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A long way to go: Inclusion of women with disabilities in African Gender-Based Violence policies



**Policy review
across 27 countries**

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FIVE LEVELS OF INCLUSION

27 gender-based violence policies have been analysed.



Invisible: No or few mentions of women with disabilities.

Awareness: Mention of women with disabilities, discrimination is seen as important to address but there are no adequate resources nor specific practices towards them.

Intentional inclusion: Women with disabilities are not only mentioned but targeted by specific practices.

Strategic inclusion: Long term, strategic measures are taken to ensure women with disabilities can enjoy their rights. Provisions for monitoring and accountability are made.

Culture of inclusion: Women's multiple identities are considered and supported and systemic processes for maintaining inclusion are enforced.

By the end of the analysis, each policy obtained a **"score of inclusion"**. This score shows to what extent the policy is inclusive of women with disabilities based on a "scale" divided in **5 levels of inclusion**.

CATEGORIES OF INCLUSION



Tata Toure and Noella Ndayikeza

The tool was built around 5 categories of questions:

1. Conceptualisation: Questions seek to analyse whether the policy refers to women with disabilities, acknowledges their vulnerability to GBV and prioritize their needs. The policy should adopt a twin track approach: ensuring that women with disabilities have access to their basic needs in all services on an equal basis with other women, while also addressing their specific needs.

2. Data and evidence: Questions seek to analyse whether the policy requires data on GBV against women with disabilities and data about the accessibility of services.

3. Accessibility and inclusive services: Questions seek to analyse whether the policy includes the concept of accessibility to all users and specific provision for vulnerable groups including women with disabilities. The policy should provide instructions on the provision of accessible services and information. It should also ensure that service providers are trained on working with women with disabilities who are victims/survivors of GBV.

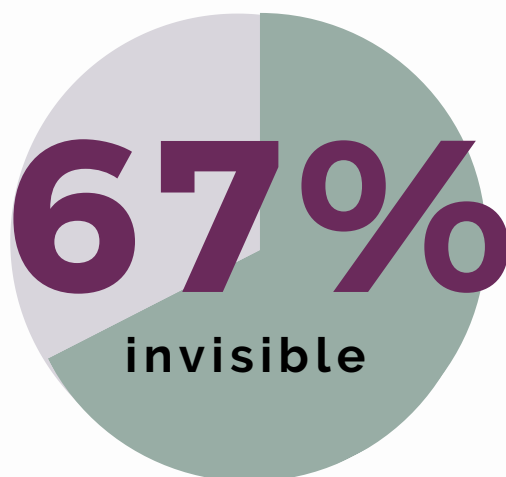
4. Participation and coordination: Questions seek to analyse whether the policy establishes partnerships with organizations of women with disabilities to develop, enforce and monitor the policy provisions. The policy should ensure monitoring of accessible service provision.

5. Resource mobilization: Questions seek to analyse whether dedicated financial resources are mobilized to prevent and respond to GBV against women with disabilities.

KEY FINDINGS

A long way to go

Women with disabilities
are **invisible** in 18 out of
the 27 policies



22%

6 out of the 27 policies are limited to an "Awareness" of the inclusion of women with disabilities.

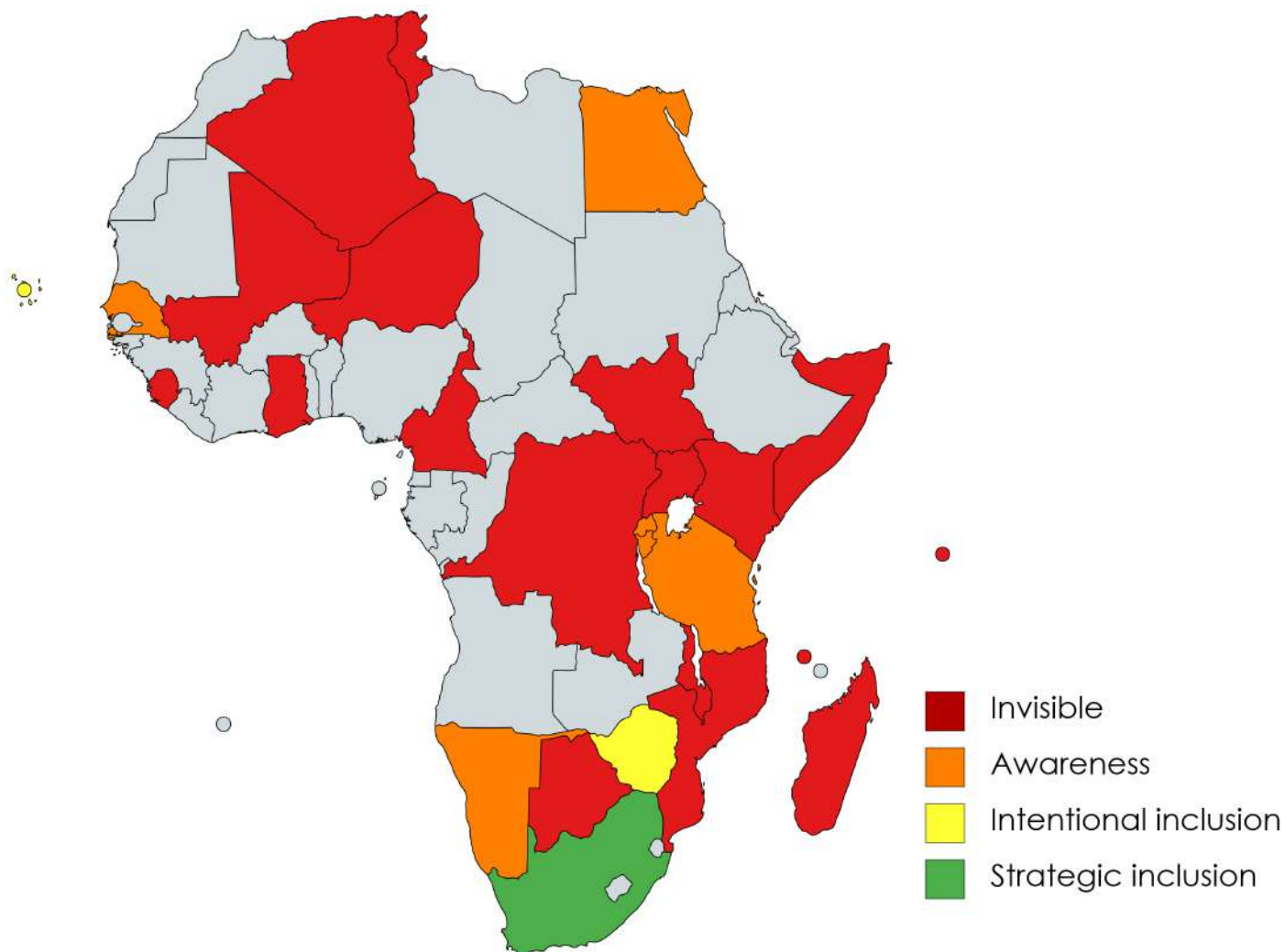
7%

2 out of the 27 policies show an "Intentional inclusion" of women with disabilities.

BEST RESULTS:

The most inclusive policies are:

- **South Africa**, National GBV and Femicide Strategic Plan 2020-2030, Strategic inclusion.
- **Cabo Verde**, National plan to combat GBV (PNVBG) 2015-2018, Intentional inclusion.
- **Zimbabwe**, National Program on GBV Prevention and Response 2016-2020, Intentional inclusion.
- **Rwanda**, National Strategic Plan for Fighting Against Gender-based Violence 2011-2016, Awareness.



LESS INCLUSIVE AREAS:

Conceptualisation

- **93% of policies do not prohibit the use of forced sterilization, forced abortion and forced contraception** on women with disabilities.

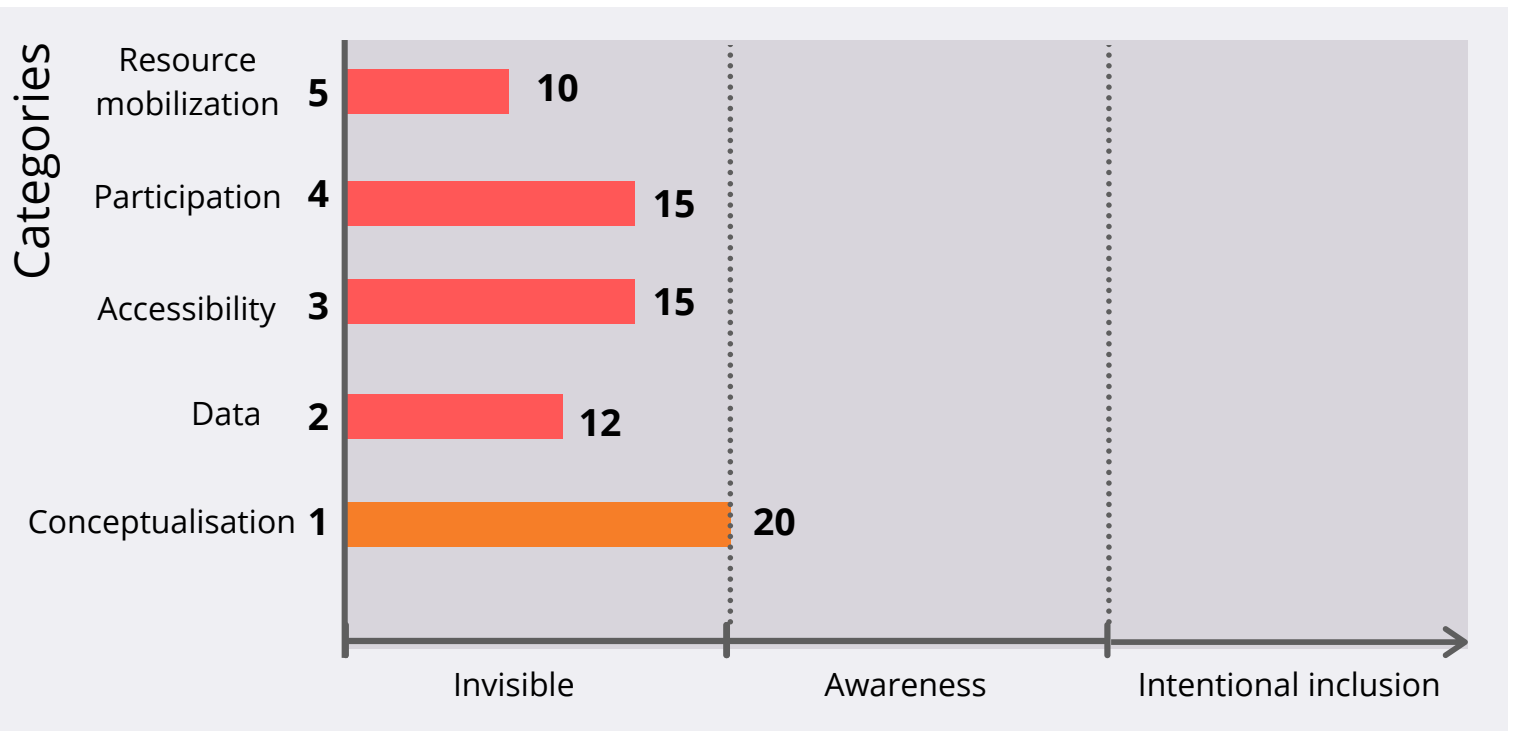
Accessibility & inclusive services

- **89% of policies do not ensure the training and supervision of service providers** (shelter staff, social workers, medical personnel) about the rights and needs of women with disabilities and how to provide respectful care; nor the **training of police, judicial officials or other law enforcement personnel** on responding to women with disabilities who are victims/survivors of GBV.

Participation

- **83% of policies do not engage organizations of women with disabilities** in the development of GBV programmes and policies.

SCORE BY CATEGORY: FROM THEORETICAL TO EFFECTIVE INCLUSION



We have shown that among the 27 analysed policies, women with disabilities are visible in only 9 of them. Looking into the different categories of inclusion, as illustrated above, it appears that most of the inclusive provisions belong to the category called Conceptualisation. This category is looking at whether the policy refers to women with disabilities, acknowledges their vulnerability to GBV and prioritize their needs.

Our study shows that even when women with disabilities are mentioned in the introduction of a policy, there is very little translation into practical provisions dealing with data, accessibility, participation, or funding.

The inclusion of women with disabilities remains performative and does not translate into concrete measures.

There is an urgent need to shift from theoretical inclusion to effective inclusive policies.

FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE PROVISIONS

Some of the policies analysed presented a few innovative and inclusive provisions to tackle GBV. Here are a few ideas on how to conceive better policies, meaning policies that encompass the complexity and diversity of women's identities, in order to leave no woman behind.

Conceptualisation:

- **Egypt** foresees that **GBV affects "in particular women and girls with disabilities** who, as a result of their disabilities, are more prone to become victims of violence."
- **Senegal** acknowledges the mental and physical harm caused by GBV: "Victims suffer serious physical and psychological consequences."
- **South Africa** insists on the intersecting forms of discrimination "As such, it can be suggested that **women with disabilities face multiple forms of oppression as gender, violence, and disability intersects and shapes the life experiences of a person** already experiencing discrimination".

Data & evidence:

- **Tunisia** reaffirms that "Data relating to the victim and the perpetrator should at a minimum be distinguished by sex, age, type of violence and relationship between victim and perpetrator, geographical location, as well as other factors considered relevant, such as disability".
- **South Africa**, assesses the accessibility of services by ensuring that **the "mapping of services assists to [...] determine the accessibility of services in terms of geo-location, language, age, disability** and diverse needs of survivors".

Accessibility:

- **Tanzania** recognizes the necessity of "Creating and sustaining safe and accessible spaces for women and children throughout our communities" p10 and that **"efforts must be made to improve access to services for those groups that are marginalized**, likely to be excluded, or face barriers to accessing services".
- **Namibia** guarantees that "Wherever possible the National Disability Council will also take responsibility for ensuring that information and messages generated by stakeholders are distributed to their constituent organizations. **While specialized versions, such as braille and sign language remain the gold standard**, the Plan encourages stakeholders to utilize simple appropriate technology (e.g. voice notes for visually impaired, text messages for hearing impaired) where the gold standard is not available or affordable".

Participation:

- **Ghana** includes "associations of persons with disabilities" in the policy implementation.
- **South Africa** commits on "community dialogues held in collaboration with civil society on critical GBV areas such as [...] rights of womxn¹ living with disability".

¹ The term « womxn » is used as a word welcoming trans and non-binary individuals, as well as each person who identifies as a woman regardless of assigned sex at birth.

LET'S BUILD POLICIES THAT LEAVE NO WOMAN BEHIND!



- Ensure the rights of women with disabilities are mainstreamed in all policies related to gender equality, GBV, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, harmful practices.
- Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and translate it into national legislation.
- Ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa, which explicitly tackles the different forms of violation that women and girls with disabilities in Africa are particularly at risk of.
- Refer to regional tools such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Protocol Barometer and other inclusive documents when building policies.
- Include organizations of women with disabilities in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies related to gender equality, GBV, SRHR, harmful practices.
- Support organizations of women with disabilities to ensure representation.
- Always consider the intersection of gender, disability and age, among other factors (socio special inequalities, ethnicity, poverty, migrant women, sex workers, etc.) in policy-making.
- Establish governance bodies which include ministries, civil society and representatives of women with disabilities to monitor the implementation of national policies and strategies.

DOES THE DOCUMENT:		Yes/Some /No	Comments
Category 1: Conceptualization			
1.1	Mention women with disabilities?		
1.2	Identify women with disabilities as a marginalized/most discriminated group?		
1.3	State the disproportionate risk of GBV women with disabilities face?		
1.4	State the specific needs of women with disabilities?		
1.5	Recognize the compounding inequities resulting from discrimination on grounds of gender, disability, ethnicity, LGBTQI+ and diverse SOGIESC, socio-economic status?		
1.6	Promote the recognition of the diversity within women with disabilities?		
1.7	Establish the causal link between GBV and a physical impairment/serious psychological trauma?		
1.8	Include any strategies on prevention and elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities?		
1.9	Prohibit the use of forced sterilization, forced abortion and forced contraception on women with disabilities?		
1.10	Encourage investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of gender-based violence against women with disabilities?		

Category 2: Data and evidence			
2.1	Promote data collection on GBV that is disaggregated for women with disabilities / Have indicators with targets on GBV amongst women with disabilities?		
2.2	Collect data on the availability and accessibility of services and accommodations for women and girls with disabilities?		

DOES THE DOCUMENT:		Yes/Some /No	Comments
Category 3: Accessibility and inclusive services			
3.1	Ensure that all GBV response programmes, complaint mechanisms and services for survivors (SRHR, shelters, psychosocial support, suitable medical equipment, etc.) are fully accessible?		
3.2	Ensure that information about GBV laws and policies and GBV prevention and response is provided in a variety of accessible formats?		
3.3	Ensure all phases of accessing justice for survivors of GBV are accessible (physically accessible police stations and courts, available Sign Language interpretation, etc.)?		
3.4	Ensure training and supervision of service providers (shelter staff, social workers, medical personnel) about the rights and needs of women with disabilities and how to provide respectful care; and the training of police, judicial officials or other law enforcement personnel on responding to women with disabilities who are victims/survivors of GBV?		

Category 4: Participation and coordination			
4.1	Engage organizations of women with disabilities in the development of GBV programmes and policies?		
4.2	Engage organizations of women with disabilities in the implementation and monitoring of GBV programmes and policies?		

Category 5: Resources mobilization			
5.1	Include separate budget line items for ensuring equal access to GBV prevention and response programming for women with disabilities?		
5.2	Allocate resources for organizations of women with disabilities to participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of GBV programmes and policies?		
5.3	Allocate specific subsidies to women with disabilities who are survivors of GBV?		

Country	Policy	Score of inclusion	Level of inclusion
Algeria	<i>Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre la Violence à l'égard des Femmes (2007-2011)</i>	5	Invisible
Botswana	National Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2015-2020)	0	Invisible
Burundi	<i>Plan Stratégique National de lutte contre les Violences Sexuelles Basées sur le Genre (2018-2022)</i>	26	Awareness
Cabo Verde	<i>Plano nacional de comate à Violência Baseada no Género (2015-2018)</i>	52	Intentional inclusion
Cameroon	<i>Stratégie Nationale de lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre (2017-2020)</i>	5	Invisible
Comoros	<i>Stratégie Nationale de lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre (2018-2030)</i>	7	Invisible
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	<i>Feuille de route nationale de l'appel à l'action pour la protection contre les violences basées sur le genre (VBG) en République Démocratique du Congo (2018-2020)</i>	18	Invisible
Egypt	National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women (2015-2020)	25	Awareness
Ghana	National Domestic Violence Policy and the Plan of Action to Implement Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (2009-2019)	10	Invisible
Kenya	National policy for prevention and response to GBV (2014)	5	Invisible
Madagascar	<i>Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre (2016-2020)</i>	5	Invisible
Malawi	National Plan of Action to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Malawi (2014 – 2020)	14	Invisible
Mali	<i>Programme National de Lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre (2018)</i>	0	Invisible
Mozambique	<i>Plano Nacional de prevenção e combate à Violência Baseada no Género (2018-2021)</i>	3	Invisible

Country	Policy	Score of inclusion	Level of inclusion
Namibia	<i>National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence (2019-2023)</i>	22	Awareness
Niger	<i>Stratégie Nationale de Prévention et de réponse aux Violences Basées sur le Genre au Niger (2017-2021)</i>	7	Invisible
Rwanda	National Strategic Plan for Fighting Against Gender-based Violence (2011-2016)	31	Awareness
Senegal	<i>Plan d'action national de lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre et la promotion des droits humains du Sénégal (2015)</i>	24	Awareness
Seychelles	Domestic Violence Act (2020)	4	Invisible
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (2012-2016)	0	Invisible
Somalia	Somalia National Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2018-2020)	0	Invisible
South Africa	National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Strategic Plan (2020-2030)	70	Strategic inclusion
South Sudan	Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence (2014)	0	Invisible
Tanzania	National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children 2017/18 –2021/22)	24	Awareness
Tunisia	<i>Stratégie Nationale de lutte contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes (2016)</i>	18	Invisible
Uganda	National Policy and Action Plan on Elimination of Gender - Based Violence in (2016)	8	Invisible
Zimbabwe	Zero Tolerance for GBV 365, A National Programme on GBV Prevention and Response (2016-2020)	36	Intentional inclusion

- Algeria, *Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre la Violence à l'égard des Femmes* (2007-2011)
- Botswana, National Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2015-2020)
- Burundi, *Plan Stratégique National de lutte contre les Violences Sexuelles Basées sur le Genre* (2018-2022)
- Cabo Verde, *Plano nacional de combate à Violência Baseada no Género* (2015-2018)
- Cameroon, *Stratégie nationale de lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre* (2017-2020)
- Comoros, *Stratégie Nationale de lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre* (2018-2030)
- Congo, Democratic Republic of the, *Feuille de route nationale de l'appel à l'action pour la protection contre les violences basées sur le genre (VBG) en République Démocratique du Congo* (2018-2020)
- Egypt, National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women (2015-2020)
- Ghana, National Domestic Violence Policy and the Plan of Action to Implement Domestic Violence Act, 2007 (2009-2019)
- Kenya, National policy for prevention and response to GBV (2014)
- Madagascar, *Stratégie Nationale de Lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre* (2016-2020)
- Malawi, National Plan of Action to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Malawi (2014 – 2020)
- Mali, *Programme National de Lutte contre les Violences Basées sur le Genre* (2018)
- Mozambique, *Plano Nacional de prevenção e combate à Violência Baseada no Género* (2018-2021)
- Namibia, National Plan of Action on GBV (2019-2023)
- Niger, *Stratégie Nationale de Prévention et de réponse aux Violences Basées sur le Genre (VBG) au Niger* (2017-2021)
- Rwanda, National Strategic Plan for Fighting Against Gender-based Violence (2011-2016)
- Senegal, *Plan d'action national de lutte contre les VBG et la promotion des droits humains du Sénégal* (2015)
- Seychelles, Domestic Violence Act (2020)
- Sierra Leone, *Sierra Leone National Action Plan on GBV* (2012-2016)
- Somalia, *Somalia National GBV Strategy* (2018-2020)
- South Africa, National GBV and Femicide Strategic Plan (2020-2030)
- South Sudan, Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) (2014)
- Tanzania, National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children 2017/18 –2021/22)
- Tunisia, *Stratégie nationale de lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes (VFF)* (2016)
- Uganda, National Policy and Action Plan on Elimination of Gender -Based Violence (2016)
- Zimbabwe, National Programme on GBV Prevention and Response (2016-2020)

METHOD TO CALCULATE THE SCORE OF INCLUSION

The scoring tool is made of 21 questions. In order to give a score to each GBV policy, we calculate as follow:

- Each “yes” gets 1 point.
- Each “some” gets 0,5 point.
- Each “no” gets 0 point.
- If a question refers to a measure which was not included in the policy, the result is written as “Na”- non available, and the question is removed from the final calculation.

The score is a ratio of the addition of answers over the number of questions answered. A fully inclusive policy would obtain a score of 100.

NB: The goal is not to establish what the perfect GBV policy would be, but rather to measure how women with disabilities are included in existing provisions.

RESOURCES

The full database of results of the analysis is available [here](#).

The main inspiration to build the scoring tool were the following documents:

- The right to access, Regional Strategic Guidance to increase access to SRHR for Young Persons with Disabilities in East and Southern Africa, SAMRC, UNFPA, KPMG, UKAid, 2017, page 95
- Young Persons with Disabilities: Global study on ending GBV and realising SRHR, Aecid, WeDecide, UNFPA, 2018

The scoring levels and their definition have been inspired by:

- The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, Measuring inclusion tool, 2017, page 9.

CREDITS

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