



Women's Protection and Empowerment

The IRC's comprehensive approach to women's protection and empowerment supports the pursuit of a world where women and girls live free from violence as valued and respected members of their community.

In nearly 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S., the IRC delivers innovative programs focused on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls (VAWG). The five key elements of our work, outlined below, help restore the dignity of survivors, engage communities in prevention efforts, create economic opportunities for women and girls, study the impact of our programs, and advocate for change.

>> SERVICE PROVISION

For women and girls subjected to violence, the ability to access immediate health care and psychological support can make the difference between a life lived with dignity and one lived in shame. Therefore, providing essential health and psychosocial services to survivors of violence forms the bedrock of our approach. In addition to direct service provision, the IRC also builds the capacity of other service providers to deliver comprehensive survivor-centered clinical care and case management. Moreover, through collection of systematic and consistent incident data, we are able to document patterns in the types of violence survivors report, enabling service providers to better target their outreach and skills.

>> VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The IRC tackles the root causes of VAWG. By working with local community groups and institutions, our programs help to change attitudes and support women and girls to realize their potential, free from violence. Since 2003, the IRC has been working to engage men in preventing VAWG, most recently via an evidence-based and field-tested primary prevention program, Engaging Men in Accountable Practice (EMAP). EMAP is informed and led by women's voices and priorities for engaging men in transformative individual behavior change, with trained facilitators in 28 countries.

>> EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS

When women have control over resources, it enhances their status in their households and communities, providing more chances to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. The IRC has developed an innovative model called EASE (Economic and Social Empowerment) that gives women more access to financial resources through participation in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) while also providing opportunities to create more equitable and safe gender dynamics within their households through gender discussion groups with their partners.



Women participate in a VSLA activity in Central African Republic

>> RESEARCH AND LEARNING

The IRC is committed to developing new and better approaches to prevent and respond to VAWG. In partnership with leading universities and research institutes, we study the effectiveness of our work and apply lessons learned to new projects within IRC and in the wider humanitarian community. The IRC is currently undertaking ten research projects across the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, South Sudan, and Yemen to examine the best ways to reduce VAWG, empower women and girls, support the recovery of survivors, change social norms, and promote accountability for the prioritization and coordination of VAWG efforts across humanitarian action. Since 2010, the IRC has completed research studies on intimate partner violence, GBV screening, disability inclusion, solar lights, mental health services, child survivors of sexual assault, economic and social empowerment, transforming gender biases, and building capacity to better respond to GBV in emergencies.

>> ADVOCACY

The IRC recognizes that ending VAWG requires sustained change that confronts power inequalities at the root of the problem. At the local level, the IRC seeks to empower women and girls to advocate for the changes that will improve their lives. At the global level, we advocate for the international community to redouble its efforts to prevent and respond to VAWG as a priority intervention that is lifesaving, not optional. Through advocacy and engagement with global processes such as the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, we share learning from our programs and research, and create opportunities for women and girls to be heard and to have their concerns recognized and prioritized.



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The IRC restores hope and opportunity for millions of women and girls in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the United States.

In 2015, the International Rescue Committee:

- >> provided psychosocial counseling, health, and legal services to more than 11,400 survivors of violence
- >> trained 33,000 people in GBV prevention and reached 750,000 people with community-based violence prevention efforts
- >> deployed GBV experts to lead responses in six emergencies in Greece, Liberia, Nigeria, Serbia, Tanzania, and Ukraine
- >> created 1,716 VSLAs, benefitting more than 38,000 members who saved a total of US \$1.8 million
- >> trained 26 local organizations on GBV-specific emergency preparedness and planning, coupled with cash awards and ongoing mentoring to implement local GBV response and preparedness work in their local contexts
- >> shared research and learning with thousands of practitioners and policymakers through over a dozen events and webinars



The IRC's programs supporting women and girls are based in nearly 30 countries across the globe, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (left) and Jordan (right).

Learn more:

To find out more about International Rescue Committee programs supporting women and girls, visit: www.gbvresponders.org