

TOWARDS SAFE, VIOLENCE-FREE COMMUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

Working Together to Improve Police Responses



**A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY
22-23 AUGUST 2013**



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FOREWORD:

OPEN DIALOGUE, THE HEART OF CHANGE

Telling her story at the “Towards Safe, Violence-free Communities for Women and Girls in South Africa,” dialogue, Thandi Mcube* struggled to hold back her tears. The mixed group of police members, government representatives, and civil society listened as she recounted how, following an argument with her former boyfriend, police arrived and shoved the heavily pregnant young woman into the back of a police vehicle, handcuffed her, and marched her from the vehicle to the station. At the station she faced insults from the boyfriend, his friend, the officers, and even the station commander. Released at night, the traumatised woman made her way home alone.

For Thandi, the abuse from her ex-boyfriend was multiplied significantly by the treatment received at the hands of the police, shattering her faith in those who are supposed to protect her. Many women and girls who have experienced domestic and sexual violence have complained about police responses as dismissive, encouraging abused women to “sort things out at home,” or asking survivors of sexual violence insinuating questions, such as what they were doing out at night, or why they wore the clothes they wore. Many, like Thandi, experience secondary victimisation at the hands of the police they seek help from.

“As stakeholders, we need to be able to overcome our differences, build meaning, and set directions together as government, as civil society, as communities and as peoples of South Africa. Indeed, together we can do more to fight the scourge of brutal violence against our most vulnerable groups.”

Maggie Sotyu, Deputy Minister of Police



On the other hand, there are officers like Warrant Officer Beqeza, who was off duty when he came upon two men attempting to rob a young woman. The fact that he was off duty did not prevent him from acting. Beqeza gave chase, running after and capturing one of the young men, and making an arrest. Not only was he able to return a stolen laptop to the frightened young woman, but unknowingly to him at the time, the robbery perpetrator was also responsible for a double murder. His actions that night while off duty not only stopped a robbery, but also removed a very dangerous person from the community.

While problems undoubtedly exist, it’s simply not realistic or helpful to “paint everyone with the same brush,” as one dialogue participant mentioned. There are those who see police work as a job, and others, like Beqeza, as a calling. According to Brigadier Bafana Linda, a day in the life of a police officer dealing with sexual offences and domestic violence is not easy. This type of crime is a difficult area of policing; the offense is often committed behind closed doors and secluded areas where no one is present, so there are rarely eye witnesses.

Getting a statement from children is even more problematic, not just because of trauma, but many children lack the verbal skills to explain what happened to them. When it comes to domestic violence, some officers become frustrated with the repetitive cycle of arrests and cases being dropped by the complainant, while others are still unfamiliar with relevant laws and actions to be taken. Some grapple with their own emotional trauma and “burnout” from years of working in difficult circumstance with no psychological or emotional support systems.

Improving police responses and the complementary working relationships between police, civil society, and all role players are vital to addressing South Africa’s pressing and startlingly high rates of violence against women and girls (VAWG). With this in mind, the two-day dialogue brought together stakeholders to talk, share experiences, express their frustration and challenges, and celebrate good



practices. Most importantly, the dialogue set out to chart a way forward that builds on organisational strengths and expertise, and works collaboratively to fill in gaps, with the ultimate collective goal of an improved police response towards safe, violence-free communities for women and girls.

This report highlights issues and perspectives raised, and attempts to capture the voices of those who are at the forefront of working towards safer communities and homes for women and girls. Every day, individuals across the country are stepping up to say no more violence, and sometimes putting their lives on the line to do so. Yet, one message that came across very clear in the two-day dialogue is that while police, government, and civil society are at the forefront of confronting VAWG, safety concerns everyone, and everyone has a role to play in making communities safer.

“We are encouraging all stakeholders to work within the community where they are staying, ourselves as the police we come from the same community. Working together, we can do more.”

Maggie Sotyu, Deputy Minister of Police

INTRODUCTION: DIALOGUE TOWARDS SAFER COMMUNITIES

South Africa has one of the world’s most progressive constitutions regarding gender equality, as well as advanced legislation related to gender and sexual violence. Yet, VAWG still remains widespread within the country, with far-reaching individual, community, social, economic, and safety impacts.

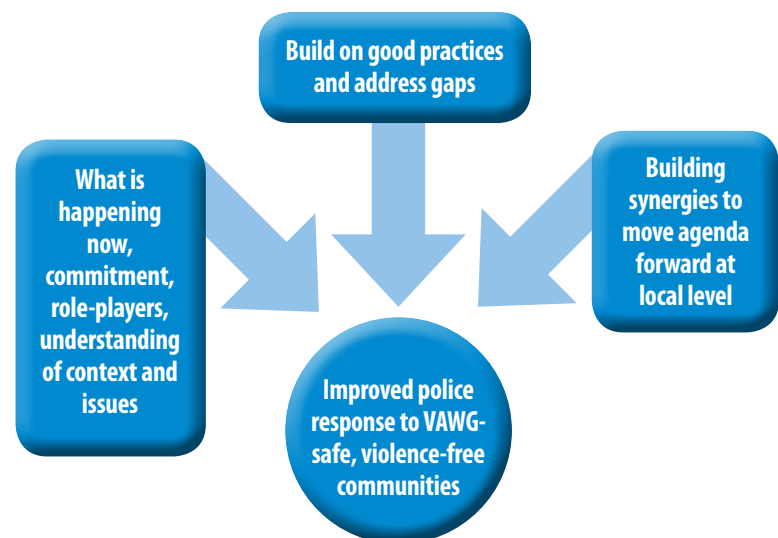
Hosted by The Civilian Secretariat for Police, the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Joint Gender Fund representatives from the police, government, and civil society took part in a dialogue at Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg from the 22-23 of August, 2013. The purpose of the two-day event was to bring together role-players who work closely with SAPS, in order to strengthen working relationships on how to respond to and prevent VAWG. While there are many aspects to violence prevention and responses, this dialogue very specifically focused on improving police responses related to VAWG.

Objectives

The dialogue sought to identify concrete actions that could contribute towards improved policing responses and violence-free communities, including the complimentary actions required by other stakeholders to ensure safe, violence-free communities for women and girls. This included:

- identifying ways in which the policing response to VAWG can be improved through strengthened collaboration;
- developing approaches to address the range of community factors and risks that need to be addressed to strengthen the policing response;
- developing a shared understanding of safe and violence-free communities for women and girls, based on respective frameworks and understandings by government, academia, civil society organizations and other development partners;
- feeding into the development of key measurements for effective policing to-

FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION...



One of the intended outputs following the dialogue is a “Manifesto for Building Safe, Violence-free Communities for Women and Girls.” The manifesto is intended to contribute towards giving meaning to wider policy level interventions, at a community level, through harnessing the mandates, capacities and commitment of respective government and community role-players to address and prevent violence against women and girls specifically.

wards safe and violent free communities for women and children; and

- agreeing on frameworks and roles and responsibilities for different stakeholders in making communities safe, violence-free spaces for women and girls.

Country Context

Since 1994, South Africa has initiated various pieces of legislation designed to eradicate violence against women and girls. These acts included the Domestic Violence Act, 1998, Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007, and the Children's Act, 2005. However, implementation and real security for women and girls has largely not followed. Stark inequalities, such as gender, socio-economic status, and a lack of access to education are some of the factors that contribute to women and girls being and feeling unsafe. Environmental and spatial factors, such as cramped living conditions and poor service delivery that results in overgrowth and unsafe public spaces, also contribute to lack of safety.

Services focused on preventing VAWG and mitigating its impact are provided by multiple stakeholders, but often lack coordination. Interventions aimed at addressing VAWG – even where they are effective – are highly localized and often under-funded. The lack of resources and systematic analysis of what has worked and why, has made it difficult to take good initiatives to scale. Furthermore, what civil society has criticised as lack of leadership from within the state, as well as lack of clarity about who should lead on issues of VAWG and in what ways, has compounded the problem.

South Africa has some of the most alarming levels of GBV

- Survey data shows that 42% of men have perpetrated violence against a partner and that 1 in 4 admits to committing rape.
- The SAPS 2011/2012 Annual Report reflects 64,514 reported sexual offences, and we know that reported crimes represent only a percentage of actual sexual offences taking place.
- According to 2011 data from the National Prosecuting Authority, children are particularly vulnerable to rape and violence; they currently constitute 58.5% of all victims seen at Thuthuzela Care Centres.
- The Medical Research Council suggests that only one in 25 rapes are actually ever reported because of fears of stigmatisation, failures of (and lack of faith in) the criminal justice system, secondary victimisation by untrained or improperly trained rape service providers, and retributive violence by perpetrators or their families.

“The outcomes of this dialogue will feed into the IMC and GBV Council processes as we don't want this to be just another talk show. I encourage all in attendance to participate fully, speak frankly but most of all assist us in coming up with tangible and implantable solutions to this mammoth task that is facing us.”

Millicent Kewuti, CSP



PHOTO: TINUS KRUGER, CSR

Cramped and impoverished conditions contribute to both real and perceived lack of safety.

Over the last year, the Civilian Secretariat for Police has been conducting oversight visits to assess the level of compliance by the SAPS to the above-mentioned legislation. Studies show that there is a low level of compliance, including poor cooperation with other government departments and civil society organisations. All of this points to an urgent need to increase coordinated and collaborative strategies and action among all role players, in order to address the levels of VAW which have reached a state of crisis.

VAWG is an issue that spans both the public and private spheres. The CSP and SAPS specifically see the dialogue and the resulting manifesto as an intervention to strengthen local coordination and collaboration, building onto national commitments.

Willpower not enough – but it can start the conversation

Along with the previously mentioned legal instruments, there are some signs that there is the will to effect change - among government, police, and civil society. Yet an overwhelming sentiment voiced during the dialogue was that despite commitments and many good intentions, many of these measures lack teeth, and more specifically, resources.

For example, established in 2012, the National Council Against Gender-Based Violence (NCGBV) has been tasked with, among other functions, leading and monitoring the implementation of South Africa's 365 Day National Action Plan (NAP) to End Gender Violence. Launched in 2007 after extensive consultations between civil society organisations and government representatives, the 365 Day NAP is an innovative, multi-sectoral plan that holistically addresses

prevention, response and support. Intended as a living document, the plan's success relies on its acceptance and use by stakeholders – it must be adapted by provinces, local government and all spheres of society for implementation at various levels. A report issued by the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) during 16 Days of Activism 2012, acknowledges that policy frameworks, national policy guidelines for victims, and institutional structures provide an enabling environment to deal with GBV. The report also cited perceived feelings of greater safety among citizens. However, while the framework is surely in place, most involved in preventing and responding to VAWG agree that such measures lack teeth, and most especially the necessary financial resources to be implemented effectively.

This same report outlines the need for partnerships between government, NGOs, faith-based organisations, traditional leaders, political parties, and communities. It also notes the need for better communication among role-players and with communities. Some segments of civil society are more critical, stating that the applauded integrated, multi-sectoral approach was not properly funded and therefore could not generate results. Further, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women and Children [CEDAW] Committee stated in its concluding observations upon analysis of South Africa's third and fourth periodic reports in 2011, that it regretted the lack of information on the impact of the measures that have been put in place to reduce incidences of all forms of violence against women and girls. The Committee called on South Africa to review the multi-sectoral action plan and expeditiously adopt comprehensive measures to address the violence. The NCGBV is fairly new and it is early to assess its progress on the 365 Day NAP. However, one statement made during the recent dialogue bluntly questioned the need for yet another body addressing gender issues, rather than strengthening those already in existence.

Examples of great intentions are plentiful. One of the outcomes identified in the Medium Term Strategic Framework (2009-2014) issued by the Presidency is to ensure that "All people in South Africa are and feel safe." While still facing some challenges, the establishment of the one-stop Thuthuzela Care Centres by the National Prosecuting Authority provides a model for care. Very recently, in August 2013, SAPS's Visible Policing Division and the Basic Education Department's School Safety and Enrichment programmes, officially launched the Safer Schools Protocol project. This collaborative partnership seeks to deal with school-based crime prevention, and currently links 18 000 schools to police stations, with safe school committees also being established. These are just a few of a large number of laudable actions.

A question posed then is, with all of these strong frameworks and positive actions (not to mention a Constitution regarded as one of the most progressive in the world, complete with a comprehensive Bill of Rights), why is the rate of gender and sexual violence in the country still so shockingly high? Policies and initiatives that take us one step closer to safer communities can be celebrated in their own right, but the challenge is – how do these, in reality, make communities safer for women and girls? Where can limited resources best be used? And how can the daunting workload ahead be best shared amongst those with the commitment to see change happen?

While government, police, and civil society may have different opinions in some areas, all voices agree that greater collaboration and coordination is vital. There is frustration about lack of concrete actions, vastly inadequate resources, level of skills and training, and perceptions that each sector doesn't understand the other.

Yet there is also a clear desire that things change. The more than 80 representatives at the dialogue represented high-level offices, government departments, police services, NGOs, community-based organisations, and service organisations. Each brought with them commitments of themselves and their institutions. The will to work towards a safer society is evident. The key next step is to continue to work towards developing this will into concrete action.

THE ECONOMIC COST OF VIOLENCE

In addition to human rights infringements and other negative impacts on development, violence is expensive. The direct and indirect costs of violence include expenditures for the criminal justice system, long-term social and economic costs, health costs, costs for victims of crime and violence, and expenditures on protective security. Aside from the immediate affects, survivors often experience post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and suicidal feelings, and may engage in high-risk health behaviours, such as smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse. For communities, there is reduced productivity, decrease of property values, disrupted social services, and an overall feeling of insecurity.



THE DIALOGUE: ISSUES ARISING

Over two days, dialogue participants raised a whole range of issues – many of which had been heard before. Yet uniquely, the mixed group at the dialogue meant that issues could be raised and discussed from different perspectives. Too often it is easy to point fingers, to hear and consider only one side of the story. The dialogue heard not only from civil society but also from police about their frustrations. A survivor of violence told her story, and so did a police officer. The good practices and innovative strategies from all sectors received attention.

This section seeks to highlight some of the key areas for consideration, as the dialogue moves from conversation to action. We recognise that not every important comment and issue may have been captured. These perspectives will be used to inform the resulting manifesto, and we hope that all with a stake in safer



communities, whether represented at the dialogue or not, will engage with this roadmap. We also hope this report will help to encourage even more dialogue and debate, with of course the eventual steps into action.

Better integration is needed

There is no single solution, and so no one sector can solve the problem of VAWG. Collaboration is needed at national level, but also community level – among SAPS, government departments, civil society, business associations, cultural and faith-based organisations, the education sector, etc. Each has unique expertise, resources, and points of contact that can be strengthened and

used. Integration is about working together on the ground. At the same time, it is about sharing information and engaging in continuous open dialogue—including developing shared tools and finding ways to share and scale-up best practices. While this is widely recognised in principle, in practice there is much work to be done to encourage integrated responses.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Gender and sexual violence cuts across boundaries of age, race, economic standing, etc, and happens in both private and public spaces. As such, different strategies need to be used to address different types of violence, to meet the specific needs of a particular area and context. There is a particular need to recognise that not all women are the same – migrant women, women with disabilities, those living with HIV, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community, and others, may all experience sexual violence differently. There are also territorial disparities - some areas are neglected in strategic plans and are also under-funded. Many do not have good facilities to help support women and girls with past-trauma care, or in legal matters, such as successfully taking cases to court. In some instances, restorative justice has been applied successfully. These widespread differences underscore the need for many different stakeholders to collaborate. However, despite the need for unique solutions, there are also some commonalities, such as the need to encourage social change, counter corruption, build capacity, and share best practices, among others.

“We must move beyond talking, and collectively ask - what is required for communities to be safe?”

Tamara Braam, Joint Gender Fund

BEING SAFE, FEELING SAFE

“There are two dimensions to safety, perception and actual dimensions. You feel safe and you are safe.”

Lisa Vetten, Independent Consultant

Feeling safe is important and yet it is not always connected to rational statistics. On the one hand, people who are vulnerable – those with disabilities, undocumented migrants – may feel less safe than another woman in the same circumstances. Similarly, women may perceive themselves as safe – yet, place themselves behind high fences and security systems. Is this really feeling safe?

Safety is multi-dimensional

Simply put, safety can mean different things to different women and girls. Older women are statistically at a lower risk of violence, but may not feel safe because they wouldn't be able to fight off attackers. A person with a disability, such as a woman who can't see or hear, may have additional dimensions of feeling unsafe. It is also important to recognise contextual and demographic factors - one intervention will not make all women feel safe. The environment, place and spaces can make women and girls feel more, or less, safe. Safety for homeless women may mean being safe on the road, having their own home, and being safe on the street when they're trying to do work. In work places, it means not being sexually harassed. Each person's own experiences may affect their feelings of safety; therefore any framework addressing violence needs to be multidimensional, and understand that feeling safe is also a right.

Problems linking Women, Girls, and Children

Some participants' also raised familiar concerns about the grouping together of women, girls, and children, given that women have their own agency, whereas girls and children automatically have the status of needing care. Some perspectives suggest that these statuses need to be kept separate.

Duplication

Some concerns were voiced about duplication. On the national level, this concern focused on agencies established and tasked with the same basic goals - or at least a lack of clarity on mandates being communicated. The question was raised, what are the tasks of the various gender and women's bodies, and perhaps more importantly, what impact are these agencies having on available funding? The group was informed that a gender-based violence hotline was in the works, and a query was posed - why should there be another hotline installed rather than building the capacity of the already existing ones? What good is a hotline if the services that the person needs to be referred to are underfunded or non-existent? There are many forums, instead of pushing something new or trying to establish a new forum, sentiment was raised to focus on the ones in existence and how can these be evaluated and improved.

Civil Society Crisis

There was some disappointment at responses provided by representatives of the state. Some civil society members expressed frustration about lack of cooperation, as well as clarity and commitments around resources. There is a strong sentiment that there is a funding crisis among civil society, yet they are "supplementing state services and doing things the state can't (or won't) do." It was felt that these services are unrecognised and un-resourced, which is a critical issue that needs to be addressed with urgency.

**"Civil society is dying,
there is no funding left!"**

Laura Washington, Project Empower

Lack of Trust in the Police

Some communities say that they do not trust the police and this provides both real and perceived shortcomings in dealing with VAWG. There is widespread evidence that some police officers ignore or belittle reports of sexual violence - especially if these happen in the home, the survivor is LGBTI, or the responding officer judges the person's behaviour as inappropriate - being out late, or wearing certain types of clothes. Likewise, domestic violence complainants have widely reported police who send them back home, or refuse to arrest the perpetrator. There are high levels of secondary victimisation when it comes to all forms of VAWG. There is also widespread evidence and belief that corruption can contribute to the withdrawing of cases - for example, dockets that get "lost." The challenge is to urgently address the real instances of police corruption and unprofessionalism, as well as perceptions of police as perpetrators of violence. This includes accountability oversight to ensure reported cases are properly investigated and followed through.



There are high levels of secondary victimisation when it comes to all forms of VAWG. There is also widespread evidence and belief that corruption can contribute to the withdrawing of cases - for example, dockets that get "lost." The challenge is to urgently address the real instances of police corruption and unprofessionalism, as well as perceptions of police as perpetrators of violence. This includes accountability oversight to ensure reported cases are properly investigated and followed through.

Capacity at Police level

While some of the lack of trust stems from corruption, lack of capacity and skills also contributes to both lack of trust, and effectiveness. It has been found that the majority of police stations don't have copies of documents of acts related to VAWG, have no service directions, and lack information on sexual offences. Simply put, some police members do not actually know the law that they are supposed to be upholding. There is also a lack of training within the policing community; many members of the police are unaware of how these cases should be handled. Some officers do not know how to accurately and efficiently take a statement, and in some of the most worrisome cases, officers are unable to read and write English well enough to take a statement or effectively perform their duties. Adult Basic Education and Training has been introduced as an interim measure. There is a great need for strengthening a whole range of skills, including also tracking of offences and keeping better records.

Understanding Police Challenges

Addressing sexual violence is a very difficult area of policing; these crimes are usually committed behind closed doors, in dark allies, secluded areas, where no one except the perpetrator and the survivor are present. This means that there are often no eye witnesses, making it difficult to prove the case in court. Statements are often withdrawn because there is insufficient evidence, or the survivor does not want to re-live the experience. Individuals are traumatised from the event and it is difficult to get accurate information. There are even greater challenges working with children, a person cannot be convicted if the child cannot give an accurate report, including the names of body parts, which many parents choose to use euphemisms for.

“How do you get a [sexual offence] conviction in court when the child says he put his cigarette in the kitchen?”

Brigadier Bafana Linda

Children who don't know the proper names for body parts pose a significant challenge for police taking statements.

Not All Officers are the Same

It is unfortunate that police officers often get painted with the same brush. There are countless examples of police members carrying out their duties with professionalism, and going above and beyond the call of duty. However, it is rare to hear of these stories. This may point to a need to highlight the good work of some of these officers within SAPS itself, and the general public.

Need for After Hours Services

Victims often receive secondary victimisation because there are no social workers after hours in many locations - the only people to help are SAPS and nurses. There should be 24h hour services, one of the goals in the Domestic Violence Act, and there is a need for involvement of different departments. There is no uniform way of dealing with victims after hours.



Care of Frontline Workers

The question is: who is servicing the service providers? Those dealing with violence every day need to be supported in order to continue to provide services. It is important to keep in mind that frontline workers - whether care workers, social workers, police officers - are dealing with highly charged environments in their daily work. As civil society struggles to cope with the surging tide of survivors that need care, with little resources, it is extremely rare that the care workers themselves receive any support to cope with emotional stress or burnout. Though rarely discussed, police officers also experience this - intervening in violent confrontations and listening to stories about violence affects them as well. Support needs to be provided for these frontline workers, since this area is particularly neglected in all strategic plans and is underfunded.

Drivers at local level

There is a need to look closely at what is happening in communities, to see why violence is happening. One key driver is alcohol and drug abuse, which contributes to gender violence and sexual offences. What is the role of the Liquor Licensing Board? The Board and SAPS require greater enforcement capacity of liquor licensing. Other issues, such as high levels of poverty, unemployment, and gender inequality that leave women and girls vulnerable, are also important.

Special attention to youth

Youth are vulnerable as victims and perpetrators of violence. Schools have been cited as places where sexual violence happens, by fellow pupils and by teachers. There is a need to work with youth to encourage civic responsibility and a culture of violence prevention. A safer schools protocol has been launched, and its implementation needs to be enforced. There are also too many instances of young people with little to do outside of school hours. Recreational activities and after-school programmes, as well as facilities within communities for school leavers, is critical.

Local government is Key

Local government can play a key role in facilitating strengthened planning, coordination and management, whilst addressing important environmental design issues. For example, the care of local parks, pavements, street lights, and community recreational activities all fall within the ambit of local government. Providing safer public spaces for women and girls not increases their physical safety, but also improves access to educational, economic, and recreational opportunities.

Peace Begins at Home

Community and family values need to be developed. Firstly, a lot of violence happens within the home. Secondly, violence is often learned at home and in the community. Communities themselves play a fundamental role in combating crimes, and families can be at the heart of change. Investment tends to focus on the community or greater level, and perhaps there is a need to pay more attention to challenging how violence is learned in the home. There is also a particular need to sensitise parents and individuals that everyone has a role to play in contributing to safer communities. There are rights, and responsibilities.

“We have become a community that rapes their own children, that beats their own women - men are supposed to protect. There is a need to invest in human capital,”

Brigadier Bafana Linda

On the need to invest in human capital and work with communities to address the high rates of violence.



“Safety Is Everybody’s Business”

Faith Mazibuko, Gauteng MEC for Community Safety

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE-PLAYERS

An overwhelming sentiment emerging from the dialogue was a clear need for more collaborative and coordinated efforts. However, there is a need to understand the key functions and mandates of the various role-players, in order to better plan for each to maximise their expertise, resources, and mandates. Several national government departments were on hand to share information with the dialogue participants, in a “talk show” format. This overview provides a snapshot of the contributions of these institutions in addressing VAWG.

SAPS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Statement Taking Project is working to improve statements, prioritising stations that are identified as “hot spots” for GBV. Sexual offences reported to the FCS are quality controlled by the crime office, where more experienced investigators can review the quality of the statements, and if necessary oversee retaking of statements.

South African Police Service (SAPS)

The South African Police Service (SAPS) has a commitment to addressing VAWG as core to its mandate. This includes divisions directly involved in working with violence against women and children, particularly the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) Unit, first established in 1995. This unit is comprised of specialised individuals that focus on family violence, child protection and sexual offences. The FCS is largely responsive, but they also have a part to play in educating, creating awareness, and communicating with citizens about speaking out against violence.

One of the recent innovations has been a statement taking project, to help improve the quality of information gathered in statements. SAPS faces a number of challenges in terms of skills and resources: for example, older police officers who are unable to write well, lack of professionalism, and the need for better technology, i.e. better forensics. However, it is also important to note that while SAPS engages in community-level prevention, such as working with youth and community policing, influencing societal change is an area where the police service relies on civil society and other partners.

Department of Social Development (DSD)

The role of the DSD is to enable the poor, the vulnerable, and the excluded within South African society to secure a better life for themselves, in partnership with them and with all those who are committed to building a caring society. In the context of VAWG, the DSD's key role is to contribute towards building safe and violence-free communities for women and girls. According to the DSD 2012 -2015 strategic plan, a key priority is to provide more resources to organisations that seek to "reduce the number of children in conflict with the law, combat gender-based violence, and run educational campaigns about the dangers of substance abuse," which has also been noted as a driver of gender-based violence. The Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment Programme develops, supports and monitors the implementation of policies, legislation and programmes to protect, empower and support children, youth, adult offenders and victims of crime and violence.



Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG)

The DCoG's function is to support provinces and local government in fulfilling their constitutional and legal obligations. In the context of VAWG, it emphasises the importance of the role of municipalities in building safer, violence-free communities for women and girls. There needs to be a focus on developmental local government to promote community structures in being active participants. The aim is to promote safe and healthy living environments through planning, design and management. A key mechanism for achieving this is Integrative Developmental Planning.

National Prosecuting Authority (NPA)

Guided by the Constitution, the NPA ensures justice for the victims of crime by prosecuting without fear, favour and prejudice, and by working with partners and the public to solve and prevent crime. One of the key strategies of the NPA is the creation of the Thuthuzela Care Centres to manage cases of sexual violence, an important model of integrated service delivery at a local level.

THUTHUZELA CARE CENTRES

These one-stop facilities have been introduced as a critical part of South Africa's anti-rape strategy, aiming to reduce secondary trauma for the victim, improve conviction rates and reduce the cycle time for finalising cases. The centres are managed by a top level inter-departmental team comprising Justice,

Health, Education, Treasury, Correctional Services, Ministry of Police, Local Government, Home Affairs, Social Development and designated civil society organisations.

National Council Against Gender-Based Violence

The NCGBV is a multi-sectoral body with a dedicated Secretariat located in the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities. The council has the responsibility of driving the implementation of the 365 Days National Action Plan, advising government on policy and intervention programmes, strengthening national and international partnerships; and monitoring and reporting progress on initiatives aimed at addressing gender-based violence. The role of the NCGBV is to create a linkage with locally-based responses and processes, and foster interlinkages between prevention and response, including improved policing. The focus of the council is on the restoration of social order and on the healing of individual victims. It looks at coordination, monitoring of issues and how society can work together.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

There is a clear need to share information about what's working, and to scale-up best practices in preventing and responding to sexual violence. There is currently a lack of knowledge exchange in this regard. Sharing best practices helps to highlight what works and encourages collaboration. A series of case studies was commissioned to kick off such knowledge sharing. The case studies can be found in the appendix of this document. However, below are some highlights of strategies currently being used, as shared during the dialogue.

Community Restorative Justice

Implemented by organisations such as the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Program (TVEP), restorative justice is an approach to justice that aims to involve the parties to a dispute and others affected by the harm (victims, offenders, families concerned and community members). All those involved collectively identify harms, needs and obligations through accepting responsibilities, making restitution, and taking measures to prevent a recurrence of the incident and promoting reconciliation. In a typical case, first the story from the abused or violated person is heard. Counselling is then provided. The offender can be called to come for mediation, but other family members may also come. The whole family is affected so all members come together for discussion and mediation. Those involved in the process feel comfortable because of the non-judgemental attitude, and find the platform useful to begin healing. TVEP has engaged with and worked with police in their support centre, and have run workshops to talk about achievements and new trends.

Community mapping , managing environmental factors

Crime and the physical environment are interlinked. There are characteristics in the environment that can enhance crime – dark areas, overgrown grass, pathways, for example. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has previously used community mapping to help communities to identify, prioritise, and address environmental risk factors in their communities. Through this process, communities themselves are able to identify trouble spots – for example, overgrown areas where sexual violence happens, or where girls are scared to go. At times simple solutions can be implemented by the community, for example working together to cut down overgrown vegetation, or pave a pathway to make it less likely to have overgrowth, and increase perceptions of safety.

SHUKUMISA FINDINGS 2011/ 2012

- On the whole, the level of service appeared to be good. Monitors often stated that despite the stations being quite busy, there were sufficient officers to help clients and sufficient space for clients to wait for assistance.
- Not all police stations displayed posters and pamphlets relating to sexual offences - vital and easily accessible information on victims' rights and services. Notably, where they were available, most of these posters and pamphlets were in English, with very few printed in any of South Africa's indigenous languages.
- According to the National Instruction 3/2008, certain documents (among others) should be readily available at all stations: the Sexual Offences Act; the National Instructions 3/2008; the station orders around sexual offences; the regulations and forms related to the SOA; information about hospitals providing PEP to rape survivors; and a list of organisations providing services to rape survivors. When asked about these documents, some police officers appeared confused and in a few cases (34%), the documentation was not located easily. Only 17% of stations where this information was available could produce all of the documentation stipulated by the National Instructions

Full report available - <http://www.shukumisa.org.za/>

Shukumisa Campaign Checklist

In order to track the translation of laws and policies into practice, the National Working Group on Sexual Offences (a network of 20 civil society organisations from around South Africa) initiated the Shukumisa Campaign with the aim of examining the extent to which the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the departments of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and Health (DoH) are meeting their commitments to providing services for victims of sexual offences. The first pilot Shukumisa Campaign monitoring was undertaken in 2008 during the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Children and was repeated in 2010. The monitoring looked at a range of variables in order to establish the level of access to services available to rape victims. These included physical accessibility, access to information, privacy and, most importantly, specialised services. During the 16 Days of Activism in 2011, and in January of 2012, civil society organisations (CSOs) participating in the Shukumisa Campaign conducted monitoring at 83 police stations, 29 courts and 30 hospitals across Gauteng, the Western Cape, Limpopo, the Eastern Cape, the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal to assess the services which these facilities provide to rape victims. Such monitoring tools provide powerful ways to monitor and report on progress.

Community mapping , Prevention in Action Programme - Empowering Communities and Families

At times simple solutions can be very effective. The Prevention in Action programme is working at the community and family level to change negative social norms that keeps VAWG alive. One of the main challenges is the norm of keeping silent, and not taking any action, about violence happening in families and neighbourhoods. This programme has worked with communities in coming up with basic actions that communities can take if violence is happening. This includes knocking on the door to intervene, diffusing a heated situation by asking a family member to go for a walk, or quietly offering a list of shelters to someone who may need them. In one example a neighbour knocked on the door asking if anyone had seen his child's ball. By the time the conversation was finished, the heated argument had been allowed to calm, thus avoiding an escalation to violent confrontation. Most importantly, the approach includes training people in the community to begin raising dialogues; and these community members speak with their own family and friends. In this way, the idea that violence is normal and accepted is challenged, as people see that in their own community people are speaking up and taking action.

GIZ Model

The GIZ systemic approach to violence prevention provides a model for analysing the contexts in which violence occurs, and for planning appropriate measures to address the local context-specific drivers of violence. The model focuses particularly on behaviour change among youth, given that young people under the age of 25 – typically the majority of the population in developing countries – are affected disproportionately by all types of violence. Involving young people is thus crucial in finding effective answers to achieving safety. Drawing on widely used concepts such as the WHO Ecological Model, the approach looks at the different levels at which young people are exposed to risk and protective factors, such as the individual, relationship, community and society levels, those actors that have an influence on the behaviour of young people, such as parents, teachers, social workers, as well as how to strengthen cooperation and coordination between relevant sectors, for example the education, health, economic and the youth sectors.



THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT VIOLENCE IS PREVENTABLE

The World Health Organisation's Ecological Model distinguishes between four levels where risk or protective factors impact on the likelihood of people becoming perpetrators of violence: the individual, relationship, community and societal levels. Below are a few examples of risk and protective factors for each level

Level	Risk factors	Protective factors
Individual	Exposure to violence in the family, early involvement with drugs and alcohol	Self-esteem, higher education
Relationship	Low parental involvement in children's activities, Parental substance abuse or criminality	Connectedness to family or adults outside the family, Positive role models
Community	Socially disorganized neighborhoods, low level of social cohesion, low levels of community participation, gangs	Social networks in place and presence of social workers, Active community structures
Societal	Rapid urbanisation, Poverty and high income inequality	Social protection system, comprehensive national violence prevention strategy

There are three stages of prevention which include:

- primary (programmes, social services and social work supporting families, children, adolescents and youth before violence occurs)
- secondary (targeted to children and young people who are identified as 'at risk' of crime and violence)
- Tertiary (aims at preventing re-offending and reintegration of convicted perpetrators) prevention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMING UP, PARTICIPANTS IN THE DIALOGUE OFFERED A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

Police Services

- Some participants recommended a total transformation of SAPS from a force to service-oriented policing.
- Develop required capacity of police to better fulfil their roles and responsibilities, especially in terms of new laws and policies. This includes technical skills such as: statement taking; forensics and investigative services; building knowledge of sexual offences legislation and proceedings; encouraging professionalism and ethics and strengthening language skills, particularly basic English skills and communication skills to ensure professional treatment of survivor.
- Review recruitment policies and strategies to ensure that the calibre of police employed is equipped to respond effectively to violence against women and girls.
- Find mechanisms to close the gaps between the community and the SAPS through community events, sporting events and dialogues.
- Build bottom-up accountability mechanisms. Clarify lines of accountability for police and ensure that compliant mechanisms and information are available in police stations.
- Develop more effective systems of sharing of information and monitoring of trends of VAWG.
- Improve feedback to survivors

“All these different dialogue platforms on gender-based violence and women/girl safety must begin to organize themselves and to build stronger partnerships between them, through a structured dialogue. And, this is the only way we can develop a manifesto as a tool for a common framework to work together.”

Maggie Sotyu, Deputy Minister of Police

Partnerships, integration and cross cutting approaches with other government departments

- There is an urgent need to build meaningful partnerships among government departments, police services, civil society organisation and initiatives and communities which recognises the critical and complimentary roles that each have in responding to VAWG. Effective partnerships should be underpinned by clear definitions of role and sufficient budget to allow for the effective undertaking of prevention and response work.
- A strengthened, integrated and strategic response is required to address not just violence itself, but the whole range of social drivers that contribute towards VAWG, including substance abuse, fractured family relationships, parenting challenges, and related issues.
- All relevant departments should integrate responses to and prevention of VAWG into their programmes, and where necessary appropriate dedicated human resource capacity should be in place.
- Where possible, initiatives should build onto current government partnerships, particularly with Departments of Health, Education and Social Development.
- There is a need to strengthen the psychosocial response to VAWG both at the level of how interventions are made with survivors, and in providing support to frontline workers, who often face significant ‘burn out’. These services should be available and provided 24 hours a day.
- Effective strategies that will have optimal impact should be prioritised and customised, given resource limitations and the scale of the problem.
- Parole boards should include SAPS and other relevant parties in the review of parole for sexual offenders.
- The management of sexual offenders by DCS should be strengthened.
- Medico-legal services should be strengthened and re-established where necessary. This, for example, would include ensuring that trained forensic nurses are made available at health facilities.
- Given the key role that local government plays at a local level, it is critical that safety is built into the IDP processes.
- Community Safety plans should integrate VAWG, as these plans are key in taking the local agenda for building safe communities for women and girls forward.

Civil Society

- There is a need to collectively advocate for increased funding and recognition of the critical role that civil society organisations play in the response to and prevention of VAWG.
- Build awareness of relevant policy and legislation relating to VAWG for communities and police officers.
- Provide local oversight on service delivery in relation to VAWG, including challenges and successes.
- Develop and implement more collaborative approaches to maximise resources and impact, and minimise duplication.

Community

- All community members should be actively involved in responding to VAWG, including individuals such as shebeen owners who should actively seek to make these safer spaces for women.
- Strengthen the functioning of Community Police to ensure community involvement.
- Communities should be transformed into safer spaces through crime prevention initiatives, risk mapping and strengthened relationships with SAPS.
- Engage FBOS and CBOS to strengthen parenting and promote respect for women and girls' right at the household level.

“Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims.”

Karen Tewson, National Council Against Gender-Based Violence/ National Prosecuting Authority

CONCLUSION

During two days of lively and frank discussions, government, police and civil society shared ideas and experiences about what is working, and offered critical insights into gaps and shortcomings. Overall, the spirit of conversations focused on what can be done, and how to work collaboratively to do it. Building onto this, discussions will be used to inform a manifesto for improved local response to VAWG, which will provide a framework that will set out priorities for action, specifically addressing police response and complimentary roles for all stakeholders. Given the scale of VAWG in South Africa, there is a need for urgent action to take the proposed manifesto and related commitments forward. Translating policy into action at a local level will contribute to not only saving lives but also ultimately building safer and healthier communities for women, girls and all South Africans. The Civilian Secretariat for Police and the Joint Gender Fund (JGF) are committed to taking this process forward.



CASE STUDIES



PREVENTION IN ACTION PROGRAMME: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

CASE STUDY

Preventing inaction

At 17, Siphos* was a young man already too familiar with violence. His uncle regularly beat his aunt, and every time this would happen, the family beat the uncle. For years, the cycle continued - the uncle beat the aunt, the family beat the uncle, but nothing changed. One day, Siphos spoke with someone who had received training in violence prevention by the Western Cape Network on Violence Against Women. He began to understand that you can't end violence by violence. So, he encouraged his family to sit down, to talk about what was happening, then speak to the uncle and the aunt, to find out the root of the problem. The family was referred for counselling, and the uncle himself received help to resolve issues he had raised in the discussions. Since the intervention, this family has changed their strategy, themselves, on how to end violence between them. While there is no guarantee violence will never happen again, for the past two years, the family has lived peacefully.

For families like Siphos's, violence becomes a "norm." The Prevention In Action Programme is working to prevent violence, by changing negative social norms that keep violence against women alive. The programme seeks to make change on the ground, and create more positive social norms for both communities and families. The Western Cape Network's Prevention In Action project is part of a programme being implemented in the Western Cape and Kwa-zulu Natal by Project Concern International, with support from the United States Agency for International Development.



The Prevention in Action programme is encouraging violence free communities.

KEY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES: WORKING TOGETHER

Community based Training

As part of the Prevention In Action programme, the Western Cape Network on Violence Against Women trains people in the community about understanding positive and harmful norms, and prevention strategies. These are usually respected community members, or accepted people of influence. During the training, members of the community come up with a "menu of actions." These are often simple actions that any community or family member can do to interrupt or shift habits that lead to or escalate violence. Each

"Everybody has a role to play. So in the end it's the whole community working together the, young, old, male and female, it's everybody taking charge of the community because there is something everybody can do and this programme helps people to have a role from the beginning."

of the trained people also engages with the community - family, friends, neighbours, to pass along what they have learned in the training. This is how Siphos came to be reached by the programme.

Building bridges

After the training, participating community members are linked with role players in the area, which can be officials, such as local police, or informal structures, like a club, whom-ever or whichever structures are working the community. This is important, because in many cases referrals are needed to more trained counsellors, and in some cases police are needed to respond where dialogue is not working. In some areas, the Prevention In Action members also help to support the police in their work. Some locations are very dangerous, even for police officers. When they receive a call from the Prevention In Action network, they know that there is a valid complaint, that they will be reasonably protected, and that they will have support with the victim. In instances where violence is happening at the moment, community members may go either individually or as a group to the home and intervene, while calling the police at the same time. Often by the time police have arrived, the situation has calmed.

Bridging the gaps

Domestic violence generally happens in the home. However, often, neighbours know it is happening, while the public, the police and other stakeholders, do not know - unless somebody tells them. And cultural norms often dictate that no-one speaks up. And even if community members want to help, they often don't always know what to do about it. Addressing this norm, and making it an accepted practice to intervene in appropriate, open, dialogue based intervention wherever possible is what the programme is all about. The programme thus attempts to bridge this gap between the private and public assistance, i.e police, and the community. **not his real name*

IMPACT/SUCCESSSES

POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE

It has been found that when officials intervene people become angry; but when neighbours intervene, they are more open to discussion, more appreciative of the support and more likely to attend the suggested referral. When people were expecting or calling the police to intervene, the cycle of violence wasn't ending; police would often be called over and over again. But when a neighbour comes peacefully to ask what the problem is, people were more open to discussion. According to WCN, this is because in the neighbourhood everyone wants to make a good impression, which meant that they were responding positively to the programme intervention.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TO A PERSON'S LIFE

The programme is still fairly new, but positive trends are evident. This programme looks at prevention differently, by taking a step back and saying; let's look at prevention in a way that would make the perpetrator not even think of doing it. For families like Siphó's this has meant a more peaceful home life, security for his aunt, and the start of a family trend to use dialogue, rather than violence, to resolve problems. However, it has also meant help for the uncle, to resolve the issues he himself was grappling with, and to change his mind set and norms when it comes to violence.

OWNERSHIP

Communities have become more open to have discussions together and more pro-active in their approaches, but they have also take ownership. This is demonstrated at a very basic level in that it was community members that named the project, and came up with the menu of actions. Neighbours are part of the solution, because they identified what they felt they themselves could and would do.

"It would be great to get more time, to really build what the programme is all about in the communities and their relationships between stake holders."

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

The main challenges are building the relationships between the stakeholders and issues with time. Behaviour change takes time, and there is a need to spend significant time working with communities to sustain the programme. This is a key lesson learned, as previous activities have sometimes been rushed. Taking the needed time, building strong relationships among stakeholders, and following each step of the programme is vital to the needed sense of community ownership.

NEXT STEPS

Ideally, the Western Cape Network on Violence Against Women would like to saturate communities with this prevention training. The more people that know about how to prevent violence against women, the more they will be able to shift negative social norms. This programme is designed in a way that can be driven by communities with less resources, all it needs is people that can influence each other. However, there is some need for funding to be able to deliver training and manage the programmes. Replicating and scaling up such strategies would help communities, and families like Siphó's to take stock of and address violence against women in their midst.



Prevention at home, among friends, family, neighbours.

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ADVICE OFFICES: CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY

Christina's* husband had been working in Johannesburg trying to raise money for his family when he died. Very poor, she and the children remained behind in Impendle. After his death, Christina went to seek help at the Centre for Community Justice and Development (CCJD) Advice Offices. There she produced documents to the paralegal. The paralegal informed Christina that she could help her claim benefits from her husband's employer. With the help from the advice office, she was able to claim from the provident fund of her deceased husband, upon which she was able to build a house. The CCJD's Advice Offices deal with a wide variety of cases, including rape, child abuse, maintenance, social problems, labour problems, helping clients to get benefits and access justice, and responding to incidents of gender-based violence. In 1997 CCJ started the Community Outreach Programme. Advice offices were established at institutions of criminal justice around KwaZulu-Natal, with the goal of working with police and magistrates to help women and children in rural areas who were victims of rape, sexual assault and other forms of abuse.



Paralegal of Impendle with a client

KEY ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES

CCJD's Advice Offices & Community Outreach Work

CCJD's Community Outreach Programme has fifteen advice offices in KwaZulu-Natal - ten are in police stations, four on the premises of magistrate's courts, and one in a traditional court. The advice offices were strategically placed to offer convenient access for clients and to bridge the gap between rural people and justice institutions. To encourage women and children to come forward to report crimes, staff were all female. However, an increasing number of men have come forward to seek help with issues such as labour disputes and obtaining pensions, social grants and child maintenance. Therefore the advice offices widened its scope to try to solve almost any legal, social or personal problem that individuals had. Compared to the police stations, where charge offices are in an open space, the advice offices include trauma rooms, a waiting area, and consultation rooms to consult with paralegals in a private space, one on one.

Collaboration with the Police

The first office that was piloted in 1997 was Plessislaer Advice Office which was placed in Plessislaer Police Station. The organisation successfully established a good partnership between the police officials, station commissioner, and paralegals. Through negotiations and strong working relationships, the police realised that the advice office was not there to compete with them, but to support them. The paralegals sit in meetings with them, tackling issues affecting community members and trying to find solutions to problems relating to domestic violence and the abuse of women and children. Meetings are held every day in the police stations, and paralegals also participate and share their challenges, achievements and trends in the community.

Community Outreach Activities

The paralegals also conduct community outreach activities jointly with the police. These activities raise awareness among community members about their legal rights, the functions of the criminal justice system, and the services offered by the advice offices. The activities include community presentations, focus group workshops, school presentations, forum presentations, and participation in community meetings. The topics that are covered during presentations and workshops include domestic violence, child abuse, maintenance, teenage pregnancy and labour related issues. While raising awareness among communities, through these activities, it is important for the paralegals to listen to the community members and to incorporate, accommodate and understand their customs, cultural beliefs and values.

"There will be a coming together of minds trying to find how they are going to combat this and they will go together, jointly, as a group to the community to do activities, we call them community outreach activities..."

IMPACT/SUCCESSSES

IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

There has been improved service delivery from the police officials that are working closely with the advice offices. Knowing that these cases are well handled at the advice offices, the police now refer relevant cases to the for appropriate services, which also relieves them from workload pressure. Clients often tell long stories and sometimes need someone to just listen to them with patience. The paralegals are well-trained to listen carefully to the story and determine the problem and give appropriate advice. Police officials are too busy and do not have patience to listen to long stories. The assumption is that a person is coming to the police station to open the case, when they may be looking for advice on options available to them.

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHTS AND HOW TO ACCESS THESE

As a result of outreach activities, more people now know their rights, how to access these rights, and where to go when they have a problem. The number of people coming in to report GBV cases has also increased. The paralegals form support groups for those who have been suffering from domestic violence and are coming into the advice offices asking for these. They meet on certain days to talk about their experiences; some of them even start doing hand crafts and growing vegetable gardens through advice offices assistance.

MEDIATION PROCESS AS AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

The advice offices usually resolve domestic violence cases through mediation. Mediation is an informal system that operates alongside the formal legal system, which involves the victim, offender, and family remembers to discuss and come up with solutions. The paralegals realised that they cannot only deal with women in cases of family violence, because the problem does not get successfully resolved. In most cases the women want the offender to be called to the advice office so that the paralegal can talk to him and warn him about the consequences of his abusive behaviour. They want the abuse to stop, but not necessarily for the perpetrator to go to jail.

CHALLENGES

Resources

CCJD is in need of resources, financial resources especially, as it is currently in the process of making its advice offices independent. Resources are needed to build the capacity of the paralegals so that they can be able to maintain and sustain their offices. The organisation wants to be in a position where it provides mentorship and guidance to the advice offices while they are functioning independently and doing everything on their own. This involves a need for the advice offices to be able to write proposals, to write their own reports for the funders, and to fundraise for their own offices.

Link with Funders

CCJD is trying to link the 15 advice offices to a specific funder, so that they are able to work on their own as independent community-based offices. Unfortunately there is not enough funding and it has not been easy to link them all. At the moment only three of the advice offices have been linked to a specific funder. There is also a new shift, of funders wanting to deal directly with the advice offices now, and the relevant systems are not yet in place, so the paralegals are not yet ready to fundraise on their own.

NEXT STEPS

To keep helping people like Christina*, CCJD's next step involves preparing the advice offices by developing their capacity, to ensure that they are well-equipped with skills, have enough financial resources, independent and fully functional on their own, as once they have enough they'll be able to sustain their offices. CCJD had planned to build the capacity of the advice offices on financial management, proposal writing, fundraising and report writing this year, but the process had to be put on hold because of financial challenges.



Paralegal of Glencoe with the client she assisted to get a wheelchair

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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GRIP: GREATER RAPE INTERVENTION PROJECT

CASE STUDY

Alice* was trying to find a job in Hazy View. She met Chris,* and his promise of work raised her hopes. When he raped her, she was shattered. Thankfully, Alice received care quickly. She went to the Greater Rape Intervention Project (GRIP) care room in the police station where she handed over Chris's phone, which he'd left behind, to the caregivers. She was given support by the caregivers and the phone was given to the police. When the owner called his phone, the caregiver pretended she was the survivor, telling him to meet her to hand over the phone. When Chris arrived, police arrested him. GRIP provides empowerment to survivors of rape, sexual assault and domestic violence; their main goal is to prevent survivors from being exposed to secondary trauma as they proceed through the criminal justice system. They are based in Mpumalanga province in 2 districts, Enhlanzeni and Gert Sibande.



Care rooms provide survivors with a safe and comforting space.

KEY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES: EMPOWERING SURVIVORS

Victim Support Centre

GRIP works within the criminal justice system, the police stations, hospitals and courts. They have volunteer counsellors at the police station level who operate a victim support centre 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The placement of the support centre at the stations helps provide immediate support services when people come to the station to report. Trained counsellors help comfort and calm the survivor when they arrive, this has the added benefit that the person taking the statement finds the survivor is ready to talk. The counsellors also explain their rights to survivors, as people often don't know what their rights are.

Hospital Care Room

Following statement taking, the survivor is referred to a GRIP hospital care room. There they receive information about the usage of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), which involves taking ARV's to prevent HIV after possible exposure during a rape. The community care giver also provides support at the hospital, and explains what is going to happen. Care Packs of toiletries and teddy bears are provided to each person to comfort them. Most people are not aware of what the medical or legal examination entails; the caregivers help to keep them informed and as comfortable as possible, and also explain how this is necessary to enhance their case when it goes to court. the same time. Often by the time police have arrived, the situation has calmed.



GRIP Continued Support & Shelter

GRIP visits every rape survivor after 4 days to monitor and encourage taking PEP. This is especially important as people often perceive ARV's as having many side effects. During this visit, they also assess the survivor's environment, whether they are safe or not. If, for example, the father was the perpetrator in this case, they make sure that the perpetrator is removed out of the house so that the survivor is able to feel safe. Also, in a case where there is no proper housing, they have a GRIP shelter for abused women and their children. Survivors can stay there for a period of 3 to 6 months, and during that time GRIP helps to trace relatives who are willing to assist. In some cases where there are no relatives, they are still able to assist survivors to make CV's, so that they are able to seek employment.

IMPACT/SUCCESSSES

FRONTLINE SUPPORT

In areas where they work, whether in hospitals, police stations and courts, there has been a significant improvement in terms of how frontline workers respond to cases when they occur. By combining resources with the police stations, the programme is also able to do more with less individual effort. Added to this, the positive support provided gives the communities greater courage to continue reporting rape cases. GRIP has assisted over 35 000 survivors to date.

“The fact that we are based at a police station, gives us more of an opportunity to keep the police on their toes.”

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Due to the already close working relationship, when the police do something incorrectly, GRIP is in a position to act on it right away. They criticise what has happened immediately and explain to police officers what is expected of them. For example, they quote pieces of legislation, such as the victim’s charter, to say that the survivor has rights - so the person can’t wait for treatment later on, the Police need to treat a rape case as an emergency. Sometimes when they have enough funds, they share their training with the police station. For example, they did a shared training on taking statements with regards to children’s cases.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

GRIP assisted Hazy View police station in arresting the perpetrator, Chris, who had been involved in Alice’s case. It wasn’t the first time. He repeatedly told girls that he would assist them to find employment and because of their desperation, they followed him. He would take them to a nearby banana farm where he would rape and leave them. The quick and trained action, and the close working relationship, between GRIP and the police meant that this serial rapist was caught and removed from the community.

CHALLENGES

GRIP has identified a wide number of challenges to their work. At times, some officers delay taking the survivors for treatment or drop survivors at hospitals, but then do not return to fetch them. Some have also been found using the Care Room as a place to eat and rest. In some cases there is a lack of language skills when recording statements, or an absence of the much needed crime kits. Resources are a continual issue, for example when the police photocopy machines are not working and they make use of GRIP’s copier without re-imburement. As with many other care organisations, GRIP continues to battle judgemental attitudes of some police officers.

NEXT STEPS

To move ahead, GRIP would like to acquire greater commitment from government. For instance in cases where there is a piece of legislation that makes it difficult to implement the programme, they would like to see government work towards improving the implementation of that particular area of legislation. At the same time if they identify needs, they would like to see greater support in making sure that these are met. For example, if a municipality has a budget to build 100 00 houses, 10 houses could be given to the GRIP shelter for that year. They could also help women through the application process and make sure that they would be able to receive a house from the government. In their future plans they want government to recognize the difference that these programmes have made and that it is cost effective. To then replicate it throughout the country and provide funding for it to be sustained. GRIP provides mandatory statutory services for the government and these services should be ‘contracted’ out to NGO’s, who have the expertise, to provide assistance. **not her/his real name*



Care packs help survivors get by.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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PROJECT EMPOWER

CASE STUDY

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING PROGRAMME

Isabel* has faced many difficulties in life. She was involved in an abusive relationship with a man who used drugs and alcohol. Her own relationships with other women were often very fragmented and competitive, often to the point of violence. Then she had the opportunity to participate in a consciousness raising group established by Project Empower. Today she is a young leader in her community and now runs other consciousness raising groups herself. She also supports women who are confronting abuse and also engages in advocacy work with health service and policing service providers. Now 12-years old, Project Empower first started out working to build the capacity of communities to respond to HIV. The organisation's scope has expanded, and they now work with women like Isabel, focusing on sexual, reproductive and other rights of women and supporting the capacity of women to defend their rights. Project Empower works in Kwazulu-Natal, in informal settlements and two rural areas.



KEY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES: EMPOWERING WOMEN

Learning Groups

Project Empower organises women into women's groups, to discuss their experiences as women, their lived realities, and their experiences with GBV. The methodology is experiential, participatory and learner centred, drawing on the life experience of participants. Participants discuss how power and power relations at a personal, interpersonal and societal level shape their experiences. Through guided processes of reflection, Project Empower assists participants to define their own solutions to the problems they are confronting.

Understanding Rights Violations

Many women experience GBV in their home and in their community, which they may take for granted as part of normal life. Some don't recognise, or are unable to name these, as being rights violations. For Project Empower, the first step is enabling women to understand how those incidents are rights violations and thereafter how they can support one another in bringing justice into their lives.

"We think it's not so much the work of our organisation that has been able to turn around this young woman's life as the process of being in a solidarity group with other women, and developing a feeling of support and purpose through that group."

Lived Realities of Women

Before building a programme of action with women, Project Empower has learned that there is a need to listen carefully to the lived realities of women in communities and not to impose an analysis or a solution.. This supports the design of longer term objectives and longer term impact indicators.

Demanding Better Services

Good policing services are an important part of the fight against gender based violence. However, in Project Empower's experience, the police sometimes fail to provide the required services to women. In response, Project Empower works with women at community level to empower and capacitate them to demand better services from policing. Project Empower supports women to complain about inadequate police services, to ensure that police take these complaints seriously and take remedial action.

Engaging Stakeholders

Rather than engaging with stakeholders directly, Project Empower prefers to work with women across the community and enable them to negotiate with stakeholders. This is important because it builds the power of women in communities to become activists around their own issues, which builds sustainability.

IMPACT/SUCCESSSES

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING GROUPS

Since initiating the programme, Project Empower has organised more than 500 women into consciousness raising groups. The first impact of these groups is on the individuals themselves, as they begin to make change in their own lives, like Isobel. However individuals in these groups also often engage in community activities, widening the reach and expanding awareness and dialogue.

WOMEN FINDING VOICE

After being members of a consciousness raising group for a year, women in one rural community were ready to confront authorities in the community around their inability to accessing land in their own name, a lack of response to GBV, and lack of representation in community decision making forums, all of which contribute to cycles of violence against women. Many women stay in abusive relationships in order to keep a roof over their heads because they can't access land in their own right. Project Empower has succeeded in raising consciousness about and building the capacity of women to understand these kinds of rights violations and to take these issues forward to the authorities that are representing them.

"...I think our other learning from a programme point of view is that women are more than able to advocate around their own issues at community level and at a provincial level if they are given the means to do so."

CHALLENGES

A key challenge is the need for medium term resourcing. Activities are severely constrained by inadequate funding and projects have to be designed to reach very specific outcomes in short time frames. These requirements are in conflict with the need to build women's capacity which is a longer term process.

NEXT STEPS

The next step of the project is to support women as they engage firstly with traditional authorities, secondly with municipal authorities, and thirdly with policing and health authorities in order to address the rights violations that women have identified.

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ZERO TOLERANCE VILLAGE ALLIANCE

CASE STUDY

WHOLE COMMUNITY

A rural village was approaching its final induction as part of the Zero Tolerance Village Alliance programme, an initiative of the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). When Alfred* a male villager began to abuse his wife again, the community wouldn't have it. The whole village took the initiative to reject violence against women by approaching TVEP and saying that they were removing him not only from the men's pledge list but from the village itself. TVEP assisted the wife to open a case with the police, who served the husband with a protection order. The couple received counselling and TVEP is continuing to monitor the situation; so far there have been no more problems. TVEP has been in the victim empowerment sector for 11 years. In 2003 the organisation started to evaluate different programmes and realised that while information was being given out on human rights issues, HIV/AIDS and other issues, cases of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) continued to not properly be reported and resolved. It became clear that the policing response and addressing these issues needed to be done by a collective. TVEP came up with the model called the Zero Tolerance Village Alliance, working with villages like this one in combating SGBV.



KEY ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES: ZTVA

Belongs to the Community

TVEP has inducted three villages into the Zero Tolerance programme so far, identified as hot spots where there is a high level of SGBV. While they initially lead the intervention, the initiative is designed to be owned by the community. It becomes a community programme with community-based responses.

Training Traditional Leaders

TVEP signed a memorandum of understanding with the specific villages, targeting the leadership within the communities. There is always a traditional leader in every rural community and they are very important; they are the custodians of cultures and tradition. Through ZTVA very traditional African men are taking the lead in creating safer spaces for women, for children, for girls. They train traditional chiefs in HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, sexual assault, rape cases and so on.

“I don't think anywhere people have seen a traditional chef in his late 60's or 70's who has been trained in presenting to women how to use the female condom. We have such activities going on, in the three villages that we have inducted into the Zero Tolerance Village Alliance...”

Pledge Book

As part of the project, men in the village take a public oath in front of the entire community. They then sign a pledge book that stays at the chief's house. The process is especially inspirational for young men and women, to see their father, brother, men that they respect, men who were abusing women, standing in front of their own village and saying they used to abuse, but took the oath to not only protect their family but to also work with other men in my village to create a safer space for women.

VEP network forum

They've set up what is called a VEP network forum, which involves not only community leaders and community stakeholders but also organisations, police, civil society and other government institutions. It is a system where different stakeholders are able to come together, take responsibility and address issues of victim empowerment, issues that affect the cases within that area and issues that affect policing response. Policing of SGBV needs to be approached as a collective of all these institutions and organizations working together. It also involves monitoring each organisation to make sure they fulfil their responsibilities.

IMPACT

EMPOWER MEN

Through the process, the project has not just empowered women but also men. If young men's issues are not addressed they grow up to become perpetrators of SGBV, and the cycle continues with no solution to it. Therefore while current occurrences of SGBV are being dealt with within the villages, young men are also being raised with a greater respect for women and their rights.

RECLAIMING AFRICAN CULTURE

Cultural tradition in Africa is often spoken of as bad culture. ZTVA approaches culture proactively by asking people to face themselves, not a foreign concept, but their own culture and traditions. African concepts need to be employed to address African problems, not taking models from western culture. This has led to finding good practices within their cultures that enhance and empower people, as no Africa culture promotes the abuse of women and children. As a result communities are standing together to reclaim their traditions, to reclaim their culture in a positive way and to use that to prevent violence against women, girls and children.

SAFE HOUSES

Safe houses have been donated by the chiefs in those communities, usually in the chief's compound. These safe houses are for women who find themselves in situations where they have encountered abuse and they need a safe place to stay while different role players are looking at a long term solution. Women feel much safer and are protected because these safe houses are within the chief's home. Communities respect their leaders so people of the village won't attack someone who is being protected by the chief. As well, this is sending a very clear signal about what is expected in the village.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

TVEP donates paper and stationary to police officers, because they pay for it themselves. If they are not convinced that SGBV or rape is a serious case then they are not going to take money from their own pockets and buy printing paper. TVEP wants to see these cases successfully processed so they are giving away their own stationary. According to TVEP, This is because for some time now Limpopo province has been placed under central administration, which has caused many delays affecting other services as well. There are not enough psychologists to assess victims of rape, like children, mentally disabled women or women suffering from brain injuries, who need to be assessed by a psychologist in a good enough time frame. Often perpetrators of these cases are released because they can't be held without evidence, and there are long waits for a psychologist's assessment. Resources need to be put in place for police officers who run out of rape kits. This affects TVEP cases when a child or woman cannot be properly treated and when, most importantly, DNA and other samples cannot be taken properly because the rape kits are not there.

NEXT STEPS

They are starting a new project called a young perpetrators program to address youth specifically; youth is a special group within communities that need to be given specific attention to their issues. They are also looking into research and looking at what are the factors that keep women submissive and non-resistant. So that these cases can be properly processed and that justice gets served, because it is still rape even if the victim becomes submissive to the perpetrator in a situation where they could have found ways of getting out.



Chief of Mangondi Village, the first citizen of his village to take the public oath taken by men to do all in their power to create Zero Tolerance to any form of Abuse of women and children as well as creating a safer place for women and girls in their communities.

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