

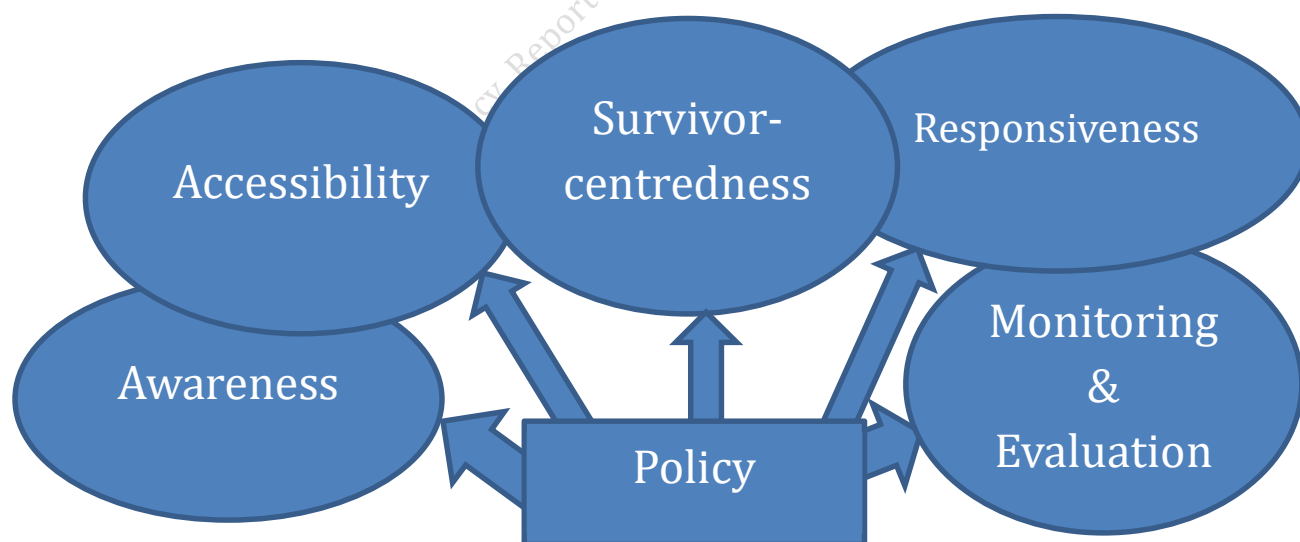
Gender-Based Violence Policy, Report and Support (GBVPRS) Framework for Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

This report presents the findings from a project which examined Gender-Based Violence (GBV) policy development and staff and students' awareness of reporting structures, support mechanisms across five sites at three Nigerian tertiary institutions. The project utilises insights from documentary analysis of publicly available university websites of higher education institutions in Nigeria and survey findings from 949 students and staff from the three participating Nigerian universities. The analysis integrates demographic information, disability disclosure, awareness levels, utilisation of reporting and support channels, and systemic factors shaping understanding and response to GBV in higher education environments.

The project findings feed into the development of a framework for GBV policy, reporting and support (GBVPRS) system in higher education. The framework has six interconnected components; Policy, Awareness, Accessibility, Survivor-centredness, Responsiveness and Monitoring/Evaluation

The GBV Policy, Report and Support (GBVPRS) Framework



Policy is a foundational requirement for action at the institutional level to establish the scope, structure and aims and objective of addressing GBV on campuses.

Awareness of GBV policy and reporting and support provisions is fundamental for institutions to achieve their goals. This requires a systemic approach to make visible available facilities, media

resources, training, workshops and information sessions and leaflets/posters in public and strategic locations, such as female hostels. The timing of the awareness sessions is also important. Survey participants mention student inductions and orientation as examples of effective sessions that made them aware of the existence of GBV report and support systems on campus.

Accessibility of report and support channels is crucial for ensuring that intended users are able to locate and make use of available provisions, as may be required. By ascertaining barriers to accessing report and support provision, institutions will be better informed to develop safeguards and robust pathways for clear access. Language matters, and this is a key consideration for effective and accessible communication. Staff and student representatives and champions are important resources who can facilitate access to GBV prevention programmes and activities across the campus and among their groups and networks.

Survivor-centredness prioritises the needs of users of GBV report and support systems. Guiding principles for a survivor-centred approach include confidentiality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness, safety, respect, trust building, especially when survivors may require physical, mental and emotional support.

Responsiveness is an integral part of GBVPRS framework, in that clear communication of timelines provide guidance and reassurance for service users. Timeliness in processing times ensure that there is careful monitoring of different stages from reporting to providing required support and resolution of cases. Accountability for responsiveness serves as a form of assessment of service delivery and quality assurance.

Monitoring and evaluating progress will inform actions and prompt overview of areas for future policy development and practice. Data collection will play a crucial role in the evaluation of progress and impact of GBVPRS. Review cycles, for example, every 3 years will ensure that actions are examined periodically to ascertain change and progress.

The GBVPRS framework provides institutions with guidance to develop policy and ensure safe spaces for students and staff on campus. The six core pillars of **GBVPRS** and their components are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Core pillars of GBVPRS and related components

Pillars	Components	Details
Policy	Designated GBV centre	- Leadership support - Funding
	Scope	- Published mission, aims, and objectives
	Governance	- Assign structure for decision making and service delivery - Accountability - Reporting structure
	Staffing: Roles and responsibilities	
Accessibility of report channels and support provisions	Reporting channels:	
	Visible	- Location (public and targeted spaces e.g hostels)

		- In-person at dedicated centre - Hours of operation - Suggestion boxes
	Media	- Hotlines: dedicated telephone numbers - Mobile App - Anonymous form - Digital through emails - Online reporting portal - Posters/stickers/flyers - Social media - Induction/welcome materials
	Language	- Empathy - Local languages - Disability friendly (sign language)
	Representation	- Faculty representatives (champions) - Female representatives - Students
	Support provisions	
		- Trauma informed counselling - Medical - Legal - Safety and security - Disability support
Awareness	Orientation session for freshers Campaign Digital (e.g WhatsApp) Emails Student engagement activities Staff training Workshops	- Determine frequency of awareness and training campaigns - Consistent messaging - Text and graphics
Survivor centered	Confidentiality	Standard level of service provision should ensure no victim blaming, and full confidential service.
	Non-discrimination	
	Inclusive	
	Safety	
	Respect	
	Trust building	
Responsiveness	Timeliness Accountability for responsible staff	- Response time are well communicated to service user. - Audit trails of report to support and case

		- Quality assurance
Monitoring and Evaluation	Data security Assessment of impact of services	- Number of reports received - Response time - Referral completion rate - User satisfaction measures - Review cycle (e.g 3 years)

Methods

Data were derived from scoping GBV-related documents on the websites of the universities, and multi-campus survey (N=949) conducted across their campuses. The mixed method design provided thematic insights on policy, awareness, accessibility, and usage of GBV structures, as well as barriers based on staff and student experiences.

Demographic Profile

The sample comprised 10.5% staff and 89.5% students. Campus distributions varied, with Campus 1 and Campus 4 having the largest student respondent populations. Disability disclosure was low overall (2.1%), with slightly higher reporting among staff.

Findings

Awareness of GBV Policies

Across institutions, approximately 52% of respondents indicated awareness of GBV policies, though awareness varied significantly by campus. Staff demonstrated 67% awareness, in contrast to 50.5% among students, revealing a recurrent staff–student information gap.

Awareness of Reporting Channels

Awareness of reporting channels mirrored policy awareness: 52.4% reported knowing the channels, but uncertainty remained high among students. Campus-level differences were notable, with Campus 1 demonstrating higher awareness and Campus 5 consistently low.

Awareness of Support Services

Support service awareness was lower than reporting awareness, with only 47.5% of respondents identifying available support structures. Students exhibited lower awareness than staff. Campus 1 again showed the strongest awareness, while Campus 2 and Campus 5 reported critical gaps.

Accessibility of GBV Structures

Most respondents who attempted locating reporting channels described them as “very easy” or “easy,” though a sizeable proportion selected “Not Applicable,” indicating non-engagement. Accessibility challenges included language barriers (notably on Campus 5), limited visibility of channels, and inconsistent signage.

Types of Available Support

Based on the data collected, counselling emerged as the most widely available support service, followed by medical and safety/security services. Trauma management and referral pathways were the least accessible resources. Availability varied by campus, with Campus 1 hosting the most comprehensive support landscape.

Usage of GBV Reporting Channels

Despite moderate awareness, actual usage of GBV reporting channels was extremely low: only 2.6% of respondents had ever used a reporting mechanism. A substantial awareness-to-action gap was evident across all campuses, with Campus 3 reporting slightly higher usage (6.1%).

Reasons for Non-Usage

Further analysis revealed most participants did not have a need to report GBV issue to report. However, in some cases, a lack of awareness of the existence of GBV report and support service was a contributing factor resulting in lack of usage. Thematic analysis of qualitative responses revealed six main reasons for non-utilisation: (a) no experience of GBV (37.6%); (b) lack of awareness of channels (25.4%); (c) no perceived need (20.4%); (d) first-time exposure to the concept (7.2%); (e) positive/constructive reflections (5%); and (f) systemic barriers (4.4%).

Systemic Barriers

Systemic limitations included poor visibility of channels, inadequate publicity, delayed responses, lack of dedicated GBV offices in some institutions, and uncertainty about confidentiality. Students frequently reported not knowing where to go or how to report.

Effectiveness and Satisfaction

Resolution satisfaction varied: while Campus 3 reported 100% satisfaction among users, other campuses showed lower satisfaction levels. Overall responsiveness was low, with 75% reporting no institutional response when cases were brought forward.

Discussion

The data reveals substantial structural inconsistencies across institutions. While policy frameworks may exist, awareness and operationalisation remain uneven. Students are disadvantaged relative to staff in awareness and access to GBV information. The extremely low usage rate highlights deep informational, cultural, and systemic challenges.

Recommendations

Key recommendations include establishing dedicated GBV centres on all campuses; enhancing publicity; providing multilingual and disability-inclusive reporting avenues; ensuring timely institutional responses; developing anonymous reporting options; engaging student representatives; and strengthening counselling and referral systems. These recommendations have been collated and inform the development of the GBVPRS framework.

Conclusion

The findings underscore the urgent need for strengthened GBV prevention and response infrastructures within Nigerian higher education. The findings reflect substantial disparities in awareness, accessibility, utilisation, and satisfaction across institutions. Despite the existence of reporting channels and policies, their operational effectiveness remains limited. Addressing the identified structural, cultural, and informational barriers is essential for safeguarding students and staff across Nigerian higher education institutions.

Gender-Based Violence Policy, Report and Support (GBVPRS) Framework for Tertiary Institutions