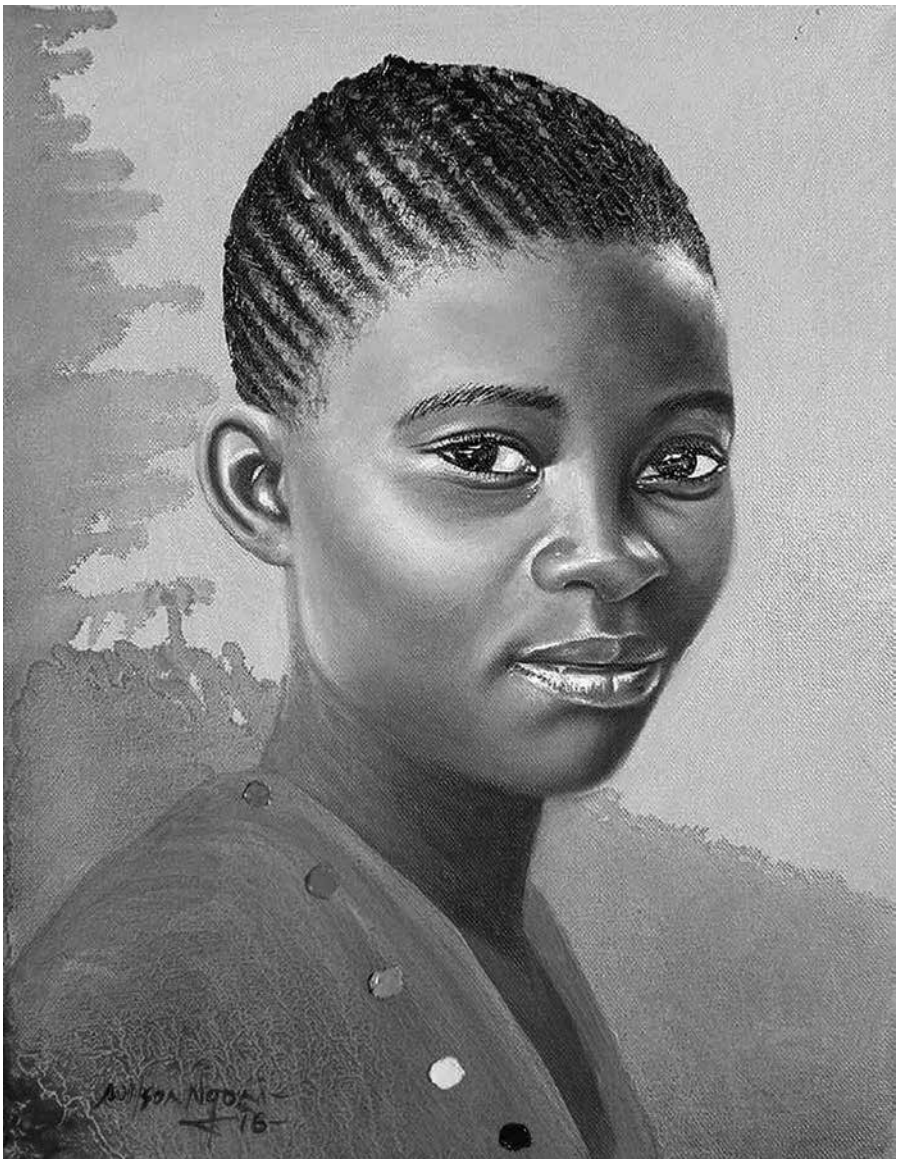
VOICES FROM BOTSWANA

We have survived Gender Based Violence



Produced and facilitated by Gomolemo Rasesigo

Illustrations by Wilson Ngoni

The writers have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity

PREFACE



Ntombi Setshwaelo
Board Member, Gender Links

> 67% of women in Botswana have experienced GBV, while 44% of men admitted to being perpetrators of this offence. **– SADC Gender Protocol 2016 Barometer.**
>
> While this statistic is alarming, several studies backed by empirical evidence, have established that a very high number of cases go unreported by women who have suffered GBV, exemplified by findings of a recent study by Georginah Muchado (2014) that, "…of respondents aged 50 and older in the Northeast District in Botswana, 87 of them have never called the police to stop their partners from hurting them, while 89% have never gone to court for protection from abuse.
> **– SADC Gender Protocol 2015 Barometer**

THESE observations are a serious and damning indictment on our society in this era of our developmental processes, at the personal, social, cultural and political levels.

Considering that it is now common knowledge that the vast majority of women remain in abusive relationships because of economic dependency, all possible efforts have to be made towards the emancipation of women from economic slavery, for the betterment and uplifting of their lives, as well as that of their children who suffer the brunt of such brutality.

Ntombi Setshwaelo
Botswana Board Member
GENDER LINKS

FACILITATOR'S DESK

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE SURVIVORS MOVE ON

Stories, Voices from Botswana, We have survived Gender Based Violence **(GBV) is a collection of success stories from GBV survivors who have decided that enough is enough. They have picked up the pieces and moved on with their lives.**

In this fourth booklet, Gender Links Botswana through its Gender and Local Government Gender Mainstreaming Program trained women from ten districts and equipped them with entrepreneurship skills.

The GBV survivors, a majority of whom had attended Gender Links workshops before were followed up and encouraged to participate in the training. Survivors shared how participating in the Gender Links workshops had helped them to deal with their abuse. They commend the business training which some say has made a difference in their lives.

They hope their stories which have been compiled into this book, will be used as a tool to educate and advocate for other survivors who have not had the opportunity to share their stories and that their experience of GBV will catapult the matter and put it at the top of the country's agenda.

This book brings knowledge and awareness of all forms of abuse, be it sexual, economic, verbal, physical and psychological. But it also brings hope to survivors and those who



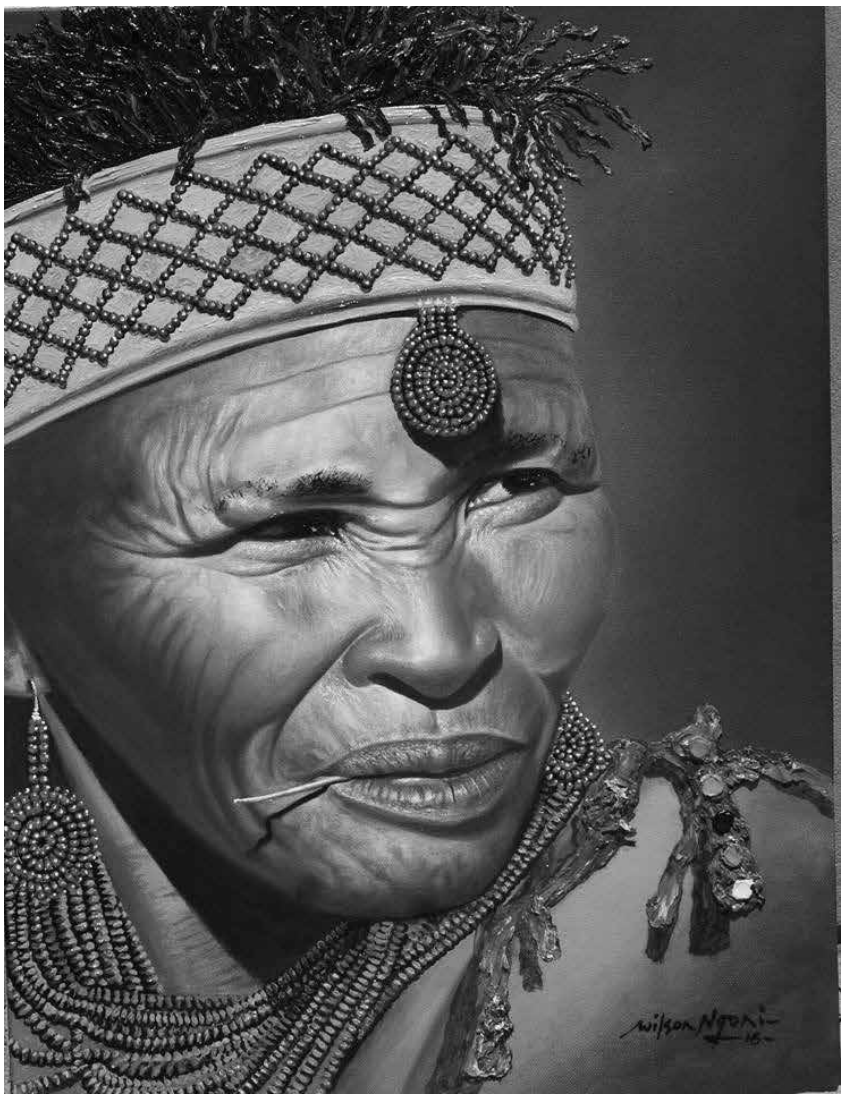
Gomolemo Rasesigo
Botswana Manager, Gender Links

are still being abused. These are stories of hope and show how women have the strength to overcome abuse and adversity if given help.

All they needed was a chance to share the sad reality of what goes on behind closed doors. A platform is given to the women to speak out and it echoes the voices of many other women suffering in silence.

This book like the others before it, puts actual faces to GBV and encourages those who find themselves in the same predicament to seek assistance.

Bobonong "I" STORIES



Abuse is not a personal thing

By Tsabotlhe Lure

I am a 43 year old woman from Sekwadila ward in Bobonong and I attended Gender Links training workshops in 2014.

I realized that I was being abused because I was married to a man who was a bully. He used to tell me that he only married me so that I can do whatever he wants. He would leave me and spent nights away from home with other women and then he got infected with HIV. After he discovered that he was HIV positive he hid his hospital cards and never disclosed his status but had sex with me without using a condom. In 2000 I fell pregnant and the baby was born HIV positive and that was when I found out that I was also infected.

What I have learned is that as long as you are alive you should not give up. I also learned that I could start a business to provide an income for my children and me. I love selling products but did not know how to run a business but now I know all that.

Gender Links business training has changed my life because I can sell without feeling any shame to make a living for children. My husband passed on and life is better now that I am not being abused and my children have also grown up even though they have not yet found permanent jobs.

Personally I think that after going through training we are not provided with what we need like money so that we can start businesses or buy cattle or small stock. People who are still being abused should not be afraid to go to social workers and ask for help.

I am happy about Gender Links training because it has made me such an important person in my society and I can advise people who still do not know, that abuse is not a personal thing it can affect anyone.

Get the bad things out in the open

By Maria Setlhare

I AM A LADY OF 43 years and I enrolled in Gender Links workshops in 2013.

I felt that my world had fallen apart when I found out that my husband was having incestuous relationships with our daughters. The girls were very young, one was 10 years old and the other, 15. He ended up impregnating the 15-year-old and she had a son. I reported the matter to the District Commissioner and my husband was found guilty of incest and was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

I felt like it was the end of the world our world because of what my husband did but Gender Links counseled me. I got motivated and strong and was able to find piece jobs to make a living for my family. I also sold airtime and chicken feet in order to have money to pay for the connection of electricity in our home. I managed to save my profits at home as I could not open a savings account because my application for citizenship has not yet been approved.

I often worry about how our lives are going to be when my husband gets out prison because I wonder what he would have learned whilst there.

The situation of survivors of abuse could be improved if service providers such as social workers, police and others could visit them at their homes to hear about their challenges and to offer advice and guidance

I would tell people who hide or are living with abuse to talk about it, to get all the bad things out in the open so that they can be resolved especially those concerning children.

Start a business and have your own income

By Bogadi Bogosi

I am young a lady of 33 years and I come from Bobonong.

I started participating in Gender Links workshops on the 7th of July 2014 in Bobonong. I was introduced to Gender Links by a social worker after I had confided in him that I had a child when I was very young and I ended up marrying his father. In this marriage I was unable to use my money the way I wanted because my husband made decisions that he like for me. For example he did not want us to leave my parents home even though I had my own house. He also did not want me to go for further education. But I have now managed to do all that.

Gender Links taught me that I had to make decisions for myself in order to get out of an abusive relationship. For instance if you are married and feel that your husband is not treating you well you can have a discussion with him about the issue and tell him how you feel. If there is no improvement in his behavior it is not wrong to think about leaving him. They also encouraged us to look for work or those who have skills can sew, knit, make pottery, work in people's homes or do anything that can make an income.

I thank the social worker who introduced me to Gender Links because I did not know that nothing is impossible if you are responsible. I was able to explain the situation concerning my husband to my parents and how I wanted to handle it. I also talked to my husband and he has stopped his controlling ways. We have moved to my house and I am attending school and he sometimes helps with my schoolwork. We are happily raising our children with a lot of love.

There are organizations such as Emang Basadi and other women's organizations in my village and women in these organizations share ideas about what to do to improve their lives. For example there are metshelo where women form groups to buy household items for each other and some even buy building materials.

I have learned from business training, what I can do to start a business, where I can find financial assistance like from Youth Development Fund or CEDA. I loved learning how to do a business plan, because all businesses need to have one. I helped a young person to do a business plan because he wanted to apply for funding to rear goats and it was approved and he has started the project. I advise people who are still in abusive relationships to get out and engage with social workers to be counseled and I also encourage them to start businesses and have an income.

I thank social workers and Gender Links for allowing me to participate in the abuse and business training workshops. I was able to realize that my challenges were not that bad compared to what other women are going through. I am thankful that I have already started a business, as it had never occurred to me in the past that I could have one.


Wilson Ntoni