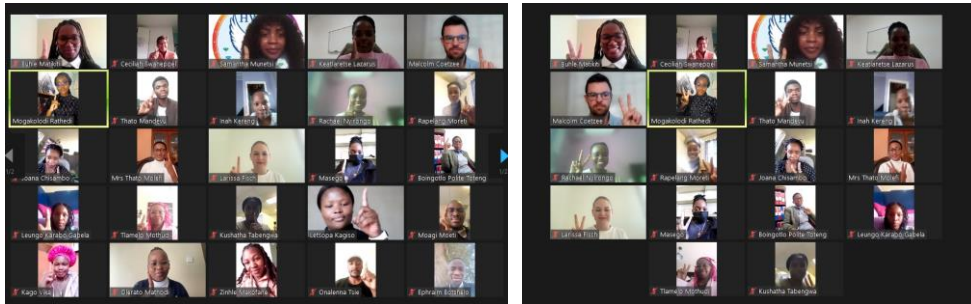




## WEBINAR REPORT

# “Silencing the Guns Project in Botswana: A focus on Gender-Based Violence – 2nd Workshop”



**Date and Time:** Thursday, 4 August 2022 10AM (CAT)  
**Location:** Online (Zoom)  
**Topics:** Gender Based Violence, Human Rights  
**Host:** HWPL Gangwon Branch

**Speakers:** Mme Thato Molefi Clinical Director, Jovial Inspirations Psychological Services  
Rev Keleneilwe Kgerethwa Minister of Religion, Gaborone West UCCSA  
Mr Malcolm Coetzee, Volunteer, International Peace Youth Group

**Webinar was held to educate Botswana youth on the current status of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Botswana, highlight the causes of GBV and to give them practical ways to address this GBV in their communities.**

*“Imagine if we have a generation or individuals who have learnt from a young age the consequences of disregarding the sanctity of life, how much life will be preserved in that generation.*

**Mr Malcolm Coetzee**

## **Introduction Webinar**

On 4 August 2022, the second virtual workshop to enable intergenerational dialogue to break the long-standing cycle of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was held in Botswana.

The workshop is a joint initiative between an international peace NGO called Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL), International Peace Youth Group (IPYG), and Volunteer Hub (VH), a social enterprise that contributes to alleviate socio-economic and environmental challenges in Botswana.

GBV is a serious issue that the international community is paying attention to amid reports of a surge in violence against many women and children globally during the pandemic. This workshop focused on the realities of what experts are dealing with every day when it comes to survivors and perpetrators of GBV in Botswana.

Mme Thato Molefi and Rev Keleneilwe Kgerethwa who spoke as experts during the event, were able to share more about what they see on a daily basis. They shared the most forms of GBV that people in Botswana are dealing with and how they advise people to best find solutions to their problems.

## **Background Information**

In Botswana, over 67% of women have experienced abuse, which is over double the global average. But according to the UNFPA, the bigger problem is that the seriousness of GBV is shrouded by a culture of silence and normalization. So this project is rated as an attempt to address these major problems such as a lack of education and information in Botswana.

As the cases of GBV continue to rise in Botswana, victims, experts and perpetrators alike are looking for solutions these issues. There are any aspects within the culture in Batswana that contribute to GBV in the country, for instance patriarchal culture which leaves women more vulnerable to GBV but at the same creates a barrier for male survivors who are less likely to report.

Community engagement is key to ending GBV, once we engage the communities we will be able to start making real changes. The Youth Empowerment Peace Workshops (YEPW) aspect of the event is there to layout practical solutions that community members can implement in order to make a difference with GBV in Botswana.

## **Points of discussion**

During her presentation, Mme Thato Molefi spoke about the most common and predominant forms of GBV she comes across including physical, emotional, sexual, financially and the less reported spiritual. She went on to say "it is never ever justifiable to engage in GBV, there is never a reason to justify why a person is being beaten up, why a person is being sexually molested by a partner or an unknown person. It can never be justified why a person is being denied to experience their



spirituality.”

From a spiritual perspective, Rev Keleneilwe Kgerethwa shared about how he has experienced circumstances of GBV as a leader in the church. He spoke about the negative impacts that the current ideology around masculinity has on women, that men are often told that they hold the power and they are able to abuse this. On the other side, women are told to be more subservient and should not speak. Women that speak up are seen to be arrogant and this has led to perpetrators to taking advantage of this culture of silence. He also spoke about how it affects children and said “normally children who grow up under violence, become violent.”

The final speaker from IPYG, Mr Malcom Coetzee shared some of the teachings from the YEPW. He emphasized on the need to have dialogue between all those that are impacted by GBV, including survivors, perpetrators and government entities. He challenged the audience to not only look at the actions of the perpetrators but rather think about why they carry out these actions, he said ‘This war is deeper than the act done by the perpetrator, it is one of the mind and the heart. You may ask why I speak of the mind and the heart - for any violent perpetrator to commit the act that they would have committed I believe they would have decided (whether premeditated or instantly) in their mind and heart to commit that act.’

After the speech by Mr Coetzee, several attendees agreed that GBV should be dealt with from a young age, that children should be participating in Peace Education within the schools where they can learn about values, especially the sanctity of life.

### **Highlights**

Attendee “Culture plays a big role in GBV, in some instances a wife is referred to as a child, this can be problematic.”

**Tlamelel Mothudi:** “We also have to try to understand how the reporting structures perpetuate GBV and make it difficult for people to actually address GBV. As mentioned by Mme Molefi that there are an unbelievable power dynamics when it comes to GBV and a lot of the times when people are feeling disempowered it becomes difficult for people to address the things that are happening to them. ”

Mr Malcolm Coetzee: “Just like a small group of people were able to infiltrate and change cultures because of a stronger culture, if we as peace messengers are transformed in our way of thinking and in our mindsets, our influence can be greater than we can imagine. It just has to start somewhere and through this we will be changing the culture of violence into a culture of peace.”

### **Next Steps**

We will continue with this campaign until September, there will be a continuous online campaign to raise awareness. There will be an Inter-generational dialogue in September to present all that has been learned and come to a consensus on the way forward.

**Contact Information**

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