

# CHAPTER 8

## Prevention



Family affair: Cyber dialogues hosted by the City of Johannesburg get people talking about GBV.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morra

### Key facts

- ✓ Prevention strategies need to address the root causes of GBV as well as create an environment that promotes GBV prevention.
- ✓ Political will and commitment is critical to addressing GBV: only 4.8% of speeches made by politicians and functionaries mention, or are about, GBV.
- ✓ The Sixteen Days of No Violence Against Women and Children is well known amongst women (78%) and men (83%).
- ✓ Most people get their news about GBV campaigns from television.
- ✓ Only 4% of media coverage in South Africa is on the topic of GBV.
- ✓ Women constitute only 24% of news sources on GBV, despite being those most affected.
- ✓ The "I" Stories have helped to increase first hand accounts in media coverage, as well as empower the women involved.
- ✓ Women espouse more progressive views than men, but perceive their communities to be highly conservative. This underscores the trap that women find themselves in with regard to GBV.



Gugu Mofokeng.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

**A**ll my life I (Gugu Mofokeng) have experienced abuse, and yet today I am a strong and confident woman in pursuit of my destiny. I understand that God was training me for a great battle that women, children and men are facing. The experiences were not easy, but today I believe it was worth it. There is this myth that Christian women cannot be abused, it's not true, I think many are wearing masks and are scared to tell the truth. Abuse has no gender, colour, race or religion.

At the time I was still hurting and on the run from another abusive man. Initially I thought to myself that God must finally be answering my prayers, giving me a father, a friend and the man of my dreams. He loved me and couldn't live without me. He asked me to move into a back room with him at his mother's house. I loved him so much, so I left my house to stay with him. For a year and five months I totally abandoned my house and it was broken into twice. We were together 24 hours,

seven days a week and lived as if we could not breathe without one another.

He introduced me to pornography and dagga, so that I could be high and do the things we saw in movies. Again because I thought this was love, I did those things. Because of my desire to please him, I turned into a sex slave. He enjoyed sex in such a way that when I was busy or tired he would cry. He would literally lock me in the room for us to be together.

If I wanted to go to my house or to visit my family he would accompany me, but two hours away from his place was too much. When his friends came to visit him five minutes was too long, after which he would chase them away. He allowed some friends to stay longer, but on leaving, he would accuse me of having affairs with them and beat me up.

His method was this: he would never beat me during the day; he would switch the lights off, sit on my torso with my arms at my side and only my head exposed. He would slap me nonstop for what felt like three or four hours, until my face became numb and swollen.

In the end, he would blame me for having pushed him to do what he did, cry, apologise, then lock me in the room and buy me gifts. He would still have sex with me as part of saying sorry.

We went to buy food, clothes, furniture and even my underwear, together. He never gave me money, he chose the clothes I wore and the food I ate. Sometimes he would prevent me from seeing my family and from checking my house. There were times I ran away only for him to find me.

*One day I decided to run away to a place he would never suspect. I switched off my cellular phone for a month, but he finally found me. Since I loved him, I went back with him. In the month that I had left him, he found himself another woman who moved in. He told me he did not love her and he was sorry. When we went back to "our home" that night, the woman came.*

*He tried to stop her from entering, but she fought her way in. He tried to solve the matter but the woman refused to go anywhere. She undressed and got into the bed that I thought was only for the two of us. At midnight, he carried me onto the bed. He raped me, in his words, to justify his love for me.*



Breaking free.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

*After that, the other woman asked him for sex and they did it in front of me. I felt dead and useless, as if this was not happening. The following morning, I went to open a rape case. After much pressure from his family and friends and, as a way to leave him, I withdrew the case.*

*I ran away and I found a home for abused women in Boksburg. I stayed for six months. On my return in January 2008, he found out I was back. He came and told me he was a changed man and that he wanted to marry me. I went on radio to counsel and motivate other women and to train them on abuse.*

*He became jealous that I had found myself, and his new mission was to oppress me. At the end of February, I told him I was ending the relationship and he said he would rather we both die than end it. I repeated this for a whole week until he saw that I was serious. On 3 March 2008, he came to my house drunk and took me out by force, threatening throughout the night to kill us both.*

*On our return to the house after midnight, I told him to stop coming to my place. He began to beat me, he grabbed me by my hair and bit off a part of my left ear and tried to bite off another piece, leaving my ear in two pieces. He was also poking my eyes, he pulled my hair and when I broke free, he was holding a clump of my hair in his hand. On top of it all he also stabbed me in the head. After a mammoth struggle, I was able to run away and 15 minutes later, my house was on fire.*

*I opened a case. I struggled to understand the court proceedings, but the matter is still on. What I like is that I am still alive to tell other*

women out there that 'get out early while you are still alive and stay beautiful.' Don't let your vulnerability and the need for love expose you. Know the difference between love and obsession.

Finally, I was able to take charge of my life and I am now single, strong and have regained my sense of worth. I am empowering other women out there. I am busy registering a shelter for abused women and children. I am unstoppable now."

Gugu Mofokeng's "I" Story, *Losing everything and finding myself*, illustrates the multi-dimensional nature of GBV. For two years Mofokeng was subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse. She has used her experience to raise awareness on GBV and to offer counselling for other women experiencing violence.

Mofokeng believes the key to addressing GBV is to empower women to know their self worth and take charge of their lives. Men, too, need to understand that GBV is a fundamental human rights violation. Men need to add their voices to the call to end GBV. This chapter explores primary and secondary prevention initiatives and their effectiveness.

This chapter presents findings from the research against a GBV prevention model developed by Gender Links (GL) that covers the relationship between prevention; response and support; the need for an overarching framework; the arenas for action as well as short, medium and long term actions to be taken.

## GBV prevention

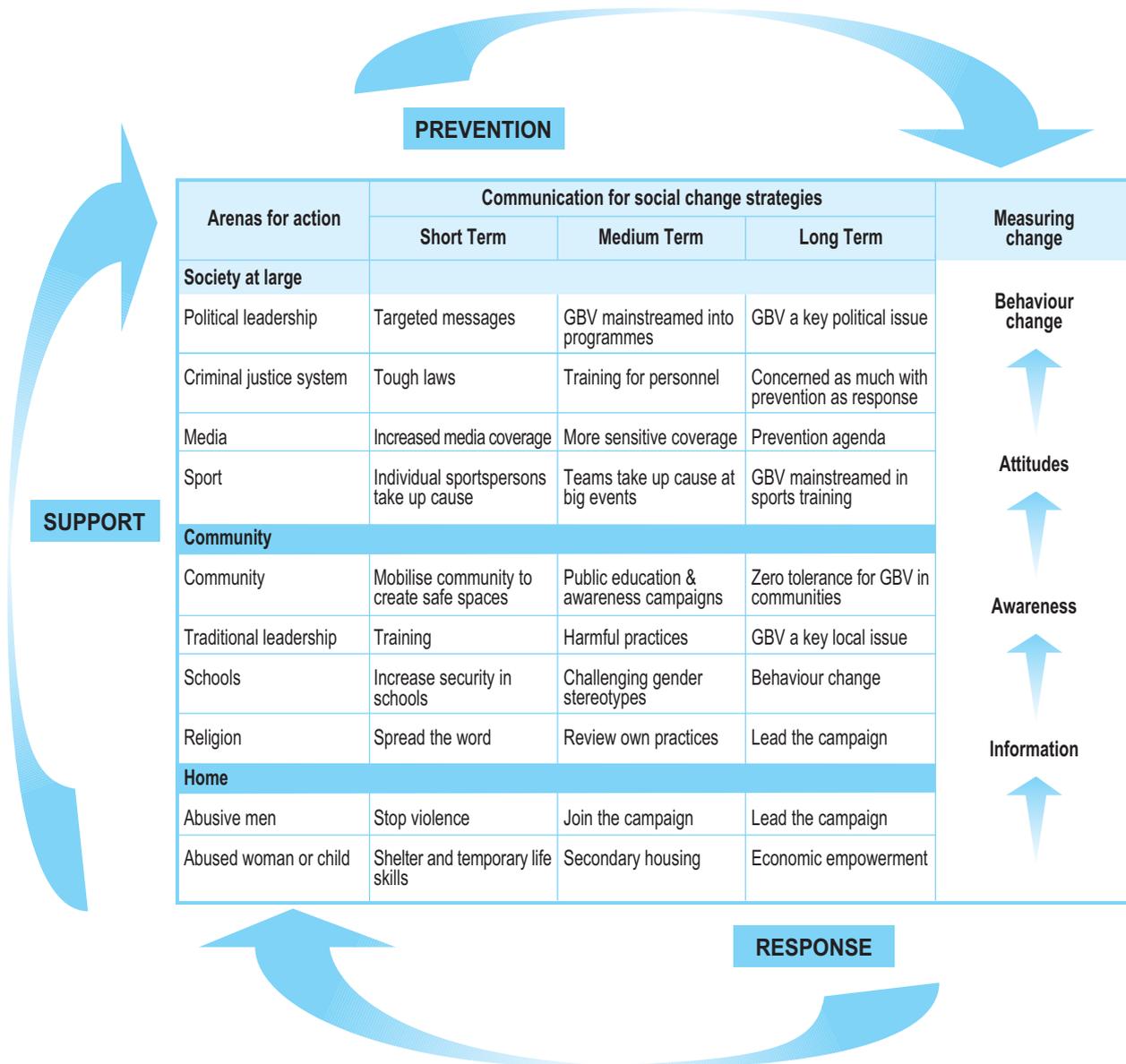
"We will strengthen and place far greater emphasis on prevention through forging effective partnerships with all stakeholders, including schools, parents associations, community based organisations, the media, local government, traditional and religious leaders and the private sector; as well as develop criteria for monitoring the effectiveness of such campaigns" - *Kopanong Declaration, 365 Days of Action to End Gender Violence, May 2006*

Figure 8.1 presents a model for preventing GBV that is based on the ecological model; brings in the response - support - prevention circle, and recommends actions to be taken in the short, medium and long term. Key elements are:

- **An overarching national framework** or campaign that provides an enabling environment for initiatives in all spheres and at all levels of society. This builds on the 365 Days of Action to End Gender Violence, with the annual Sixteen Days of Activism campaign as a way of heightening awareness as well as enhancing accountability for targets set.
- **Understanding the relationship between prevention, response and support.** While the focus is on primary prevention, the model emphasises that good response and support mechanisms should also contribute to prevention. For example, tough laws and their implementation should serve as a deterrent to GBV. Shelters should not only provide temporary refuge but empower women to leave abusive relationships, thus preventing secondary victimisation. Working in unison,

**Figure 8.1: GBV prevention model for South Africa**

**NATIONAL CAMPAIGN: 365 DAYS OF ACTION TO END GBV**



prevention, response and support strategies can both reduce and GBV and ensure redress for those affected.

- **Stepping up targeted primary prevention interventions at three key levels:** in the home (women, men, children and the family); the community (traditional leaders; religion; schools and sports); and the broader society (the criminal justice system; media and political leadership). Again, if well designed, these initiatives should form a continuum. An initiative to empower abused women should also seek to change the way that their families, communities and society addresses GBV and vice versa.
- **Identifying approaches and strategies that work,** based on communication for social change theories and using these in the design of future interventions.
- **Developing more effective monitoring and evaluation tools,** bearing in mind that up to now most of the data available concerns outputs rather than outcomes. Ultimately, prevention campaigns must be able to demonstrate that their impact moves beyond information and awareness to create knowledge, wisdom and behaviour change. This in turn should lead to a quantifiable reduction in GBV.

There are three categories of prevention intervention that can be adopted<sup>67</sup>, namely:

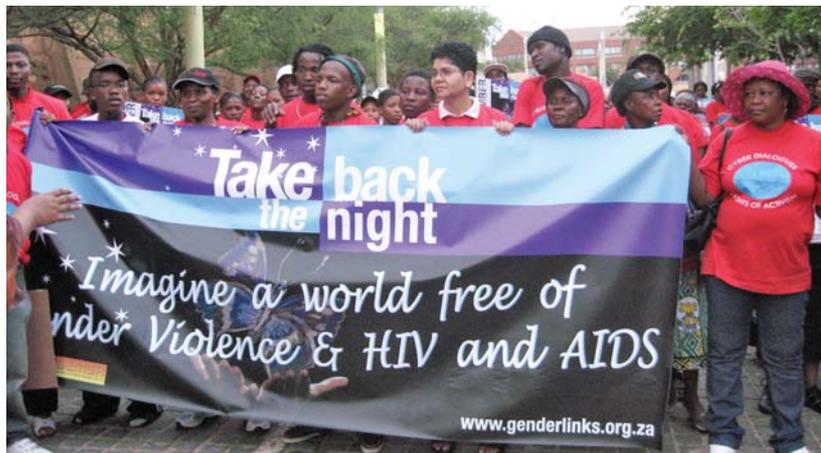


Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

- **Primary prevention**, which are interventions that are aimed at addressing GBV before it occurs, in order to prevent initial perpetration or victimization, targeted action aimed at behavioral issues and risk producing environments.
- **Secondary prevention**, that happens immediately after the violence has occurred to deal with the short term consequences, e.g. treatment, counselling.
- **Tertiary prevention** focuses on long term interventions after the violence has occurred, in order to address lasting consequences, including perpetrator counselling interventions.

As with other social challenges, GBV has largely been addressed and understood through responding to the aftermath of such violence. Prevention efforts, to the extent they have existed, have largely been driven by the women's movement. These have focused on changing social norms, building individual empower-

<sup>67</sup> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Sexual Violence Prevention: Beginning the Dialogue. Atlanta, GA (2004) p. 3.

ment and addressing underlying structures that perpetuate GBV. The primary focus, however, has been at the level of response.

Response efforts focus on developing crisis services, law enforcement interventions, and judicial sanctions. In contrast, primary prevention focuses on education and includes efforts to change individual attitudes and social norms - what a community regards as acceptable behaviour from its citizens.<sup>68</sup>

There is often, however, a fine line between prevention and response. Each can enhance the effectiveness of the other. For example, strong laws and sanctions against gender-based violence can have a preventive effect. Strong rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators of GBV can help to ensure that they do not become repeat offenders. Programmes of support for women that include economic empowerment can help to ensure that women do not become repeat victims.

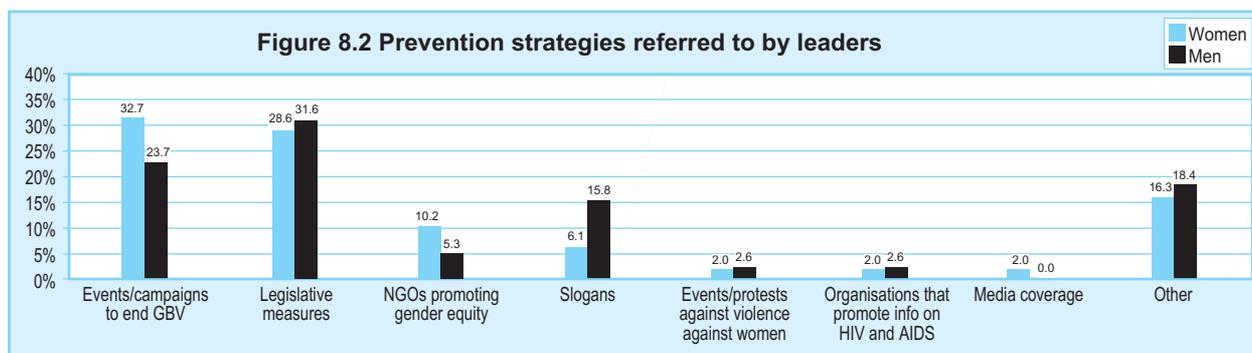


Figure 8.2, drawn from the findings on the political discourse analysis, shows that women politicians were more inclined to emphasise events and campaigns as GBV prevention strategies while male functionaries referred more often to legislative measures. Politicians hardly ever identified the media as a key prevention strategy for addressing GBV.

### Arenas for action

The ecological model referenced earlier in this study locates the key arenas for action. These are:

- *Individual*: The first level identifies biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Some of these factors are age, education, income, substance use, or history of abuse.
- *Relationship*: The second level includes factors that increase risk because of relationships with peers, intimate partners, and family members. A person's closest social circle - peers, partners and family members - influences their behavior and contributes to their range of experience.

<sup>68</sup> Oregon Violence Against Women Prevention Plan; Oregon Department of Human Services; Office of Disease Prevention Epidemiology.

- *Community*: The third level explores the settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.
- *Societal*: The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural norms. Other large societal factors include the health, economic, educational and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

### Primary prevention

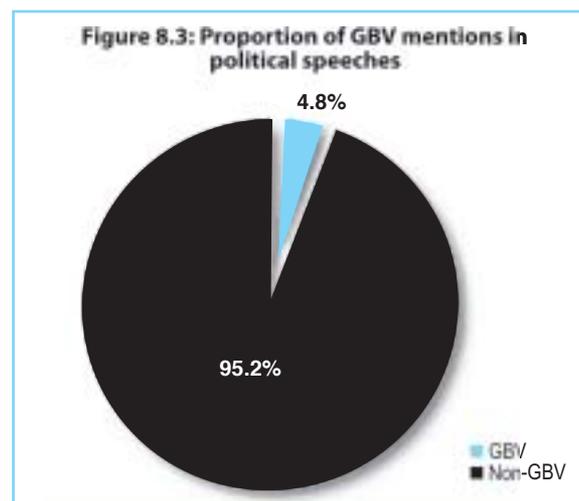
Primary interventions for GBV are targeted at addressing the root causes at an individual, relationship, community and societal level. Strategies include:

- Political will and commitment to address GBV;
- Public awareness programmes;
- Using media to raise awareness on GBV.

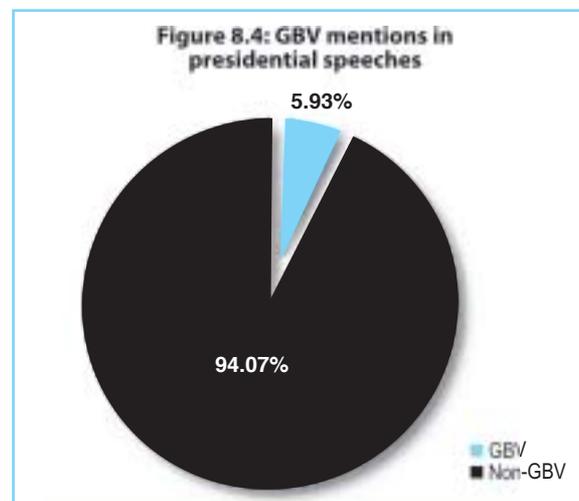
#### *Political will and commitment to address GBV*

For a violence prevention strategy to be successful it has to be unified, coordinated, scientifically-informed, well-resourced and directed across all clusters of society, government departments and civil society.<sup>69</sup> There is a need for political commitment to ending GBV. The UN advises that high-level government officials should consistently and publicly denounce GBV and support necessary changes in community norms that influence

GBV-related behaviours of boys and young men.<sup>70</sup>



This has, however, not been the case in South Africa during the monitoring period. Figure 8.3 shows that just 4.8% of 1956 political speeches mentioned GBV.



<sup>69</sup> Jewkes, Abrahams, Mathews, Seedat, et al, 2009.

<sup>70</sup> UN General Assembly. 2006b. Rights of the Child: Report of the Independent Expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. New York: UN.

Figure 8.4 shows that of the 118 speeches made by Zuma during the monitoring period, only 5.93% mentioned GBV. However, it is noteworthy that the president did make the linkage between HIV and GBV. Of his 17 GBV-related speeches, four made reference to this link.

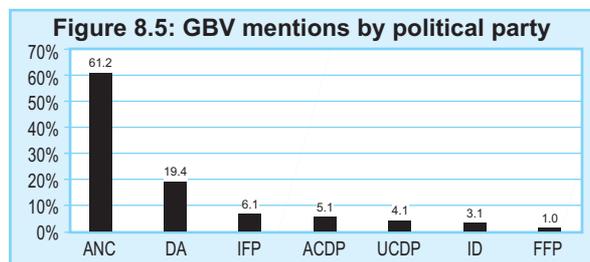


Figure 8.5 breaks down GBV speeches by political party. It shows that there is large disparity in references to GBV among political parties. The African National Congress (ANC) spoke more about GBV than any other party followed by the Democratic Alliance, which is the official opposition. At 19.4% the Democratic Alliance (DA) came in well behind the ANC (61.2%), followed by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) at 6.1%, the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) at 5.1%, the United Christian Democratic Party (UCP) at 4.1% and the Freedom Front Plus (FFP) at 1%.

Although speeches were made by the United Democratic Movement (UDM), none mentioned GBV: for this reason the UDM is not represented in Figure 8.5. Speeches by the Pan-African Congress (PAC), Minority Front (MF) and the Congress of the People (COPE) parliamentarians were not available and were therefore not analysed in this study.

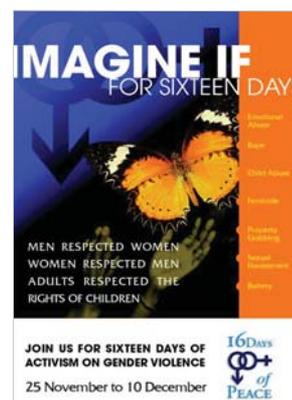
The ANC is also the only party that included GBV in its party manifesto, stating that it intends to “upscale the prevention for Mother to Child transmission of HIV to 95% in all districts, to combat violence and crimes against women and children by increasing the capacity of the criminal justice system to deal with such violence and to vigorously implement broad based economic empowerment and affirmative action policies and adjust them to ensure that they benefit more broad sections of the South African People.” This shows a degree of gender mainstreaming in the party.

### Public awareness programmes

The Gauteng province runs large-scale public awareness campaigns around GBV. The campaigns are often conducted during commemorative periods such as Women’s Month in August and the 16 Days of No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign which runs from 25 November (International Day of No Violence against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day) every year.

### The Sixteen Days of Activism campaign

Over the years the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign has provided a rallying point for the South African government and NGOs to mount campaigns aimed at raising awareness, influencing behaviour change and securing high level political commitment to end gender violence.



Though often branded as a UN campaign, this is not the case. The sixteen days are actually the days between two UN dates - International Day of No Violence Against Women on 25 November, and Human Rights Day on 10 December (Human Rights Day). There are several other key dates for women's rights in the intervening days. These are:

- 1 December: World Aids Day;
- 3 December: International Day for the Disabled;
- 6 December: Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, when a man gunned down 14 women engineering students for allegedly being feminist.

### *Symbols and messages*



Each year since the advent of democracy in 1994 the government, spurred on by NGO efforts, has increasingly taken ownership of the campaign. The government symbol for the campaign is the bearing drums to which was later added the strap line "Act Against Abuse." In 2007, government added to this the "Don't look away" concept illustrated in the graphic. Government refers to the campaign as the "Sixteen Days of Activism Against Women and Child Abuse" and promotes use of the white ribbon, internationally the symbol of protest against gender violence.

NGOs have come up with their own variants to the theme and messaging. In 2004, NGOs chose

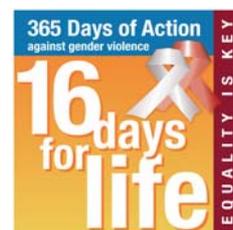
to call the campaign "Sixteen Days of Peace" with the strap line "Imagine a world free of gender violence, HIV and AIDS." In 2005, some chose the slogan, "Peace begins at home" arguing that this is a simple and positive message that easy to translate into many languages.



A point of departure has been in the promotion of the red and white as opposed to just the white ribbon. The red ribbon is the symbol for HIV and AIDS. Nisaa Institute for Women and Development pioneered the red and white ribbon campaign in South Africa as a way of raising awareness on the link between gender violence, HIV and AIDS.

### *365 Day National Action Plan to End Gender Violence*

Convened by Gender Links, the National Prosecution Authority (NPA) and UNICEF, the Kopanong conference in May 2006 adopted as its logo and theme the "Sixteen Days



for Life" logo pioneered by the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network with the strap line, "365 Days of action against gender violence" and side bar "equality is key." The logo captures:

- The shift from a campaign to an action plan;
- The need to sustain the momentum generated by Sixteen Day campaigns over the whole year;
- The need to start addressing root causes, rather than just tinkering with the symptoms. In other words, unless equality is achieved, the fight against violence will constantly hit a brick wall.

A 2008 Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) tracker study reported that the Sixteen Days Campaign was the second most known government event in South Africa, after the State of the Nation Address.<sup>71</sup> Other notable successes of the campaign have been:

- Growth in public awareness of the campaign and its messages: Knowledge about the campaign increased from 16% in 2003 to 33% in 2007;<sup>72</sup>
- Growth in 16 Days Campaign activities at provincial and local government spheres, coupled by active participation by communities;

- Commitment by government, in partnership with NGOs, to fight the scourge 365 Days of the year; and
- Consistent participation by government sector departments, provincial governments, civil society, the South African Police Services, religious formations, the media, and South African business.

The prevalence/attitude survey for this study asked women and men about their knowledge of the Sixteen Days campaigns and which messages they are familiar with.

**Figure 8.6: Knowledge of the Sixteen Days Campaign**

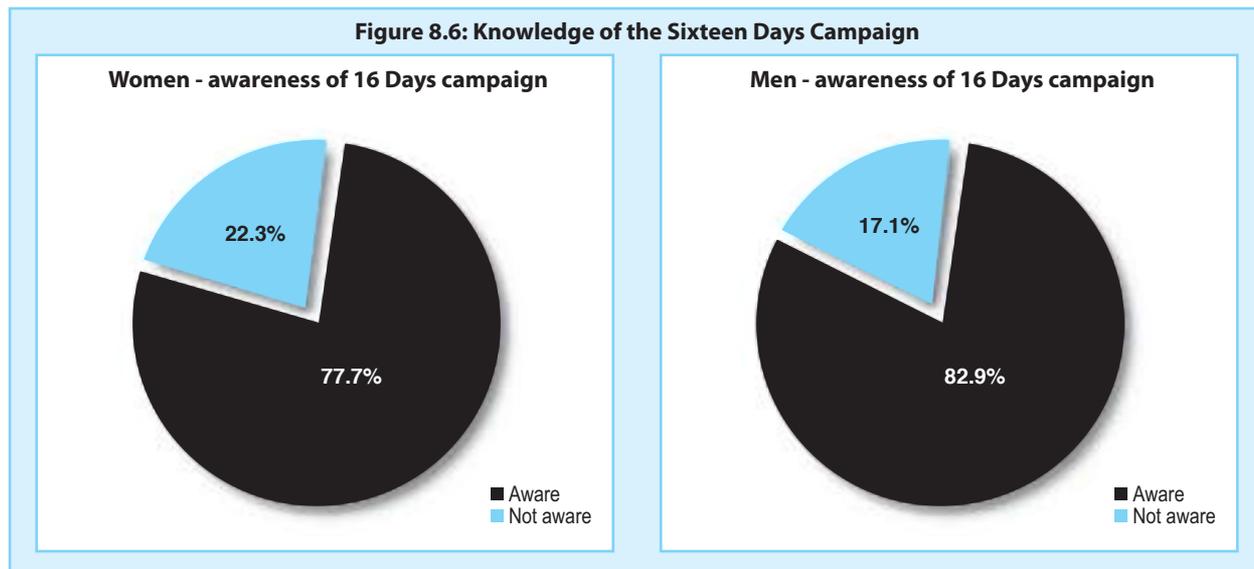


Figure 8.6 shows that compared to the GCIS study in which just one third of those surveyed across the country said they knew about the campaign, more than three quarters of both women and men in Gauteng said they knew

about the Sixteen Days. This may reflect both higher levels of awareness in South Africa's most urbanised and populous province as well as the growing awareness with each passing year. Interestingly, a higher proportion of men (82.9%) than women (77.7%) knew about the campaign. This may reflect higher levels of education and access to information by men in the province.

<sup>71</sup> GCIS Tracker Survey:2008

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

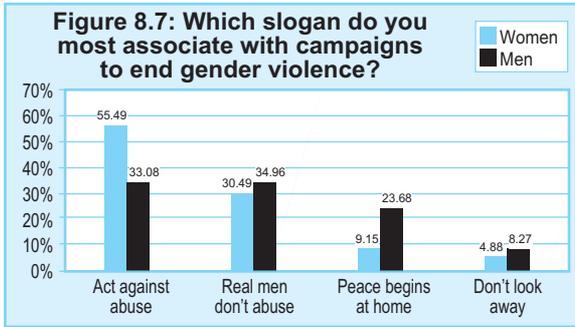


Figure 8.7 shows that women were most familiar with the slogan “Act Against Abuse” while most men (35%) knew the slogan “Real men don't abuse”, followed by “Peace begins at home.” Very few women or men knew the slogan “Don't look away.” As the government’s “Act Against Abuse” slogan has had the most publicity for the longest period of time, it is not surprising that this is the best known slogan. The fact that women identify most with this slogan is also instructive. It is also significant that men identify quite strongly with the slogans “Real men don't abuse” as well as the slogan “Peace begins at home.” This shows the power of positive messaging in reaching out to men and growing the ranks of those who stand up to be counted in the fight against GBV.

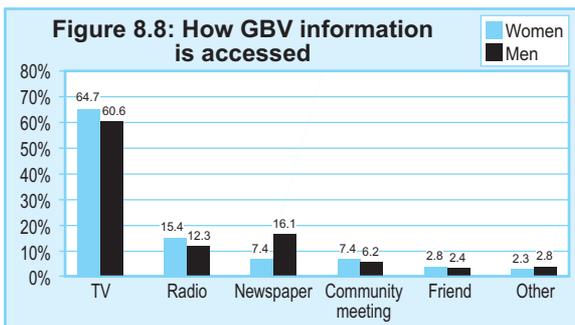


Figure 8.8 illustrates that most South Africans access knowledge about GBV campaigns

through television: both men (60.6%) and women (64.7%). Similar proportions of women and men heard about campaigns through radio, while more men read about campaigns in print media than women. This concurs with findings by the GCIS. The clear message is the importance of targeting TV in public awareness campaigns.

### Speaking out as a prevention strategy



An important dimension of the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign is the space it has provided for survivors of gender violence to speak out. Since 2004 to 2007 GL, in partnership with the Nisaa Institute for Women's Development,

People Opposed to Women Abuse (POWA) and ADAPT has worked with 54 women who have suffered abuse and six men who are ex-perpetrators of gender violence to write first hand accounts of their experiences.

These stories are contained in four volumes of “I” Stories published in booklet format and also distributed through the GL Opinion and Commentary Service. Writers of the stories are also frequently called to give radio and TV interviews. They speak on panels and events during the Sixteen Days, including opening and closing events.

The “I” Stories demonstrate the importance and value of those most affected being at the fore-

front of any GBV campaign. They receive media pick up; generate discussion and debate; and on the whole are empowering to the women concerned.

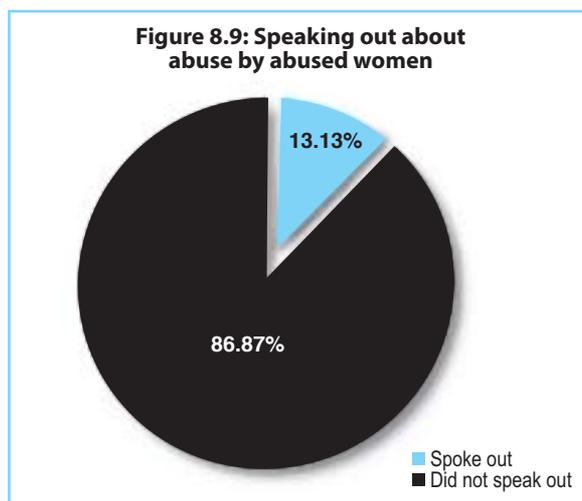


Figure 8.9 shows that most of the women (86.9%) who have been abused have not spoken about the abuse.

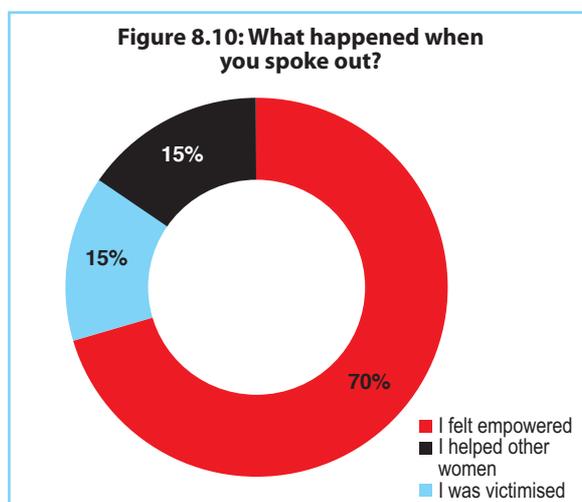


Figure 8.10 shows that the majority of women who spoke out felt empowered. Speaking out

was also seen as helping other women. About one in seven women who spoke out were later victimised.

These results are supported by qualitative research findings, from follow up research with those who have participated in the “I” Stories and related processes. Maleshoane Motsiri, a 2006 “I” Story participant who wrote the foreword to this book, now works as a counsellor at POWA. After the publication of her “I” Story, Motsiri gave a radio interview, after which listeners could phone in and ask questions.

Motsiri recalls, “One man asked me why I had stayed in the relationship for so long. I didn’t feel offended at all and explained how difficult it was to leave and that everyday I searched for a reason to stay, also for my children. He was sorry for me and was compassionate. Another man phoned in and said it was good we talked about it, because men also get a chance to learn and understand how abuse affects women. Other practical questions came from women, asking me how long I was in the relationship, how I got out etc.”

Sweetness Gwabe, a 2007 participant, said the process “has changed me tremendously. I realise who I am, a woman of multiple talents. I became myself and not what I have been told I am: useless. I am now a role model to my children. I walk in front of them and am confident, because I know that children who grow up in an abusive home often lack confidence. The way I feel now, I wish I had not hidden my name.”

Martha Selokane, a 2004 participant, says she is “no longer a victim but a survivor”. At the time

she was in an abusive relationship she was not working and fully dependent on her husband. Now she is divorced and works as a Senior Personal Officer at the Department of Justice. After Seloane's "I" Story was published during the 16 Days of Activism, she appeared on radio and two television shows.



Editor Jan Moolman (left) with Martha Seloane. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

When friends and colleagues told her they had seen her on TV, she would initially joke, saying, "That wasn't me, but my sister." Soon women from her community would come to her house for help. Seloane recalls, "They explained about their abusive relationships, and that they didn't know where to go for help. They also wanted to leave and tell their story on radio or television, but didn't know how to approach this. I would refer them to Gender Links or Nisaa. Therefore I believe the "I" Stories are powerful, because they open up the eyes of women, who before not always realised they were in an abusive relationship or did not know where to get help."

## Media: part of the problem or part of the solution?

"The only way to deal with rape in this country is to get it out there."

- ETV reporter Sandy McCowen

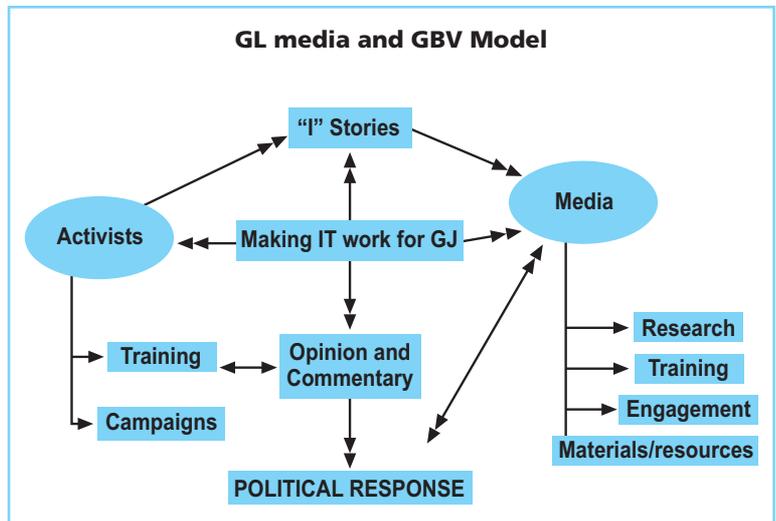
The media is a powerful tool in fighting GBV because it not only reports on society but helps shape public opinion and perceptions. The media calls attention to social issues and problems and it can hold leaders accountable. A number of NGOs work in the field of communication for social change. They have devised various strategies for influencing the media agenda on GBV.

For example: Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication (SC IHDC) is a social change project seeking to make an impact at the individual, community and socio-political level. Established in 1992, it is an NGO with a view to promoting health from a holistic standpoint, based on advocacy through "edutainment"<sup>73</sup>: a mixture of education and entertainment. Its success lies in the fact that the various media used by SC IHDC is accessible at different levels. It is powerfully persuasive because it is rooted in community experiences and it successfully responds to complex social and health issues. The information provided impacts on social norms, attitudes and practices, aimed at the individual, community and socio-political environment. Violence prevention and children's life skill development are some of the key areas of focus.

<sup>73</sup> Defined as 'the art of integrating social issues into popular and high quality entertainment formats, based on a thorough research process'.

Gender Links' GBV and media model is illustrated in the diagram. The key elements of GL's media strategy are as follows:

- Working directly with mainstream media through research, training, developing gender policies, continuous engagement, and providing useful links, contacts etc.
- Working with gender activists to develop strategic communication skills and package their issues more effectively to ensure media coverage.
- Providing bridging services between activists and the mainstream media through the Opinion and Commentary Service, especially working with survivors of gender violence to tell their stories, providing content



that is often difficult for the media to access due to lack of trust, time and skills constraints.

- Using IT to maximise impact, build skills and capacity.

## GBV and the media

Over the last decade, GL has conducted training workshops with media in all nine provinces of South Africa and conducted media monitoring. Key findings of this monitoring are that:

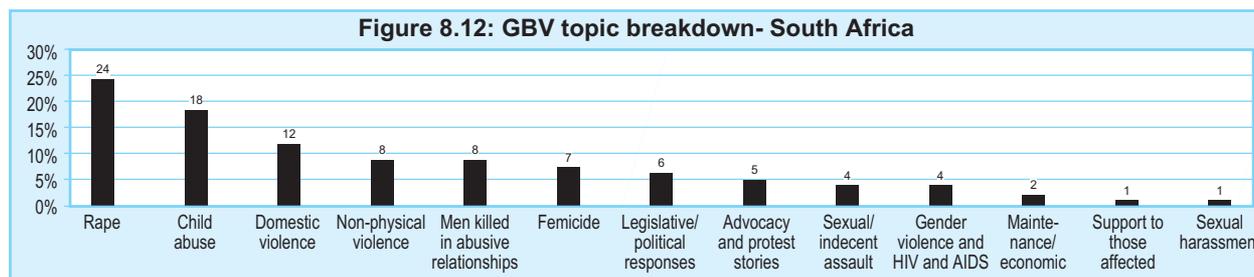
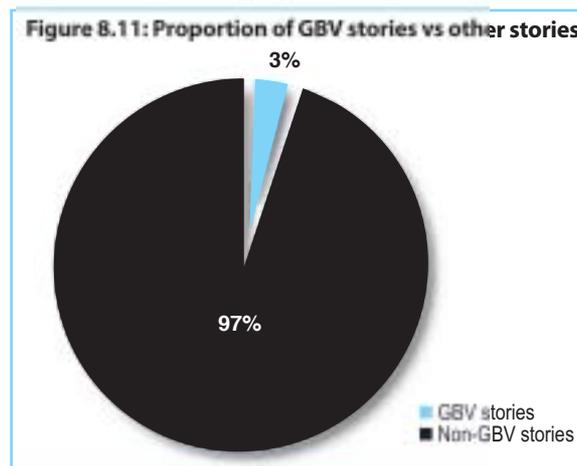
- To the extent gender issues are covered, gender violence tends to get more coverage;
- However, gender violence is often treated as relatively minor compared to other crimes;
- Certain types of gender violence get much higher coverage, e.g. sexual assault;
- There is very little coverage of where those affected can get help;
- There is very little coverage of those who protest against gender violence;
- Much of the source information is from the courts. This has a heavy male bias;
- The voices of those affected are not heard;
- Experiences of women are often trivialised;
- Coverage is often insensitive, for example in the use of images, names etc. that could lead to secondary victimisation;
- Women are often portrayed as victims rather than survivors;
- Women are often portrayed as temptresses (they asked for the abuse);
- Men are portrayed as being unable to control their sexual urges;
- There is a tendency to exonerate the perpetrators;
- There is a tendency to sensationalise; and
- Most gender violence stories are written by men or court reporters.

In the recent *Gender and Media Progress Study* (GMPS), GL monitored media in 14 Southern African countries including South Africa. In addition to monitoring general media practice and content, GL looked at coverage of HIV and AIDS and GBV.

For GBV, monitoring focused on the proportion of GBV coverage; GBV sub topics; who speaks on them; their function; and who reports on these topics. The monitoring period was from 18 October to 18 November 2009.

Figure 8.11 illustrates that GBV stories and stories that mention GBV constitute just 3% of all

coverage in South African media, despite high levels of gender violence.



Loga Virahsammy speaking on gender in the media at the GEM Summit, 2010. Photo: Trevor Davies

Figure 8.12 shows that rape (24%) receives the most coverage in South African media followed by child abuse (18%) and domestic violence (12%). Non-physical abuse (8%), men killed in abusive situations (8%) and femicide (7%) receive the highest proportion of coverage after rape, child abuse and domestic violence. Coverage of relevant policy and legislation is very low in South Africa (6%). Support to people affected by gender violence and sexual harassment are topics that are largely absent in media coverage in both South Africa and the region.

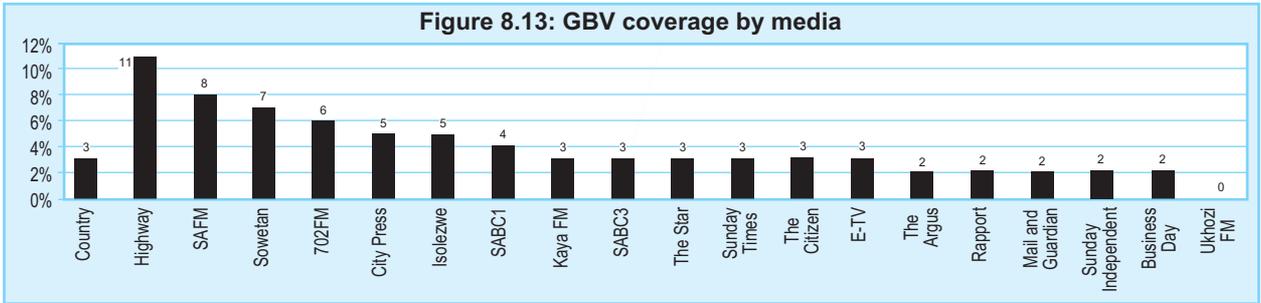


Figure 8.13 shows that Highway Radio (11%), a community radio station, had the highest proportion of gender violence coverage, followed by SAFM (8%); the Sowetan (7%) and 702 Talk Radio (6%). Ukhozi FM on SABC radio, which has the highest listenership in the country, had no coverage of gender violence during the monitoring period.

in GBV coverage in South Africa (39%). Survivors constitute 15% of sources on gender violence while alleged perpetrators or perpetrators constitute 10% of sources in GBV stories. Relatives of victims or perpetrators speak on gender violence in 13% of articles. These figures underscore a common concern that people too often speak on behalf of victims and survivors of GBV.

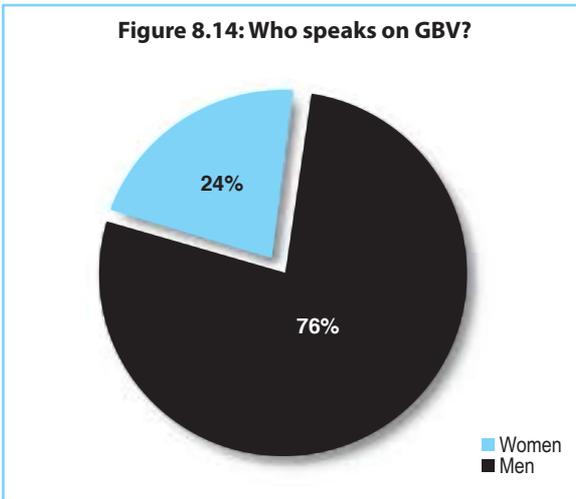


Figure 8.14 shows that men dominate as news sources in stories about GBV; just 24% of the sources in these stories are women despite the fact that women are those most affected.

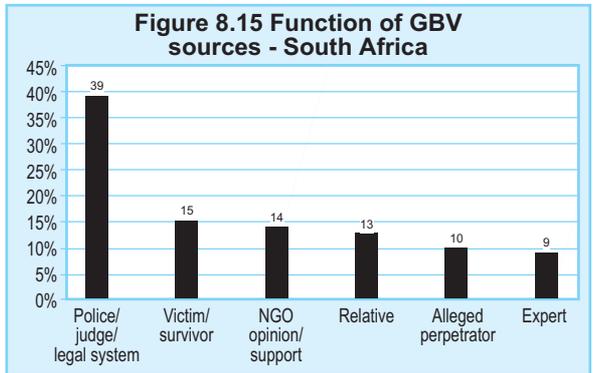


Figure 8.15 shows that the voices of police and judges, the legal system and experts dominate

**Mixed messages**

While the media has come a long way in improving its sensitivity in the coverage of gender violence, this is often fraught with mixed messages, as illustrated in the coverage of the alleged rape of a student at Jules High School in Johannesburg in November 2010:

## Sex or rape? Something is terribly wrong!

By Colleen Lowe Morna\*



On the eve of the Sixteen Days of Activism 2010, the news overflowed with the Jules High School incident, that some called “sex”, others “rape”, others “alleged rape”. The confusion and conflation of sex and rape - apparent also in the famous rape trial of President Jacob Zuma two years before - is a glaring reminder that something in our society is terribly wrong.

In the Jules High School case, we are told that boys drugged a 15 year old girl, but in the same breath that she consented to sex. In the course of a fortnight, one newspaper ran these three contradictory headlines: “Girl in video was willing”; then (after an exclusive interview with the girl) “I was not in control after taking drink”; but a week later, “Girl admits to consensual sex.”

The girl laid a charge of rape, only to find herself charged with rape through some bizarre twist of the Sexual Offences Act that makes it a crime to have sex with a girl below the age of 16, but makes her equally guilty if she consents.

She stood before a magistrate and said she did in fact consent. What would have been the consequences if she did not say this? What were

the choices? To go to jail (for raping herself?) or to face an agonising trial in which the cards are stacked against her?

The young woman at Jules High School became the subject of a cell phone video being pawned on the Internet. Where the two boys involved (whom the police did not want to charge so as not to disturb their exams) emerged as macho heroes, her reputation sunk to one of a cheap, low down “slut”.

I am not condoning women who have sex and then cry rape. Nor am I condoning under-age children having sex, under whatever pretext, on school grounds. What I am saying is that when the line between sex and rape has become so blurred that we use these words interchangeably, something is seriously amiss. At the heart of this are the unequal power relations between boys and girls, men and women that result in us not even being able to distinguish what is and is not appropriate behaviour.

The Internet does not help. Try googling the word “girls” on Google images. You might expect to see pictures of young women going to

school, planning their careers, at sports or at play. Instead you will find young women in bikinis, painting their finger nails, or being available for boys (like in the image adjacent). Images of “boys” on the other hand are cool, hunting in packs, playing sport, being successful, and (proudly) “bad”!



If girls and boys understood what is meant by mutual respect, perhaps we would be able to identify right away what is sex and what is rape just like we know right from wrong. The obvious battles for gender equality - like getting a Sexual Offences Act passed - have been won. What the Jules High School case suggests is that the battle to change attitudes and mindsets has just begun.

*\* Colleen Lowe Morna is CEO of Gender Links*

### Media as part of the solution

**16 Days of Activism**

## Healing body and soul

**Germina Setshedi**

I am a mother of four children. I used to live with them and my husband.

My husband was violent and cruel but I did not realize that at the time. He used to beat me up for nothing. I sometimes wondered if I was born to suffer.

I cried every day and prayed for years, asking God to change me for the better. Instead, my problems got worse.

I had given up on having any chance of happiness. He would strangle me and I would cry and he would tell me to stop making a noise.

I tried to tell him that his behaviour made me feel inadequate and unhappy but that caused a big fight.

The violence continued for a long time. But on Sunday September 7 2008 things changed. Two days after a car knocked down my son, he was admitted to hospital with a head injury. My husband was arrested. When I was about to leave the house, he came to me and locked the door, preventing me from going to my son. He pushed me until he threw me out of the fourth-floor window. My legs and my spine were broken. I spent three months in a hospital, sleeping.

When I was discharged, I opened a case against him but nothing was done because my husband was friends with one of the police officers. I stayed with my younger sister and her boyfriend, telling me to come back. I was using credit cards and could not move my body because the plastic was heavy.

He would come to the house shouting that my sister was at work and the children were at school. He would kick the door open and tell me he wanted me at home. All that I could do was sit and cry.

I moved back home and after three days he started swearing and pointing at me again. It was the beginning of the end. One day he hit me with a hammer on my head. I was bleeding profusely. I saw that as an opportunity to get him arrested.

I was still on crutches, so with the help of my neighbours the police were called.

I opened a case and they sent him to “Pretoria” (Lithameng) prison. He was in trial for three months. He asked the magistrate and I forgave him. After the hearing...

I have a choice to stop the cycle of abuse, a privilege that some women in my position do not have.

I do not sleep at home, only coming during the day. I tried to tell God and pretend all the time: “God help me because this man is going to kill me.”

Nothing changed. I stayed in that horrible life. The stopped eating at home, came home late and sometimes not at all. Life in that house was that way until he left.

I found out he was to live with my neighbour’s daughter and they have a baby boy. But I don’t want. He is unhappy and wants to come back. But there is no space in my house anymore.

I remember my mother’s words, before she died: “What are you doing with that husband? He’s a thing and a monster.”

Now he doesn’t have a place to sleep. He wants me to assist him but I won’t. I have a choice to stop the cycle of abuse, a privilege that some women in my position do not have.

I am empowered and fully aware of my rights as a woman, a human being and a citizen.

I now give advice to survivors of domestic and sexual forms of violence in my community because what I would like most is to have a good, normal life like anyone else.

*This story is part of the 16 Days of Activism series produced by Gender Links Opinion and Commentary Service for the 16 Days of Activism on Gender Violence*

Germina Setshedi's story appeared in the *Mail & Guardian*.

The media has an important role in contributing to GBV prevention strategies. One way to achieve success with these strategies is to ensure that media includes the voices and views of women who have experienced violence.

One of the contributions of the “I” Stories has been to assist the media in accessing the views and voices of those most affected.

### Who feels it knows it: What journalists say about the “I” Stories

As part of follow up research on the “I” Stories, GL has interviewed journalists who have made use of this service on what value it has added.

TV reporter Sandy McCowen's noted that her news items featuring “I” Story participants always prompted a response: “I have had many women phone me at SABC over the years asking for help. After listening to their story I would refer them to the right NGO's.”

Susan Smuts, Deputy Managing Editor of the *Sunday Times*, added: “The “I” Stories are amazing. The feedback I have received has been very positive. People recognise themselves and their family members and friends in the stories because they are about human beings. They make us see what the real impact of domestic violence is, in ways that statistics and analysis cannot do (not that there is not room for those types of stories too).”

Nicole Johnston, former Editor of the Monitor supplement in the *Mail & Guardian*, believes the "I" Stories work for journalists because "they are about real people." Johnston recalls, "In 2006 we published the two stories of the lesbian

women. I believed they were really good and interesting. Too often NGO's want to write about policy, while readers are interested in real stories. The trick is to write about policies, by mixing it into a real personal story."

*This is an excerpt from an article for the GL Opinion and Commentary Service.*

## Secondary prevention

Secondary GBV interventions are targeted at empowering those charged with the responsibility of addressing GBV with the skills to promote prevention and the ability to deal sensitively with the topic. Strategies include training key stakeholders: police; health personnel; traditional leaders; prosecutors and faith-based organisations.

### Police officer training

There has been a major improvement in the criminal justice system around training police on gender issues. The aim has been focused on improving attitudes and alleviating secondary victimisation that often occurs when victims of GBV, and especially rape, report to police stations. The SAPS has implemented a number of short-term GBV courses for its staff, namely First Responders to Sexual Offences Learning Programme (2008); Sexual Offences Course for Investigating Officers; Domestic Violence Learning Programme; and Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Learning Programme, which consists of a four-week residential training. The SAPS has also developed training materials around the Sexual

Offences Act aimed at its first responders' personnel.

### Health personnel training

Any training for medical practitioners needs to cover all forms of gender violence and their subsequent possible health consequences. Such training has been implemented through the development of curricula about gender screening during the initial consultation in clinics and hospitals: it is called *Vezimfihlo*.<sup>74</sup> *Vezimfihlo!* is a training programme created to equip counsellors who work in VCT settings to address gender issues, particularly GBV. The programme gives an overview of GBV as a public health concern. Health workers are trained to improve services for abused patients. Under this programme counsellors are encouraged to provide care in a way that maximises protection for women and assists in processes that encourage men to test, including couples counselling. One recommendation in this sector calls for a comprehensive client-centred health response to GBV to enable provision of high quality care even in rural areas.<sup>75</sup> Improvements in medico-legal practices and services related to rape and sexual assault, especially better documentation of injuries, can lead to higher conviction rates.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *Vezimfihlo*, an IsiXhosa term meaning "reveal the secret.

<sup>75</sup> SAGBVI, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> Jewkes, Christofides, Vetten, Jina, Sigsworth, et al., 2009.

### Training traditional leaders and prosecutors

Project Ndabezitha is a public awareness and legal education programme aimed at empowering rural communities on GBV which is currently being rolled-out in phases. The first phase, which is already completed, entailed conducting a training of trainers on domestic violence issues using a Unit Standard manual. These trainers comprise selected traditional chiefs and prosecutors who will in turn train other leaders to facilitate sessions on domestic violence.

The second phase involves building capacity for traditional leadership and prosecutors to be able to conduct Victim Offender Mediation Services as a way of promoting secondary violence prevention through restorative justice. It targets first time offenders and see them through a programme to prevent reoffending. Through this intensive skills programme, traditional leaders will acquire knowledge and understanding about managing cases of domestic violence from a restorative justice perspective. It recognises the critical importance of harmonising the retributive and restorative justice systems.

The project is worth ensuring that it is sustainable in that it targets traditional leaders who are role models and respected in rural areas. It promotes community participation and emphasises the complementarities of traditional and constitutional legal systems. The project is helping to deal with the operational problems experienced in the criminal justice system especially in dealing with domestic violence which is usually deemed as a private matter.

### Training for faith based organisations

Religious structures tend to reinforce patriarchal values, and because of this there is a great need to bring them on board in the fight against GBV in a meaningful way. It is significant that Hope World Wide, one of the few religious networks involved in preventing GBV, is a global, rather than local, network. Clearly, far more work needs to be done with religious organisations at local and provincial level.

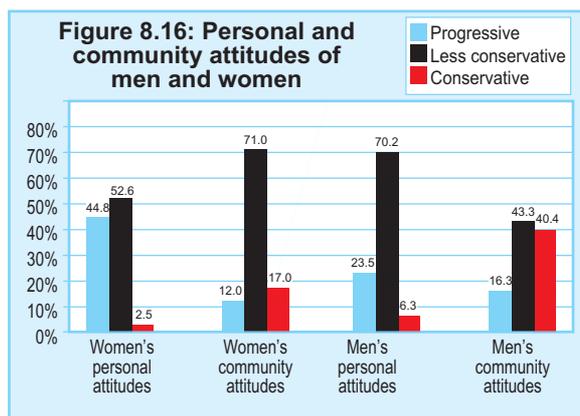
### Measuring change

Typically prevention campaigns have been measured according to their information outputs (how many pamphlets, radio programmes etc). A few studies, such as the GCIS survey on the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign, have started to measure awareness. There have been sporadic attitude surveys. Behaviour change is ultimately measured through prevalence surveys, such as the one conducted here. As in any prevention campaign, the major challenge with GBV is how to measure what has not happened. The attitude questions in the survey conducted for this study provide baseline data for measuring if attitudes are changing.



Figure 8.16 overleaf is a summing up of all the questions responded to under attitudes categorised as progressive; less conservative and

conservative. The graph also sums up the perceptions of women and men about how their communities view these issues.



The graph shows that women (44.8%) hold progressive views with only 2.5% having conservative views (and about half in between). This is a strong indicator that women are increasingly aware of their rights. On the other hand they perceive 78% of their communities to hold either conservative or less conservative views (this explains the “trap” that women often find themselves in with regard to taking up cases of gender violence).

The bulk of men (70.2%) fall in the less conservative attitudes category, with 23.5% in the progressive category. While the latter figure is considerably lower than that for women, it does indicate that messages about equality are starting to get through to men. On the other hand men perceive other men in the community (40.4%) as far more conservative than women (17%). This contrast is interesting and prompts the question whether men are increasingly espousing more progressive views, but hiding

behind the perceived beliefs of their communities to justify their behaviour (bearing in mind that 78.3% of men in the study admitted to perpetrating some form of violence over their life time).

## Conclusions

The analysis of speeches made by political functionaries shows that GBV is not a priority area for decision-makers. They have not led from the front in the same way as in the campaign against HIV and AIDS.

The Sixteen Day campaign is well known, with the government slogan “Act Against Abuse” best known, reflecting the power of the government machinery and resources. Media is still largely part of the problem rather than of the solution in prevention campaigns. While the media (and especially TV) is the main source of information on GBV, this only constitutes 3% of all coverage; men dominate as sources; and there is little information on where to go for help.

The voices of those most affected are still the least heard; yet those women who speak out feel empowered. The act of speaking out can itself be a form of healing, and has generally not resulted in secondary forms of victimisation, even when other forms of redress are difficult to access.

While women are becoming more empowered and men more aware, the attitudes of communities and contradictory views of men (for example the belief that women must obey men and that men can punish them) result in continued high levels of gender violence.