



WEBINAR REPORT

Silencing the Guns Project in Botswana: A focus on Gender-Based Violence – Report Back and Inter-Generational Dialogue



Date and Time: Thursday, 13 April 2023, 10AM (CAT)
Location: Cresta Presidential Hotel, Gaborone, Botswana
Topics: Gender Based Violence, Human Rights
Host: HWPL Gangwon Branch

Speakers: Ms Olerato Mathodi, Founder, Volunteer Hub
Ms Amogelang Chikunyana, Business and Social Psychology Advisor,
University of Botswana
Mr Malcolm Coetzee, Volunteer, International Peace Youth Group

This dialogue was a follow-up to two webinars that had been held before. To report back on the findings of the short campaign so far and also to plan on what activities need to be implemented to make a lasting impact on eradicating GBV in Botswana.

“There is a lot at stake because we have thrown our values out of the window and we have adopted a culture that is confusing us.”

Masego Kwapa (Founder of Serenity Trust)

Introduction Webinar

On 14 April 2023, a report back session was hosted to present the status of a joint campaign on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that was held in Botswana.

This event comes the campaign carried out jointly by 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.

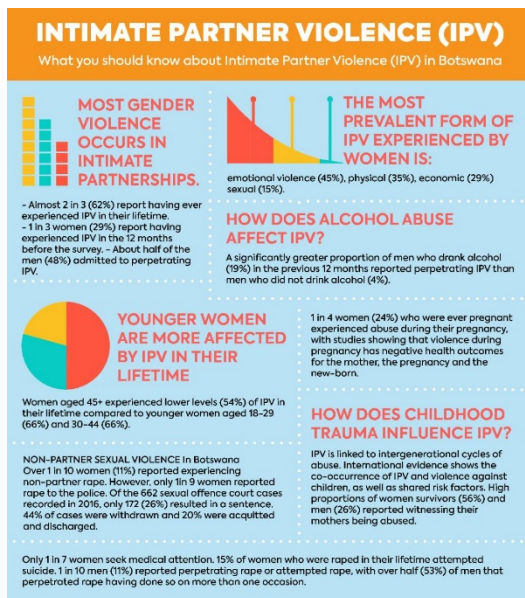
GBV is a serious concern that escalated in Botswana over the last few years. This campaign focused on various aspects such as, the importance of educating on GBV, the realities of what experts are dealing with everyday and also the current status of available resources to tackle GBV.

Amogelang Chikunyana who has been an attendee of the events during the campaign, was able to share how GBV has been impacting her work as a psychologist. Moreover, representatives from HWPL and VH gave a report on the findings of the event.

Background Information

At the beginning of the campaign, there was a focus on raising awareness about the GBV statistics in Botswana, we shared various statistics through infographics on social media.

Examples of Infographics shared:



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 was rated as an attempt to address these major



problems such as a lack of education and information in Botswana.

As GBV continues to rise within the country, the people are calling for more solutions, especially from the government. The country is coming out of a time when survivors did not have access to basic support as a result of lockdown restrictions, this led to graver circumstances of the victims.

Educating the community is empowering them to take action against GBV. Botswana has many organizations that are working within this sector, and by working together they will be able to achieve results that are far reaching. The Youth Empowerment Peace Classrooms (YEPW) aspect of the campaign was there to layout practical solutions that community members can implement in order to make a difference with GBV in Botswana.

Points of discussion

Ms Olerato Mathodi, the Founder of Volunteer Hub presented a background of the campaign. She shared about the background of the campaign and why the campaign was started.

The report back was presented by HWPL representative, Mr Malcolm Coetzee. The report spoke about some of the statics of GBV in Botswana to show the relevance of the campaign. Some of these included the impact that the pandemic lockdown had on GBV, including that women's shelters were beyond capacity during this time, and help for victims was not seen as an essential service.

Mr Coetzee reported on some of the brief findings that we have gathered through the campaign so far.

"Through surveys, we were able to identify that we were able to gather 100% of the participants who agreed that there is a need to eradicate, and 64% of participants stated that Education is key to eradicating GBV. Our participants indicated that 76% of them had either been a victim of GBV or knew someone who had. 68% agreed that they knew about structures on how to report on GBV against women but only said they knew of similar structures available to male victims. This indicated that there are gaps within the reporting structures in the country and that there needs to be more development of the conversation around male victims and how this can be addressed."

The report back was concluded with a focus on Article 10 of the DPCW, he explained how the DPCW is key to resolving violence and conflict.

Finally, Amogelang Chikunyana who is a psychologist shared about what she has been experiencing in the field of GBV. She had been an attendee of the first two events. She expressed that no one is safe from GBV, and many are shocked that they became victims of GBV even though they are educated. She also spoke about the patriarchal issues within the society, that many men believe that they need to be violent to assert their dominance within the home.

The event was concluded by participants agreeing that there needs to be a continuation of the

campaign. Many participants appreciated that educational approach of the campaign, especially the type of education the campaign focused on.

Highlights

At the end of the event, HWPL and Volunteer Hub signed an MOU agreement to show their commitment to continue working together to ensure the longevity of all upcoming projects.

Masego Kwapa (Founder of Serenity Trust): "Some people don't have peace because of what they went through, let us help them to recover. We can do this, if we work together, let us remember not to give up."

Hawa Sankwasa (Social Worker, Botswana Girl Guide Association): "How do we expect offices to deliver, when the rightfully skilled persons are not in office? How far does government go with consultation? How many times does government come to us and ask, what do you think of GBV? The services that government is offering is not tailor-made for the issues at hand, we are not the same as the other nations."

Mr Malcolm Coetzee (HWPL Representative): "This campaign was able to raise awareness on GBV issues, but also educate more people on the issues around GBV. However, many people are already aware of how bad GBV is in Botswana, the problem is they do not feel the current systems are working. The YEPW is one area that can offer a solution to this problem."

Next Steps

We will be engaging with all organizations and personnel who would like to take this campaign further, we will be looking to expand our reach. We are committed to continuing with the YEPW sessions and finding solutions that are tailored to the Batswana.

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