

A photograph of four people (three women and one man) sitting around a table in a modern office setting, engaged in a discussion. One woman is holding a tablet displaying a bar chart.

BEYOND POWER TOWARDS LIBERATION



**THE SA NATIONAL
AIDS COUNCIL
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AND FEMICIDE (GBVF)
MESSAGING FOR COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS**

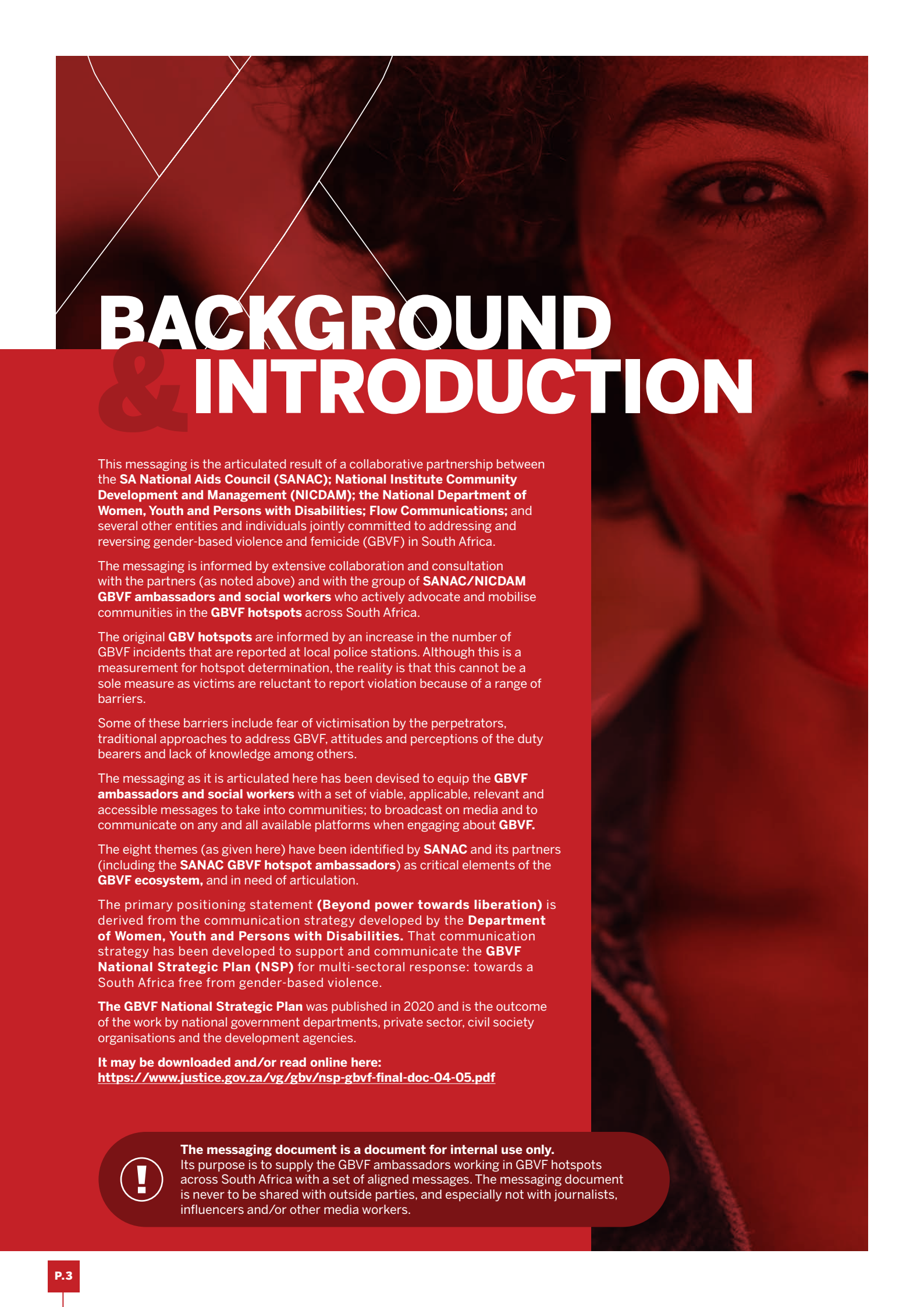


REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

This messaging is the articulated result of a collaborative partnership between the **SA National Aids Council (SANAC); National Institute Community Development and Management (NICDAM); the National Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities; Flow Communications;** and several other entities and individuals jointly committed to addressing and reversing gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in South Africa.

The messaging is informed by extensive collaboration and consultation with the partners (as noted above) and with the group of **SANAC/NICDAM GBVF ambassadors and social workers** who actively advocate and mobilise communities in the **GBVF hotspots** across South Africa.

The original **GBV hotspots** are informed by an increase in the number of GBVF incidents that are reported at local police stations. Although this is a measurement for hotspot determination, the reality is that this cannot be a sole measure as victims are reluctant to report violation because of a range of barriers.

Some of these barriers include fear of victimisation by the perpetrators, traditional approaches to address GBVF, attitudes and perceptions of the duty bearers and lack of knowledge among others.

The messaging as it is articulated here has been devised to equip the **GBVF ambassadors and social workers** with a set of viable, applicable, relevant and accessible messages to take into communities; to broadcast on media and to communicate on any and all available platforms when engaging about **GBVF**.

The eight themes (as given here) have been identified by **SANAC** and its partners (including the **SANAC GBVF hotspot ambassadors**) as critical elements of the **GBVF ecosystem**, and in need of articulation.

The primary positioning statement (**Beyond power towards liberation**) is derived from the communication strategy developed by the **Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**. That communication strategy has been developed to support and communicate the **GBVF National Strategic Plan (NSP)** for multi-sectoral response: towards a South Africa free from gender-based violence.

The GBVF National Strategic Plan was published in 2020 and is the outcome of the work by national government departments, private sector, civil society organisations and the development agencies.

It may be downloaded and/or read online here:
<https://www.justice.gov.za/vg/gbv/nsp-gbv-final-doc-04-05.pdf>



The messaging document is a document for internal use only.

Its purpose is to supply the GBVF ambassadors working in GBVF hotspots across South Africa with a set of aligned messages. The messaging document is never to be shared with outside parties, and especially not with journalists, influencers and/or other media workers.



WHAT IS GBV?

Gender-based violence (GBV) is defined as any act against women that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, economic or psychological harm or suffering. It may occur at any stage of a woman's life and is often made worse by cultural, economic, ideological, technological, political, religious, social and environmental factors.

WHAT IS FEMICIDE?

Femicide is defined as the killing of a female person or perceived female person on the basis of gender identity.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF GBVF

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) has been part of the South African social context for decades. It's rooted in historical apartheid policies and underpinned by high levels of inequality, poverty, racism, unequal gender power relations, and hostility to sexual and gender diversity.

DATA AND NUMBERS

A 2015 study by the SA Medical Research Council and humanitarian organisation UNICEF found that while many types of GBVF data are collected by various South African government departments, these types of data are not collected in a systematic or synchronised way. As a result, it's impossible to give confirmed numbers and statistics about GBVF in South Africa

Nobody denies, though, that GBVF has reached epidemic numbers. The numbers that follow here give the best available indication of GBVF in South Africa:

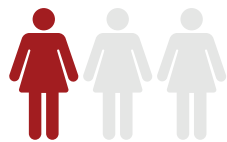
1 024 the number of **women murdered** by an intimate partner in 2009

A police report released **10 years later** (in 2019) indicated that GBVF had not come down. In fact, the 2018 Victims of Crime Survey (conducted by the SAPS) reported **increased crime levels overall**, including the number of murders.



1/5

the number of murdered South African women who were **also raped**, according to a 2018 police report.



1/3

the number of women who have experienced **intimate partner violence** (according to a 2011 GBV population-based study in Gauteng).



1/23

the number of women who **report sexual abuse** to the police (according to a 2011 GBV population-based study in Gauteng).



37%

of men admit to having **raped a woman or girl** (according to a 2011 GBV population-based study in Gauteng).



46%

of sexual offence complainants are **children**

THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN ON

GBVF



NOV 2018

The first **Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide** is convened. The summit concluded with the signing of a declaration that government, business, labour and civil society would work together to devise ways to end **GBVF** and would establish a **National Strategic Plan (NSP)** to end **GBV**. A steering committee was established to lead the development of the **NSP**.

2020

The **National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide** is published.

NATIONAL INVESTMENT IN THE NSP

R1.6 BILLION

R1.6 billion - the amount of money repatriated by national departments to support the implementation of the **NSP**.

VISION OF THE NSP

A South Africa free from gender-based violence directed at women, children and LGBTQIA+ persons.

PURPOSE OF THE NSP

To provide a multi-sectoral, coherent strategic policy and programming framework to ensure a coordinated national response to the crisis of GBVF by the government of South Africa and the country as a whole.

SCOPE OF THE NSP

To focus on comprehensively and strategically responding to GBVF, with a specific focus on violence against ALL women.

THE SIX PILLARS OF THE NSP

ACCOUNTABILITY,
COORDINATION &
LEADERSHIP

PREVENTION AND
REBUILDING SOCIAL
COHESION

JUSTICE, SAFETY
& PROTECTION

RESPONSE, CARE,
SUPPORT & HEALING

ECONOMIC POWER

RESEARCH &
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



Gender-based violence and femicide is an ill that has left no sector of society untouched. We call upon all South Africans to be part of the implementation of this National Strategic Plan, to support it both materially and morally, and to be active forces for change in their homes and their communities. The public, the media, faith-based groups and traditional organisations, business and labour must all come on board.

**South African President
Cyril Ramaphosa**
(in his foreword to the NSP)



THE IMPACT OF GBVF

Between **R24-billion**
and **R42-billion**

the estimated annual cost to the national economy
of GBVF (according to a 2015 costing study on GBVF)

Health impact of GBV

Health implications are **profound**, with the most extreme outcome of GBVF being the **death** of the victim.

However, numerous **other injuries** are associated with GBV, ranging from relatively minor to severe injuries that require **hospitalisation** and emergency medical intervention.

Intimate partner violence against women is associated with **HIV infection**.

Abusive men are more likely to display **HIV-risk behaviours**.

HIV often leads to violence because it causes **relationship conflict** - for instance, conflict arising from the disclosure of one's HIV status.



Socio-economic impact of GBVF

The most profound impact is its interference with women's **social and economic development**.

GBVF **prevents their equal participation** in, and contribution to, socio-economic decision-making.

Women and children who've experienced GBV are at higher risk of suffering from **depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse** and **suicidal thoughts**, and at higher risk of **self-harming**.



GBVF & THE LAW



South Africa has a number of laws that express the **constitutional right** all citizens have to **equality, human dignity, life, freedom and security**. However, a key problem is the **ineffective implementation** of these laws, policies and commitments. These are the laws pertaining to GBVF:



The Constitution



Promotion of Equality and
Unfair Discrimination
Act No. 4 of 2000



Employment Equity
Act No. 55 of 1998



Labour Relations
Act No. 66 of 1995



Domestic Violence
Act No. 116 of 1998



Maintenance
Act No. 99 of 1998



Criminal Law
(Sexual Offences and Related
Matters) Amendment
Act No. 32 of 2007



Protection from
Harassment
Act No. 17 of 2011



Children's
Act No. 38 of 2005



Older Persons
Act No. 13 of 2006



Prevention and Combating
of Trafficking in Persons
Act No. 7 of 2013



THE KEY POSITIONING MESSAGE:

BEYOND POWER TOWARDS LIBERATION

South Africa and South African culture need to move from beyond power toward **liberation**

This is our best chance of **combating GBVF**

Just as our nation confronted the trauma of race-based oppression and violence, we are now called on, as a nation, to **confront and stop** the trauma of gender-based oppression and violence

This message (i.e. Beyond power towards liberation) has been devised by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities in support of the National Strategic Plan to combat GBVF.

BEYOND POWER TOWARDS LIBERATION FOR **VICTIMS**

For women and other vulnerable persons, this is the **power of feeling protected** and being safe from the violence brought about by dysfunctional patriarchy.

BEYOND POWER TOWARDS LIBERATION FOR **PERPETRATORS**

For men, this is the **liberation of being the gender that protects** women, children and other vulnerable persons: the power of liberation from being a perpetrator of violence to being a powerful, masculine being who cares and protects.



DYSFUNCTIONAL PATRIARCHY AT THE ROOT OF **GBVF**

Dysfunctional patriarchy is a form of oppressive gender-based **power domination** by men over vulnerable persons (mainly women, girls, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ and children, but sometimes other men, too)

PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT

- ✓ GBVF is an **extremely serious** and deeply worrying problem in our country.
- ✓ I'm committed to **working with others** to address and eliminate GBVF in my community.
- ✓ We're a hundreds-strong team of people from all provinces, working in hundreds of communities and with thousands of people to **address and stem the tide of GBVF**.
- ✓ We – and the **women, children, and vulnerable people** everywhere – need as much help as we can get. We invite you to join us in our determination to end GBVF in our country.
- ✓ For every one woman killed elsewhere in the world, **five are killed in South Africa**.
- ✓ Our history goes hand in hand with **deep inequality, poverty, racism, and skewed gender relationships**.
- ✓ GBVF is a deeply embedded and serious problem, one that's not easy to solve. It's a serious problem that **impacts all of society**, and not only the individuals who experience it personally.
- ✓ However, every effort must be made by **all stakeholders** to solve the problem and turn the tide of GBVF.
- ✓ This is why I am invested in this nationwide project to **work with communities, advocate for survivors of violence and raise awareness** about the causes of GBVF, its impact to health and well-being of families and society, create awareness on the resources available to affected people and discuss what we can all do as citizens to address this very serious issue that plagues our country.



THE ROLE OF AMBASSADORS

My role as ambassador is multifaceted. One of those roles is to be a communicator and advocate that is working with a range of stakeholders and with people in hotspot communities who are affected by the scourge of GBVF.

A **hotspot community** is a community with especially high levels of GBVF incidence. These levels are gauged through reports of GBVF violence that have been received by the SAPS and community-based entities and groups.

“One vulnerable person hurt is one person too many.”

As an ambassador on this project, **I engage people and deliver messaging** that helps people understand what they can do to break the GBVF cycle.

Breaking the cycle of GBVF is our collective problem and our collective responsibility.

We ambassadors acknowledge that GBVF is a very serious problem. We are committed to addressing it. We want GBVF to end. **One vulnerable person hurt is one person too many.**

We work **proactively** to address GBVF and bring it down:

- It's no longer sufficient to merely react to the GBVF problem in South Africa.
- Rather, we must **prevent, expose, and examine the root causes** of GBVF so that the phenomenon may be understood, and lives may be saved.

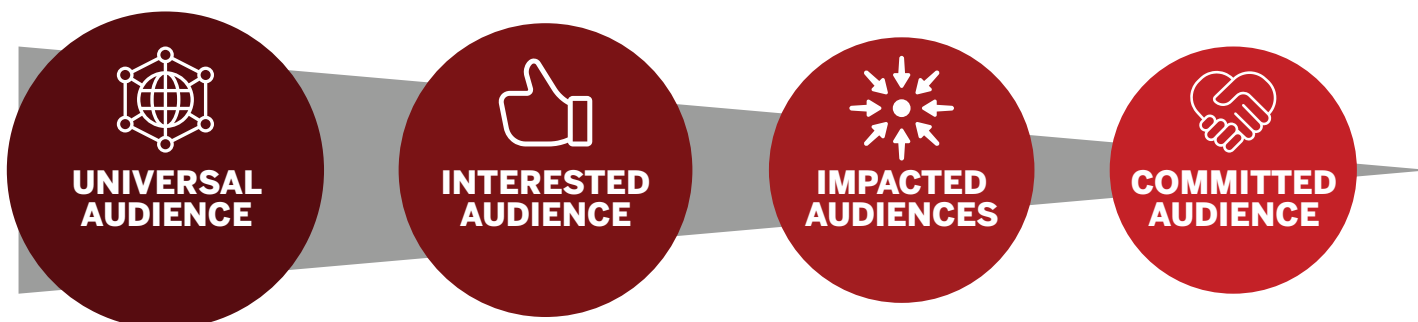
STRIVING FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN PEOPLE, AND BETWEEN THE GENDERS

Striving for equality between men and women will create safer and better-connected communities

This, in turn, will bring about a safer country where women, children and vulnerable people are protected from dysfunctional patriarchy and other forms of gender-based violence

When we all, as citizens, understand this and support each other, we will be able to claim our own power and eliminate GBVF

COMMUNICATING BEYOND POWER TOWARDS LIBERATION TO THE FOUR SEGMENTED AUDIENCE GROUPS



Audience profile

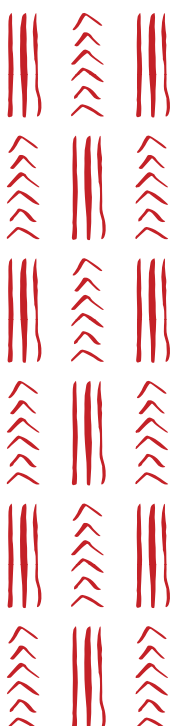
All South Africans, everywhere.

Message intent

Educate, mobilise, create awareness and contribute towards total elimination of GBVF.

Message communication

On national platforms, on media (print and digital, broadcast, websites) and on non-targeted social media platforms.



Audience profile

People who are interested in gender politics and the broad-based impact of GBVF in particular regions and economic and public sectors (for example, education, justice, media).

Message intent

Encourage people to consider the impact of GBVF on the national conscience and in particular sectors and areas of socioeconomics and politics.

Message communication

Via consumer titles (digital and print, for example: business and financial media, women's interest media); electronic/ broadcast interviews; targeted social media platforms.

A small number of impactful messages/ statements about why dealing with GBVF matters right here and right now in this community and sector of socio-politics and the economy: Beyond power towards liberation for my/ our community and/or my/ our socio-economic sector of society.

Audience profile

Patriarchal masculine and vulnerable feminine; people at the coalface of GBVF experiences (usually in community hotspots, but elsewhere too).

Both perpetrators and victims of GBVF and people closely involved with victims and perpetrators.

People familiar and intimate with or involved in and impacted by the phenomenon of GBVF in hotspot communities.

Message intent

Address the causes of GBVF as it is experienced and offer practical remedy and help.

Particular and specific calls to action.

There are things you can do ... so do something to move yourself and your family/ community beyond violence towards liberation.

Let me help or put you in touch with somebody who can help.

Message communication

On bespoke and tailored/ created platforms: 1-2-1; in person by ambassadors; with community leaders, allies, and champions.

Audience profile

Civil society organisations and partners, ambassadors, social workers.

The team moving the nation from power to liberation.

Message intent

Build unity, share resources and learnings, and fuel the change that moves South Africa closer to eliminating GBVF (ie move the nation from power towards liberation).

Together, making a difference, saving lives.

Message communication

On personalised, tailored platforms: meetings, gatherings and briefings. Personal and 1-2-1 platforms.



MESSAGE THEME:

ECONOMIC REALITIES



KEY MESSAGES

A good, strong, sustainable economy is good for addressing and reducing GBVF.

Invest in economic growth because when our economy grows, GBVF comes down and vulnerable persons are safer.

There are initiatives in your community to help you and your family financially. Use these resources.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » Our country is characterised by high levels of **economic and financial inequality**
- » **Poverty** is rife in South Africa
- » Poverty is rife in South Africa, and there is a high rate of **unemployment**
- » **People with money have power.** Women are especially financially and economically marginalised, making them reliant on men. For some men, this is used as an abusive power over women and other vulnerable persons
- » Economic strengthening initiatives exist in communities. However, **people seek quick fixes**, especially when facing potentially life-threatening situations
- » **Creating economic growth and strength** is part of the GBVF solutions toolkit

ONE KEY MESSAGE

- » **South Africa needs a good, strong economy** that creates and sustains jobs and that gives people a viable and sustainable way to earn a living, become self-reliant and take care of themselves and their families
- » Through **economic growth, strength and sustainability**, our nation will move beyond power towards liberation
- » It's excellent when the public and private sector, either individually or in partnership, **work together and invest to strengthen our economy** (nationally, regionally and in communities) – because the stronger the economy, the safer South Africa is for potential GBVF victims



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Create awareness:

- » What's **good for the economy** is good for men, women and children therefore good for countering GBVF
- » Public and private sector captains and policymakers need to **invest in strengthening the economy** because the stronger and more viable our economy, the safer society is for women, children, and other vulnerable groups



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences

Consideration:

- » **Highlight economic strengthening initiatives** and projects in communities and advise business and community/sectoral leaders to invest in initiatives that stimulate sustainable economic growth
- » There are initiatives in this community (created by businesses and leaders in this community) that are **helping people financially**
- » These initiatives are helping to move the people in this community **beyond power towards liberation**



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in hotspots, economic role players in hotspot communities

- » There are initiatives in your community to help **ease the financial burden** that you and your family are under.
- » This is what they are, and **where you can get help**

Call to action:

- » **Demonstrate success and reward of economic initiatives;** drive people to them; co-opt initiators of projects into the story; and encourage communities to support them and their initiatives



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Drive change:

- » Curate **databases of economic resources/initiatives** and make them accessible across the broader team
- » This is what we can do, and are doing, together to **alleviate economic pressure** on communities to curtail GBVF in our areas of focus

MESSAGE THEME:

TOXIC MASCULINITY



KEY MESSAGES

Constructive, positive masculinity will move South Africans beyond power towards liberation

Down with toxic masculinity

Viva constructive, positive masculinity

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » Male dominance and toxicity are a normalised cultural reality
- » Toxicity takes the form of **physical, financial, emotional and psychological** manipulation and abuse
- » Toxicity is **aggravated by alcohol and other substance use** and abuse
- » Men are seen and regarded as **head of the household** in the nuclear family. Women are often overlooked and demoted
- » Men exhibiting toxic traits must understand the benefits of shifting to **constructive, enabling masculine behaviour**
- » Constructive, enabling masculinity is when men use their strength, power and position in the nuclear family and in society to **nurture and protect** their families and partners
- » It's easy to **harm somebody who is weaker than you**. But doing so diminishes your masculinity; it does not affirm it
- » Our key message to South Africa's men is that you can, and must, **use your strength to do good** and to take care of those who are weaker than you and who rely on your strength and protection
- » Being constructively masculine **does not diminish your masculinity**, power and strength. Instead, it enhances it
- » **Bullying is never acceptable**, no matter the gender of the bully

FEMALE SUBORDINATION IS A CULTURAL REALITY

- » Women are often seen as the property of men, **owned and possessed** by them
- » The truth is that women and men are **partners in families**
- » The idea that men possess women must be **challenged and reversed**
- » **No human** being can ever be the possession of another
- » It's a common toxic assumption that women should not work outside of the home: their role is to **cook, clean and take care of children**. This toxic assumption further disempowers women and increases their vulnerability to GBVF
- » **It's a toxic assumption we must challenge** as a nation to move beyond power towards liberation



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Create awareness:

- » As head of the household and family, men have the manly responsibility and privilege to **love, protect and enable** women and children.
- » Doing so will allow individuals, families, communities and the whole of South Africa to move **beyond power towards liberation**



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences

Consideration:

- » There's **power and liberation in constructive masculinity** – men using their strength and taking personal responsibility to build a relationship, a family, a community, a nation



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in hotspots

Call to action:

- » Hold up examples of constructive masculinity, encouraging men to emulate and align with **strong and positive role models** in their communities
- » Devise a **list of five things** that define the non-toxic man
- » Initiate conversations about **constructive gender roles**



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Drive change:

- » We challenge the traits of masculine toxicity collectively, **celebrating successes and enabling conversations** about constructive manliness.
- » We share our **insights and successes** with each other

MEN WHO ARE CONSTRUCTIVELY MASCULINE:



Respect women

Know that women and children rely on them for safety and **provide this safety** as best as they can



Protect those they love emotionally and physically



Speak to other men about how to manage difficult situations and **help** other men in difficult situations when they can



Take responsibility for their decisions and actions





MESSAGE THEME:

GENDER ROLES



KEY MESSAGES

Greater equality between the genders will reduce GBVF and enhance the safety of vulnerable persons

Greater equality between the genders will move South Africa beyond power towards liberation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » All persons have **dignity and validity**, no matter their gender
- » **Gender roles are constructed and imposed from a very early age:** through assignment of roles and household chores among young children. We need to think about this and change the way in which we instil these assumptions in our children
- » **Education and self-development are lifelong** and important for everybody, irrespective of age and gender
- » We need **specialised, focused programmes for young children** that challenge existing roles and instil positive gender role culture
- » **It's never too early to start instilling this positive gender culture:** early childhood development (ECD) curricula must be interrogated and adjusted if necessary
- » People need the tools to unlearn destructive gender role behaviour and gender role assumptions
- » **People also need to ask for help to:**
 - live by example
 - seek/find support systems
- » And to be able to **easily and accessibly find that help** when they seek it
- » We need to unlearn our fear of being different and **challenge trans- and homophobia** wherever we find it

MALE DOMINANCE MUST BE CHALLENGED

- » Male dominance is **embedded in all cultures** and communities, and must be challenged
- » We know that **male dominance contributes to GBVF**

POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE MASCULINITY

- » **Men lose none of their power** when they use their strength to protect vulnerable persons, to nurture them and to challenge those who harm women, children and vulnerable people



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Create awareness:

- » The genders are different; **one is not superior to the other**
- » **Gender role assumptions are oppressive** to women and harm our nation, our economy and our communities ... and fuel GBVF



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences

Consideration:

- » There's power and liberation in **questioning and challenging** what we always thought was true of gender roles
- » Questioning gender roles, assumptions and behaviours takes families and communities **beyond power towards liberation**



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in hotspots

Call to action:

- » **Workshop gender roles** and relationship dynamics with communities
- » Devise a **list of five things that define useful and safe** gender role dynamics
- » **Initiate conversations** about constructive gender roles that take individuals beyond power towards liberation



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Driving change:

- » Together, **challenging embedded gender role assumptions** to create constructive, supportive relationships and family dynamics that take South Africa beyond power towards liberation

USEFUL AND SAFE GENDER DYNAMICS ARE DEFINED BY:



Respect between partners



Working as a team to support the family



Being **willing to talk** about problems with each other



Taking **decisions together** with your partner



Showing **love and gratitude** for what the other person does in the relationship

MESSAGE THEME:

VICTIM/ PERPETRATOR- CENTRIC FOCUS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » To address the issue of GBVF, **attention needs to focus as much on victims as it does on perpetrators**
- » The centrality of the communication must **focus on the violence itself and the impact of that violence** – not on whether the violence is justified, as it can never be justified
- » **Victim blaming** is fuelled by misperceptions that victims provoke perpetrators and so deserve what they get. This misperception must be vigorously challenged wherever it is found
- » **Victim-empowerment programmes** exist in many communities. These need to be identified and included in the resource toolkit for impacted audiences in the various hotspot communities



KEY MESSAGES

In addressing, curtailing and eventually eliminating GBVF, we must focus on both victim(s) and perpetrator(s) as both are part of the GBVF dynamic

Victim blaming is absolutely unacceptable. It exacerbates the problem and prompts fewer victims to speak up. This, in turn, gives greater cover and power to perpetrators

Vulnerable persons are entitled to feel safe in their homes and communities: moving beyond power towards liberation

Perpetrating men are entitled to exercise constructive masculinity and be a force for good in their homes and communities: moving beyond power towards liberation



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Awareness:

- » GBVF is a **destructive national phenomenon** that severely restricts personal liberties and equalities of all genders and undermines our democracy
- » To eradicate GBVF, we need to **focus as much on victims as on perpetrators**. Essentially, we need to focus on the causes of violence and its impact on families, communities and society



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences

Consideration:

- » **Victim blaming** perpetuates the cycle of GBVF
- » **Perpetrator interventions** may be applied as a preventive step rather than a rehabilitative step
- » **There are tools to address GBVF.** The nation needs to know them and use them



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in hotspots

Call to action

- » Persons who feel at risk of perpetrating GBVF and/or persons who feel vulnerable **must seek help**: in support groups and with enforcement and protective entities
- » **Understand the risks** and protect yourself ... whether you are a perpetrator or a potential victim
- » In this way, your action takes you **beyond power towards liberation**



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Fuelling change

- » We're united in understanding and applying **both a perpetrator- and a victim-centric focus** to address GBVF together

MESSAGE THEME:

TOXICITY IN RELIGION, CULTURE AND TRADITION



KEY MESSAGES

Religion, culture and tradition can never be used as justification for any kind of violence

Faith-based, traditional and cultural leaders have the responsibility to speak out against GBVF perpetrated in the name of culture, tradition and religion

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » Perpetrators often **hide behind religion, tradition and culture** and use religion, tradition and culture to justify their abuse
- » Victims sometimes imagine their **abuse is deserved** because it is said to be condoned and decreed in religion, culture and traditional practices and beliefs
- » Religion, culture and tradition can never, and should never, be used as a **shield/excuse/justification** for one person harming another
- » Culture and religion are **incompatible with destructive, abusive relationships**
- » All persons (whether impacted by GBVF or not) must be encouraged to form their personal and **individual identity outside of culture and religion**
- » Pastors, traditional leaders and other community **leadership forums** are to be encouraged. Urgent (if uncomfortable) conversations need to take place in these forums about GBVF



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Awareness:

- » GBVF is sometimes perpetrated under the **misguided assumption that culture, tradition and religion sanctify and condone it**. This is a false assumption that must be challenged wherever it is encountered
- » **Faith-based, cultural and traditional leaders have a responsibility** to correct this misguided assumption and send a clear message that culture/religion is no excuse ever for GBVF



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences, culture, faith-based and traditional entities and bodies

Consideration:

- » **We cannot allow persons who harm women and children** to do so in the name of our faith, culture and/or tradition.
- » As a traditional, cultural and/or faith-based leader, you have the **clear and unambiguous responsibility** to take a vocal and visible stand and declare that GBVF is wrong
- » You also have a responsibility, and you are called on to **align and unite to protect GBVF victims** and potential victims, and to work to help rehabilitate perpetrators



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in GBVF hotspots, faith-based, cultural and traditional leaders and their communities, congregations

Call to action

- » **Take a stand against GBVF** perpetrated with religion and/or culture as justification
- » **Work with faith-based, cultural and traditional leaders** in your community to devise a simple, easily communicated declaration to decry GBVF under the guise of faith, culture and/or tradition sanction



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Fuelling change

- » We're aligned to **challenge the myth that GBVF is sanctioned by religion, culture and tradition**; and we're ready to confront this assumption wherever it is found in order to stem the tide of violence committed against vulnerable persons

MESSAGE THEME:

BYSTANDER SYNDROME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » Bystander syndrome keeps GBVF in the shadows, making it easier to perpetrate and exposing more women to more violence
- » Persons who are not victims often **choose to stay silent**, even while knowing that violence is taking place
- » Victims stay silent under the mistaken notion that **violence is something they deserve** and have to endure
- » Survivors stay silent because **nobody helped them** when they were victims, so they now do the same to other victims
- » Bystanders often stay silent when the breadwinner perpetrates GBVF for **fear of financial implications** for the family
- » Victims and children are often financially reliant on perpetrators. Because they fear the financial consequences, they remain silent. In addition, families often **victimise whistle-blowers as 'snitches'**, so they remain silent through fear of such reprisal



KEY MESSAGES

Not speaking up when you see or hear or know of GBVF in your community enables the perpetrator and heightens the danger for victims

Don't be silent: speak up against GBVF



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Awareness:

- » Families and communities that **protect perpetrators** need to understand that by remaining silent they perpetuate the cycle of abuse



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences

Consideration:

- » We have to **stop the cycle of abuse by speaking out.** Rehabilitation of perpetrators can only start once they are exposed. Protecting perpetrators we care for is not helping them



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in hotspots

Call to action

- » **Speak out!** If we stand by silently, then we are complicit and the cycle of abuse will continue until you are also affected

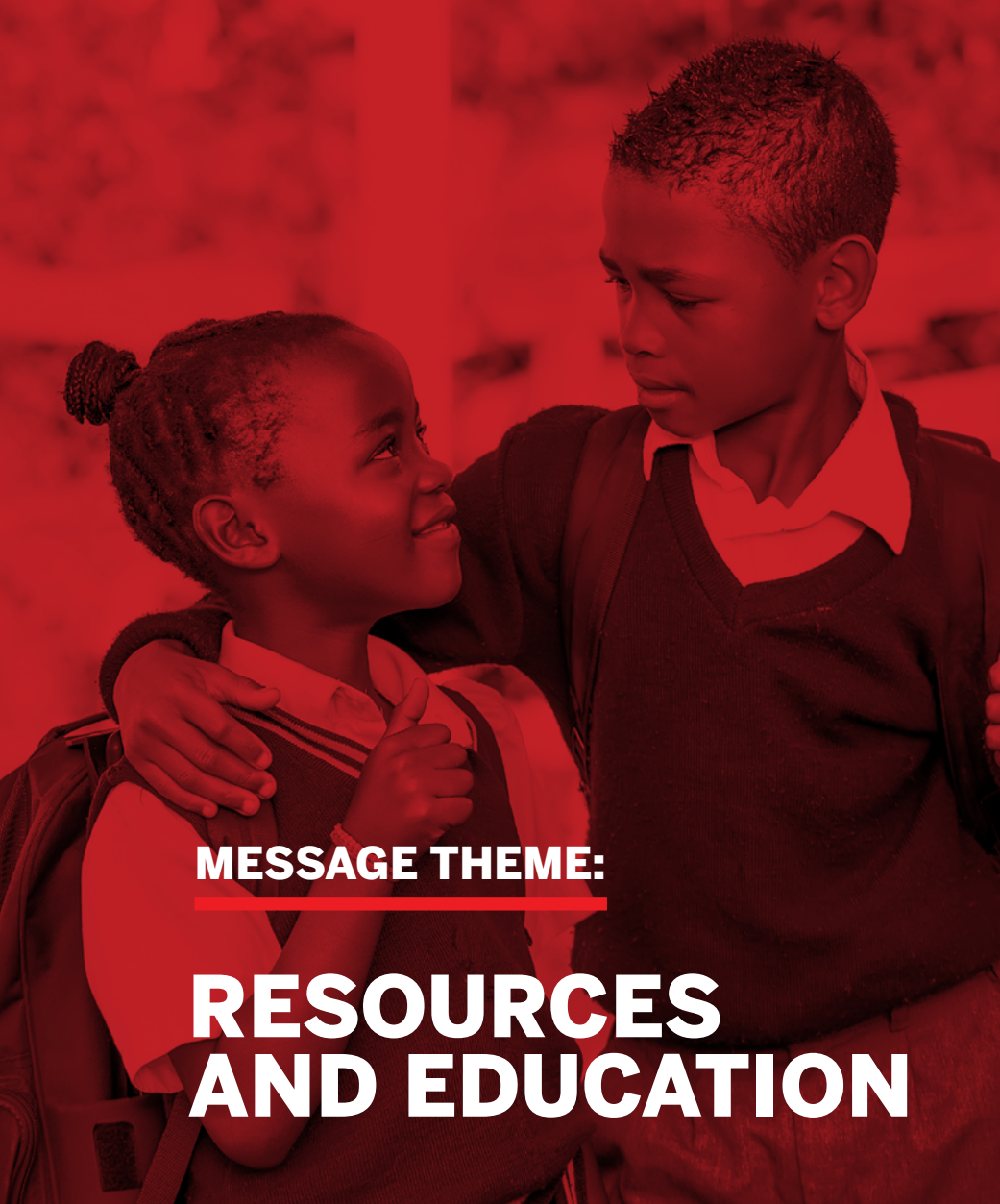


COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Fuelling change

- » The more we **talk about it in our communities**, the more those who are afraid will feel encouraged to speak out



MESSAGE THEME:

RESOURCES AND EDUCATION



KEY MESSAGES

Education on gender roles, individual integrity and the reality of GBVF cannot begin too early: there is a need to introduce these subjects to children at early childhood development, or ECD, stage

The language of GBVF is alienating. It needs to be decoded for accessibility

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » The language of GBVF must be decoded so that it's accessible to all. **Clarity is critical** so that messaging may be universally understood and internalised
- » The term and acronym GBVF, for example, is often seen as jargon, as a **concept that does not apply personally**
- » **Schools are not safe spaces.** Children are vulnerable in the education system. ECD inclusion in message delivery is important so that children understand the dynamics of gender and how to protect themselves
- » Constructive gender understanding needs to be built into the **curriculum**
- » Although the system feels broken, there are many **positive groups and resources** that people are not aware of and need to know about



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Awareness:

- » **Give exposure** to the groups and **resources available** and the impact they are making



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences, especially the education sector and schools

Consideration:

- » Encourage the education system to **talk more freely with learners** about resources and support
- » This issue needs a **common language** which is simple and understood and easy to translate



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in GBVF hotspots, ECD and other schools, educators

Call to action

- » **Spread hope** by telling of the good organisations and resources available to them
- » **Use common language** of the topic and their mother tongue so that the issue becomes more accessible to everyone
- » **Don't shy away** from uncomfortable language



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Fuelling change

- » **Give words to the uncomfortable topics** and champion the partners that are doing great work to support and prevent GBVF



MESSAGE THEME:

THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



KEY MESSAGES

Victims have little faith in a justice system that's inaccessible, flawed and ineffective

The justice system must be accountable. And it must be held accountable for not dispensing justice to GBVF perpetrators

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MESSAGING

- » Justice delayed is **justice denied**
- » To many, the justice system is **flawed and ineffectual**: it is inaccessible to many people, there is poor law enforcement and the referral system seldom works
- » The justice system needs to be **held accountable**
- » We need a **victim-centric justice system**: at present, very few victims trust the system and they do not understand the lingo or processes of justice
- » **Activists need to be visible** in the legal/justice system space in order to give victims evidence of their support
- » The justice system needs to reflect a better **gender balance** and should not resort to **victim blaming or shaming**
- » **Low conviction rates and inadmissible evidence** impede the delivery of justice and reduce faith in the system
- » Community workers and victims need **training or guidelines** on how to articulate the incident properly in a statement so that it becomes a viable case
- » The **South African Police Service (SAPS)** needs **human rights training** and training on how to ask the right questions



UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

All South Africans

Awareness:

- » We need to see the **statistics** (good and bad) in all media (similar to the Covid-19 flux of numbers and cases)



INTERESTED AUDIENCE

Particular regions, economic and public sector audiences, especially the SAPS and judicial systems and personnel

Consideration:

- » The public needs to **hold the justice system accountable** and must demand transparency in the statistics, whether those figures are good or bad



IMPACTED AUDIENCES

Communities on the ground in GBVF hotspots, SAPS offices, courts and victim support groups, rehabilitation and correctional authorities

Call to action

- » **Victims need to be given hope** and need to be educated about the process so that they are more inclined to report incidents
- » **The SAPS and other duty-bearers** need to communicate alongside ambassadors so that the messaging is integrated and aligned with that of the justice system
- » The system is not sufficiently victim-centric; **blaming and shaming** are common ... and unacceptable
- » Duty-bearing entities must invest in strategies for **balanced gender representation**



COMMITTED AUDIENCE

Social workers and partners, fellow ambassadors

Fuelling change

- » Be tenacious and brave in speaking truth to power and **holding direct duty-bearers accountable** – keep asking the questions and demanding the answers