

DIGITIZING INFORMATION ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Digital Referral Pathway App (eRPW)

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Jessica, using a UNICEF-supported mobile application in Rwanda.

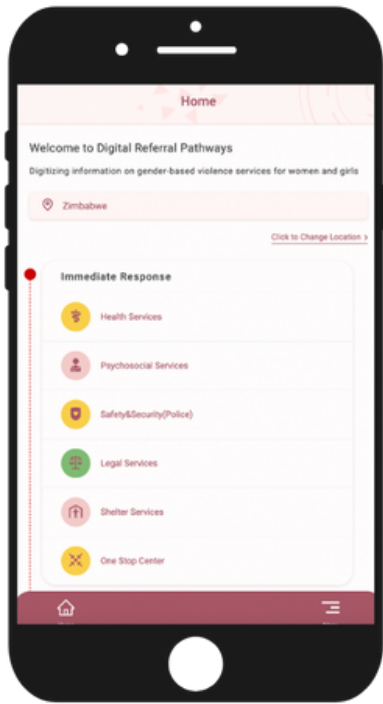
Background

In humanitarian and fragile contexts, access to GBV services by survivors can be lifesaving. However, in most contexts, finding the right service to respond to survivors' needs can be proven difficult due to the lack of harmonized and updated tools, among other factors.

Referral pathways are flexible mechanisms that safely link survivors to services such as health, psychosocial support, case management, safety/security, and justice and legal aid. These referral pathways are often outdated and not widely disseminated due to high staff turnover, volatile security context, and unpredictable funding that affect the stability of service provision, as well as lack of agile and accessible tools and reliance on heavy modalities (such as paper-based) to support information-sharing, among other challenges. As a result, survivors often fall within the cracks and do not receive life-saving assistance in a timely manner.

To address this challenge, [UNICEF](#), in collaboration with the [GBV AoR](#), has developed the eReferral Pathways app (eRPW) to enable real-time updating of available services and digital referral pathways in order to make information more widely accessible on the services available.





Objectives

The key objectives of the eRPW app are to:

- Serve as a platform to manage up-to-date information on available services for GBV survivors in real-time
- Establish a vetting process (approvals workflow) to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information related to GBV services.
- Create quality control mechanisms on GBV services based on feedback collected from users (“yelp” functionality)
- Provide hooks to link to similar solutions within and outside UNICEF, such as Primero and Virtual Safe Space (VSS)

To account for the low connectivity and low literacy settings, the following technical aspects were accounted for:

- Progressive web app that can be accessed offline and online
- Downloadable referral pathways in PDF and excel formats
- Maximized accessibility based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and Google Material Design Guidelines
- Multi-lingual functionality
- Strict adherence to data security and privacy protocol

Human-Centered Design Process

Bangladesh (Cox’s Bazar) and Zimbabwe were the two contexts selected for the first phase of the product pilot. In order to develop technology easily adopted and engage users, UNICEF hired local human-centered design (HCD) experts to ensure that the product met the needs of the GBV service providers and coordinators.

HCD refers to a problem-solving approach that includes the end-user from the very beginning and throughout the digital design process and centers on their human needs. Throughout the initial user research, the design testing, and the usability testing, insights from the users have been collected and outlined by the researchers to serve as guidance for the product developers.

One of the significant findings from the user research was the need to have a vetting mechanism for the GBV coordination team to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information inputted before being made available online.

The Minimum Viable Product (MVP) was rolled out in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe in July 2022. The HCD process continues where user feedback is constantly monitored through the app usage to identify technical enhancements and development requirements.

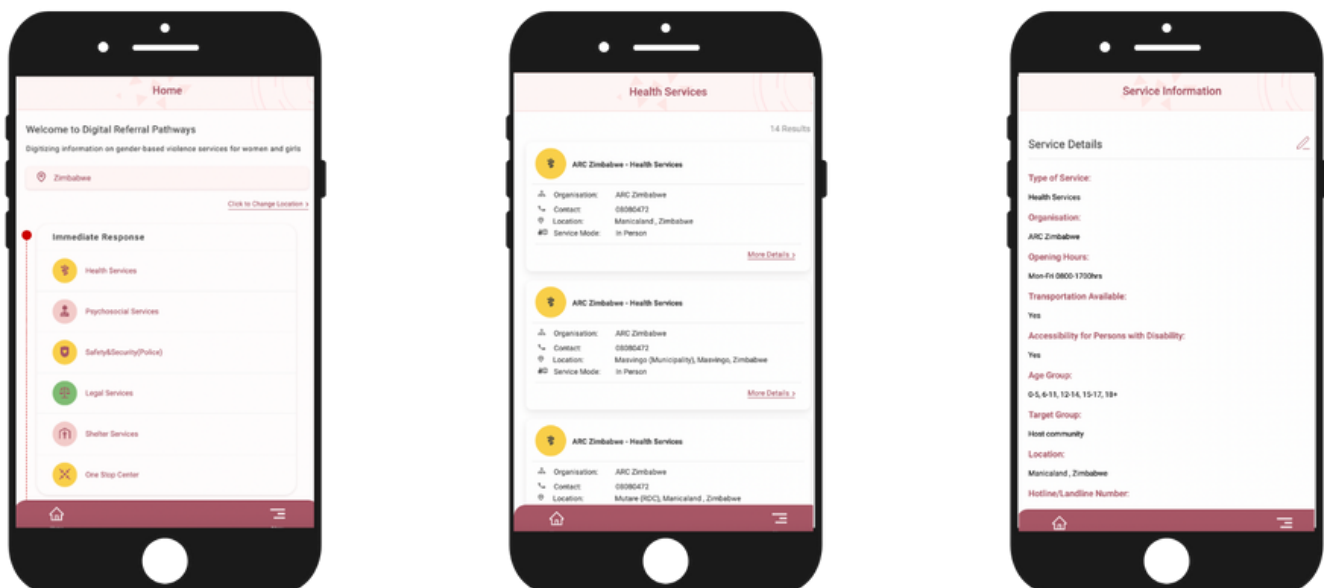


Fig1. Snapshots from Minimum Viable Product (MVP) version of the app

Next Steps

The next steps for the eRPW app are focused on expanding the deployment of the app in additional contexts; namely [Turkey Cross-Border](#) and [Venezuela](#), where user research will be done to ensure that the product is contextualized accordingly. In addition, other next steps include:

1. Introducing 'Yelp' functionality to provide accountability on the quality of services registered in the app
2. Introducing Google maps on the app to help locate GBV service points
3. Exploring the implementation of the SMS version of the eRPW app to enable basic phone users to have access to information on GBV services



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The manager of a Safe Space for Women and Girls where GBV services are provided. The Safe Space is supported by UNICEF and managed by BRAC, in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

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