

Empowering Women - Ending Violence in Botswana



Gladys Simon speaking at the 2015 Gender Protocol@Work Summit in Botswana.
Credit: Gender Links

During the 2015 Gender Protocol@ Work Summit held in Botswana the shy **Gladys Simon** stood in front of hundreds of participants and declared: "I have learnt that I do not need a man in my life to survive" She highlighted how she learnt to survive with her children after their father deserted her. She had suffered abuse at his hands.

In 2005 she had started a landscaping company as her passion lay in tree planting and she was not able to make any profit out of it. She said she almost gave up on her dream. "GL gave me a new lease of life. I felt that for the first time the workshop was about making a difference in my life. Unlike all the other training I had attended GL followed us up and cared that we succeeded. I have managed to revive my company. I am now able to keep the books and save money. Ministers have visited my business and donated much needed equipment. I am now able to encourage and empower others. My life has improved a lot and I managed to put a roof over my family. I am able to provide for their needs and I no longer beg for help from people." The participants gave Simon a huge hand of applause. In his speech the Vice president of Botswana Hon. Mokgweetsi Masisi applauded Simon for her perseverance. At the regional SADC Protocol@ Work summit in Botswana in August 2014, Simon won the award in the category of existing businesses, against competition from nine other countries.

KEY FACTS

- 109 survivors of gender based violence (GBV) in 10 councils in Botswana have been trained as entrepreneurs.
- 100% completed a business plan and 56% followed through on the plan.
- 37% grew their businesses, 33% started a new business and 29% found new markets.
- 78% perceived a positive change in their financial circumstances, 27% added new products and 24% opened bank accounts.
- Average monthly income among participants in Botswana increased by P401. Overall the project resulted in a P380,544 increase in annual income.
- 59% added new products and 54% found new markets; 48% indicated starting a new business and 29% increased the size of their business; 41% opened a bank account and 35% increased email usage.
- 96% of participants said they now experience less or much less GBV. The average Botswana score of 82% for relationship control is the highest in the region.
- Gender attitudes as measured by the Gender Progress Score (GPS) rose from 61% to 62%. At 75% the participants had a GPS of 14 percentage point higher than their communities.
- Participants gave the programme an overall rating of 92%.

Gender Links (GL) is a Southern African NGO committed to an inclusive, equal and just society in the public and private space in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that is being updated in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, Beijing Plus Twenty and Africa Agenda 2063. GL coordinates the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance and works to achieve the 2030 targets of the Protocol in its core media, governance and justice programmes.

Why this project?

Since its founding in 2001 GL has worked with over 2000 women in documenting their experiences of Gender based Violence (GBV). GL has also conducted GBV prevalence surveys in Mauritius, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho that that one in four (Mauritius) to four in five women (Zambia) have experienced gender violence. The most likely forms of violence are also those least likely to be reported to the police - economic, psychological and verbal abuse. Many women spoke about staying in or returning to abusive relationships because they lacked

“My business has not grown as I would like but I do make money that I bank at the post office. I am trying to save so that I can grow my business because I have had challenges with getting funds to improve my business. With the knowledge I got from Gender Links I always ensure that I do not use all the money for the business but rather save some. I am grateful that now I can support my family and buy groceries, clothes and pay school fees. I now keep financial records indicating income and payments.”
Cecilia Webb from Ghanzi, Botswana

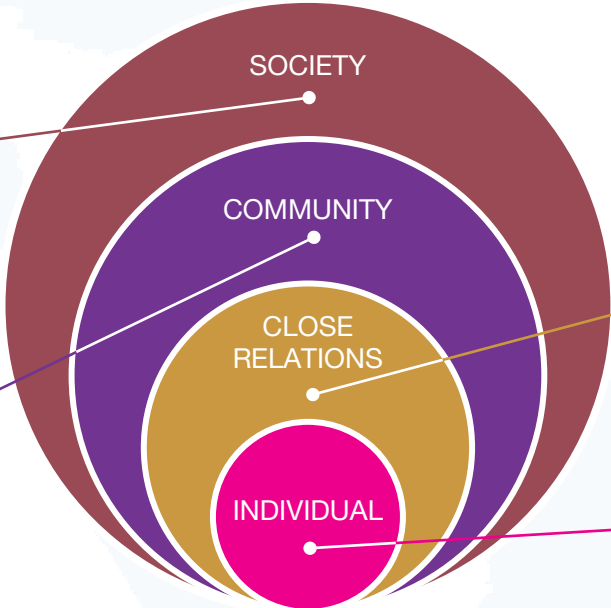
economic independence or experienced financial control as a form of abuse. GL set out to test the links between economic empowerment and ending GBV.

What the project involved

The programme focusses on an integrated approach of life skills and entrepreneurship training including confidence building; decision making, business management, use of IT, networking and addressing the underlying structural inequalities between men and men. Informed by the ecological theory of change, the project aims at addressing power relations at an individual, personal relationship, community and societal levels.

Public realm of power - policy/strategy to meet the needs of women in business - access to assets, financial services and business development opportunities

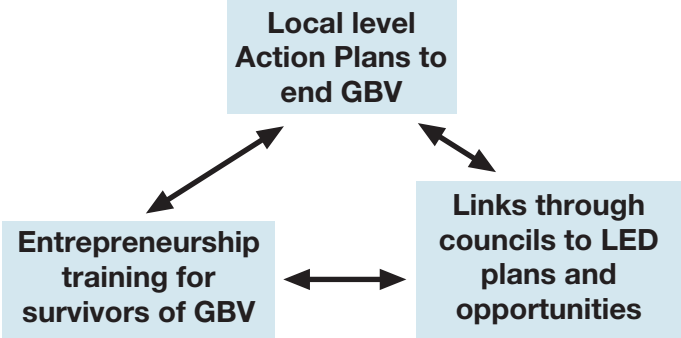
Community realm of power - local government, private sector, NGOs and funders support



Private realm of power - economic GBV as a form of control

Intimate realm of power - creating a belief in ability to achieve economic independence

Key partners in the project included 10 councils in each of ten Southern African countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) that form part of the Centres of Excellence for Gender in Local Government. The councils helped to identify participants, improve access to markets, infrastructure, finance, mentorship and support. Altogether councils provided 574982 pula in support of the COE programme in Botswana in cash and in kind such as the provision of free venues. and market gap which I apply on my business today. I want to see my business growing.



Key results

Some important outcomes are demonstrated in the personal accounts of participants through “I” stories and interviews:

“I have realised that there is a link between gender based violence and economic empowerment because when you are **financially independent** you do not annoy anyone by asking for this and that. You buy what you want when you want it with your own money and within your means. Women in my community love to associate with me. They heard about me on radio. They also want to meet with GL officers as they too want the same lessons as given to me by GL.”
Sense Mokoti from Chobe Council, Botswana

Many of the women have expressed having **more self-confidence** because they have learned more about GBV and running a business which has given them more status in their homes and the community. “My challenges was that I was living with a man whose was very abusive and because I loved him I didn't see his abusive behaviour as anything violent to me. I ended up deciding to break up with this man as I feared for my life. I reported the matter to the relevant authorities. I am no longer abused; I had to

stand up for myself to be a winner. My family and friends are happy for the decision that I have made. My knowledge of women's empowerment has helped me to reduce abuse. I am not scared to share or talk about how I managed to go through all the abuse in my life. Most of the people in our country are scared to come forward and seek help when they are being abused.”

Shally Bridget Gontho from Lobatse, Botswana

In some cases survivors have been able to **provide jobs** for others in their community. “Before Gender Links I had experienced violence from my husband and family members even from some members in my community. They called me names because I was a beggar, a shebeen queen and when times were very tough I also resorted to selling dagga. But since I met Gender Links I am my own boss. I do not experience physical abuse nor do I experience emotional abuse. There is change in my life, I own my own private company and I am the sole owner and I create jobs for Batswana men and women. I also encourage other people to go green and have their own back yard gardens and nurseries to generate income.”
Gladys Simon - Chobe, Botswana



Gladys Simon now runs a flower business and arranged flowers for the National Summit in Gaborone 2014.
Credit: Gender Links

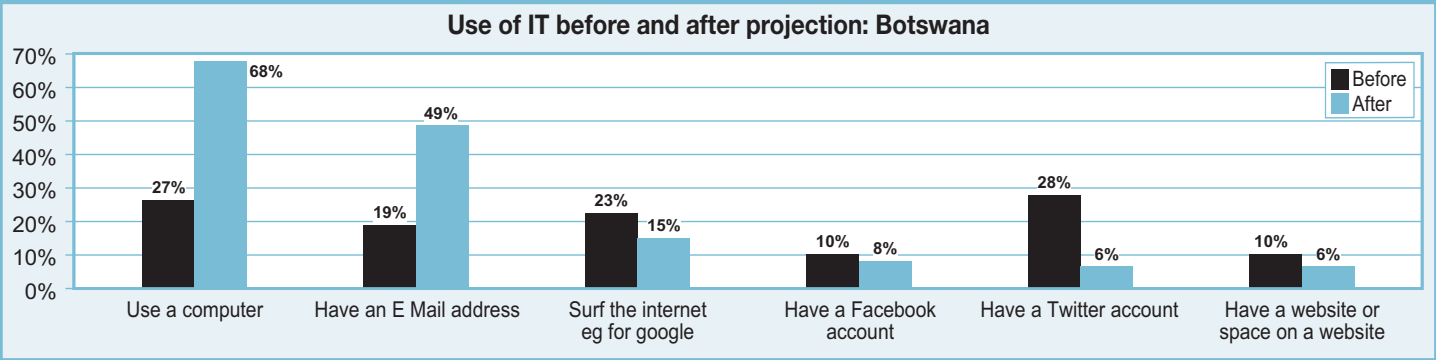
Before the project started some of the women were already running small businesses and have said they have been able to **improve how they run the businesses**. “Before the training I was dependent on my family and I ran the business at a loss but after going through the training there was a difference. I can now pay school fees for my son and be able to give him all the support he needs. The courses have given me ideas about market research and market gaps which I apply in my business today. I want to see my business growing. In the near future I would like to have a chain of stores.”

Gontle Motang from Goodhope, Botswana

One of the main aims of the project was to **increase survivor's personal agency** and many have indicated positive changes in their relationships. “I did not give up in life despite all he put me through. Rather I showed him that I can do just fine without him by my side. All this education helped me reduce the abuse in my life and helped me become the person I am today. I managed to change because now

I do not depend on a man for anything; rather I am now able to support my children with the little I get. At times people I live with ask me how I manage without working and without a man by my side but I always tell them; it's because I have accepted the situation.”

Boineelo M. Bareng - Kanye, Botswana



Source: Gender Links.

The programme brought about a significant change in **IT skills**. As illustrated in the graph, 68% women now use a computer compared to 27% at the start of the project. 49% have access to E Mail (compared to 13% at the start). 15% surf the internet (compared to 19% at the start). 8% now have a website or space on a website, compared to 10% at the start. It appears that some of the women no longer had access to the internet and this was because some could no longer afford it, mainly because they parted ways with the man who was the provider. Some no longer had time to access the internet since they had to work extra hours to provide for their families.

The programme has helped Centres of Excellence for Gender in local government **to put their gender action plans to work**. Lobatse is an example of a supportive council: “Since drawing the action plan we have been very lucky to have leaders who fully support the quest to empower women in Lobatse. We have managed not only

to build a strong Council gender committee but a strong District gender committee as well. Many of the activities that were not done previously have been able to surface because of the action plan which we use to draw annual



Lobatse Town council receiving a certificate as winner in the category of best COE at the District Level Summit in Mahalapye, Botswana.
Credit: Gender Links

activities. The council has also been quite proactive in considering women for job opportunities especially management positions; such as the Town Clerk and mayoral positions. We are currently working on enrolling more women into our economic empowerment projects. This action comes as a result of the entrepreneurship programme being carried out in partnership with Gender Links.”

Kutlo C. Mophalane, Lobatse Town Council

Gender Links measures **progress in gender attitudes in communities**. Gender attitudes as measured by the Gender Progress Score (GPS) rose from 61% to 62%. At 75% the participants had a GPS of 14 percentage point higher than their communities. These positive trends suggest that if the programme is sustained, it will contribute to the broader goal of ending gender violence, community, by community.

These are fundamental changes in the lives of the participants, their families, communities and local government structures which together have the power to end GBV through changes in survivor's individual, close relationships, communities and societal areas of change. This project has shown that possibility of ending GBV through

the combination of life skills and entrepreneurship development within a framework of community and local participation to change lives and mainstream women.

Lessons learned and how they will be applied

- Working closely with Gender focal persons and locking in their commitment for better results.
- Identifying needs for each council and tailor making possible solutions to facilitate links and sustainability of the project and the women's business aspirations.
- Choosing participants more carefully and supporting them holistically for the workshop period to maximise impact of the training including working with their families.
- Strengthening links with potential support for the women in councils.
- Introducing of communities of business women and peer mentorship for learning, sharing and networking.
- Identifying potential sources of funding has been difficult and needs to be a focus issue with each new council and as a key issue in the post 2015 agenda for the economic mainstreaming of women in SADC.

KEY INDICATORS

Indicator	Botswana	Lesotho	Madagascar	Mauritius	Mozambique	Namibia	South Africa	Swaziland	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Regional total or average
Survivor participation (in Phase 3)	109	130	154	105	220	128	81	140	133	150	1,350
Completed a business plan	100%	99%	96%	81%	80%	95%	79%	81%	98%	98%	91%
Followed a business plan	56%	92%	90%	64%	72%	89%	54%	72%	87%	96%	79%
Average monthly income before the project (Pula)	75	190	396	60	8,80	84	-99,2	165	610	491	216
Average monthly income after the project (Pula)	402	474	761	347	10,40	489	426	280	1,586	1385	615
Increase in average monthly income after training (Pula)	326	285	365	287	1,60	405	525	115	976	894	421
Overall increase in income over one year as a result of the project (Pula)	380,544	426,730	1,277,606	299,846	24,319	779,712	434,314	262,368	2,302,915	2,443,296	8,631,650
Personal agency at the start	74%	72%	81%	83%	76%	69%	74%	71%	76%	77%	76%
Personal agency after the project	79%	76%	84%	83%	73%	73%	77%	74%	77%	80%	78%
Increase or decrease in personal agency	5%	4%	3%	0	-3%	4%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%
Relationship control at the start	70%	49%	65%	65%	69%	65%	65%	63%	50%	52%	62%
Relationship control after the project	82%	60%	70%	68%	73%	64%	65%	68%	60%	54%	66%
Increase or decrease in relationship control	12%	11%	5%	3%	4%	-1%	0	5%	10%	2%	4%
GBV less or much less	96%	93%	94%	92%	66%	81%	74%	86%	97%	91%	85%
Gender Progress Scores in community (baseline in brackets)	62% (61%)	73% (66%)	65% (65%)	57% (56%)	67% (56%)	60% (59%)	62% (65%)	64% (57%)	59% (61%)	61% (59%)	63% (61%)
Gender Progress Score of participants	75%	66%	73%	82%	64%	65%	72%	70%	71%	70%	70%
Contribution in kind from councils (Pula)	5,4982	312,800	271,137	1,369,383	26	131,473	8,000	432,720	866,978	780,726	4,748,656
Rating of council support	44%	38%	70%	50%	70%	50%	38%	56%	52%	76%	54%
Overall rating of the project	92%	84%	87%	92%	95%	82%	84%	84%	89%	90%	89%

Source: Gender Links.

Botswana participants scored the project at 92% (2% higher than the regional average) and the second highest in the region. Relationship control at 82% is the highest score obtained (16% higher than the regional average). An increase of 5% in personal agency also exceeds to regional score of 2%.

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