



# CREATING SAFER PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN

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The safe markets project under the Spotlight initiative seeks to address the key drivers of SGBV in public spaces by strengthening the capacity of local authorities to provide safety for women through gender responsive policies and infrastructure. It seeks to address social norms and gender stereotypes that normalize violence against women in public spaces by challenging negative attitudes in the community towards young women and girls.

“These women-led solutions range from addressing gaps in data and establishing strong versatile partnerships with different sectors to develop and strengthen laws and policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, to ensuring urban and transport plans inclusive of women’s needs and developing initiatives to change social norms.”

Sexual violence in public spaces negatively impacts the health and well-being of women; reduces their freedom of movement and ability to participate in school, work, and public life; and limits their access to essential services and their enjoyment of cultural and recreational activities. In turn, women, families, workplaces, communities, and economies suffer.

Safe cities project has 3 pillars which are

- A. Assessment of current policies and laws in order to developing the capacity of local authorities to create safe public spaces, especially safe markets, in order to promote the participation of women in local economies. The training provided local



*Example of current Jopa market toilet*

authorities (both elected officials and administrators) with knowledge and tools for analysis to create such safe spaces. It helped to introduce the basics to understanding gender as well as introducing key gender issues in local governance and exploring key areas of attention for building safe cities and safe public spaces for women. Through this initiative Katswe managed to develop a training manual on gender responsive infrastructure, budgeting as well as ending Violence Against Women in public spaces. The training supported local authorities with the development of gender policies

## WHAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN DO TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPACES



### B. Construction of a model safe market



C.

The safe cities project has seen the **construction of a model safe market** in the Epworth area. This model market



*New model safe market aerial view*

is as a response to the growing need for safer, healthy, gendered community development structures that put women at the centre of growing economies. Katswe conducted a needs assessment survey in the above mentioned markets. There was an identified need to develop gender responsive structures/markets with the following components:

1. Permissive of young women and girls
2. Safe sanitation taking cognizance of the Covid19 pandemic
3. Inclusive of young children by providing play areas which are safe and conducive for child development
4. Set in hotspot areas for good business

#### C. Covid19 response

The global pandemic, COVID 19 has had many effects to both the developing and the developed world. In a bid to curb the spread of the virus, government implement a raft of measures state controlled lockdowns which began on 30 March.

Whilst the lockdown is a credible means of containing the deadly virus, it present several challenges particularly to street vendors and informal traders who are largely women. The restrictions that came as a result of the virus have eroded the income of many vendors and traders whose businesses rely on the movement of people. In addition, this outbreak has necessitated the need to broaden the conceptualization of safe public spaces to include



Old market



New market



*Old market stalls*

safety from disease outbreaks. With this in mind, Katswe Sistahood procured PPE for women in various markets in Umzingwane, Chipinge and Epworth.



*Women in Epworth showcasing their masawu jam*





*A young mother making masawu jam during a food processing training workshop in Epworth*

The COVID-19 pandemic has made more visible the gender inequalities and inequities within the economy. Poor and marginalized women in the rural areas and informal sector have faced the loss of their livelihoods, which has increased their vulnerabilities to Gender



*Woman washing hands at Jopa market hand washing point*

Based Violence (GBV).

Zimbabwe's Spotlight Initiative's (SI) support to build the capacity of identified groups of vulnerable women in

Chipinge District, Manicaland Province, is provided through the International Labour Organisation (ILO), one of the Spotlight participating UN agencies.



*Vegetable drying training (Jopa women)*

The government through the Ministry of Women’s Affairs is set to disburse funds to cushion SMEs and informal sector associations from the economic impact of the lockdown. However, there are many women who because of limited capital operate on the margins of the informal sector and are notable to affiliate to any association, these



*Masawu Jam*

will not benefit. In addition, it is these women who are more vulnerable to violence in public spaces because of the informality and marginal status. It against this background that Katswe Sistahood

seeks to adjust the Safe Cities project by facilitating crisis mitigation and post emergency recovery for female vendors as well as supporting gender responsive post emergency planning by local authorities through the model market.

Katswe with support from ministry trained fresh produce vendors on food processing and value addition. Some of the women were trained in business management and pre-cooperative planning.



*Old toilet*

The market ablution facilities are an essential part of the market because they are safe for women and their children.



New toilet setup





*Children's play area*

The market has a safe play ground for children that enables women to work whilst their children are in a safe space

### **Safe Market Project in Numbers**

**Market shed accommodating 96 women constructed.**

**Rehabilitation of one ablution facilities.**

**Construction of a children's play area to accommodate about 50 children**

**133 trained in food processing and value addition.**

**55 women organized into the Jopa Market Cooperative in Chipinge and are in the process of purchasing land for the construction of a safe market.**

**72 women organized into 6 internal savings and loan club in Epworth.**



**Spotlight  
Initiative**

*To eliminate violence  
against women and girls*

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:

