPs and Community Cadres on disability inclusive programming and facilitation.
- ❑ Strengthening the capacity of GBV response partners and facilities to ensure GBV services are accessible to women and girls with disabilities.
- ❑ A Disability Technical Working Group (SAFE team, IPs and the Disability Technical partner).
- ❑ Selection and training of community cadres as disability ambassadors in order to promote leadership of PWDs.
- ❑ Training and support to IPs to conduct accessibility and barriers analysis and audits to identify environmental, institutional and attitudinal barriers to participation and accessibility of GBV services.

Innovative And Inclusive Roll out of Toose

- ❑ Used a learning and adaptation approach to incorporate internal and external learnings.
- ❑ Completed a disability inclusive review of Toose manuals and training materials by the Technical partner to make them more inclusive.
- ❑ Developing inclusive facilitators' guides to ensure inclusive roll out of Toose.
- ❑ Through trainings and disability sensitization of community cadres, groups were encouraged to select PWDs as field agents, Toose Peer Facilitators and GCBCs.
- ❑ Provision of assistive devices to participants in need (walking sticks, wheelchairs etc.).

Innovative And Inclusive Roll out of Toose (cont'd)

- ❑ Support adaptations to meeting venues, times and length of sessions.
- ❑ Physical accessibility assessments of GBV shelters and making inclusive adaptations.
- ❑ Strengthening the capacity of GBV response practitioners (e.g., shelter counsellors).
- ❑ Production of disability referral pathway and directory for survivors of GBV (local and district level service providers).
- ❑ Provision of specialist disability services like sign language interpretation in sessions and courts, accompaniments etc.

Challenges Towards Disability Inclusion

- ❑ Challenges of responding to and meeting the needs of various forms of disabilities.
- ❑ Budgetary limitations to facilitate effective and full inclusion of PWDs in Toose, especially when using learning and adaptation approach.
- ❑ Some initial program materials were not in accessible formats for some forms of disability (amended later).
- ❑ Low levels of literacy amongst PWDs resulted in poor comprehension of curriculum-based interventions.
- ❑ Ableism within groups. E.g., non-disabled participants assume lack of knowledge and capacity for PWDs.
- ❑ Staff turnover at IP level, especially those trained and mentored, led to reversed gains on disability inclusion.
- ❑ Late reporting of GBV by PWDs. It takes a long time to break barriers faced by PWDs.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- ❑ Disability profiling and assessments are critical to determine needs and tailor support for PWDs.
- ❑ Planning for disability accommodations (i.e., time, budget) improves participation outcomes for PWDs.
- ❑ For effective and meaningful inclusion, it is critical to provide adequate budget and resourcing (capacity building, assistive devices, reasonable accommodations etc.).
- ❑ For enhanced participation and continued support, partnerships with local disability organisations is critical.
- ❑ Leadership by PWDs is critical to break stigma and encourage participation.
- ❑ Establish and support regular debrief and feedback sessions with PWDs.

Key Stories of Change

- ❑ **PWDs participated fully in Toose Sessions:** participants confirmed 'feeling at home' during the sessions.
- ❑ **Toose sessions were highly inclusive of persons with disabilities:** 'They treated me well as a disabled person. The sessions taught everyone to stop discrimination and adopt more disability-inclusive attitudes.'
- ❑ Several PWDs confirmed **completing the homework with their husbands/intimate partners, children, and other family members.**
- ❑ Several participants confirmed **sharing the Toose knowledge with other family members, friends, and neighbours.**
- ❑ A total of **1,919** PWDs accessed services between July to December 2023.