

# Partnerships for Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls in Southern Africa

Lesotho: ‘Nokaneng’ – Breaking the Silence on Violence Against Women and Girls

## Confronting the Challenge

In Southern Africa, gender-based violence (GBV), especially violence against women and girls (VAWG), is among the most **severe and wide-spread human rights violations**. The prevalence and acceptance of VAWG is high in international comparison. A study by Gender Links shows that 86% of women in Lesotho have experienced GBV in their lifetime, and over 50% of women experienced Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The VAWG epidemic poses a serious obstacle for efforts to achieve global, regional and national development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

The GBV situation in Lesotho is characterized by **stigmatisation of GBV survivors**, who are blamed for the violence they experience, even among women, who show high levels of acceptance of VAWG. Women and girls often remain silent because of the fear of revictimization as well as their individual feelings of shame and embarrassment of their experience of violence. At the same time, there is **lack of private and public discourse** on GBV that could stimulate a change in social norms that perpetuate VAWG.

## Building Partnerships

Considering the magnitude of VAWG in Southern Africa, a broad-based effort is required. The programme supports the formation of **multi-stakeholder initiatives** that leverage financial and technical contributions from governments, civil society organisations, private sector companies, the media and academia.

Flagship name	Nokaneng - Breaking the silence on VAWG
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Lesotho
Key stakeholders	The Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation, Lesotho Council of NGOs, Gender Links, Vodacom Lesotho Foundation, Vodacom Lesotho
Duration	12/2017 – 11/2020



The ‘Nokaneng’-flagship brings together government, non-governmental and private actors and supports their joint efforts towards reducing the acceptability of VAWG. PfP closely works together with The Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation to ensure buy-in and to align ‘Nokaneng’ with other ongoing initiatives. Through Vodacom, the project has secured in-kind contribution and parallel financial support to develop digital solutions (i.e. App- and SMS-based systems). A consortium of civil society organizations implements community-based interventions, while media actors are engaged to spread messages through the radio. Selected stakeholders form an Advisory Group to steer the initiative.



Photo left: Users of the Nokaneng App © GIZ

## Taking Action

The 'Nokaneng'-flagship project seeks to sensitize women, stimulate conversations and build solidarity among women and girls around VAWG. The flagship project is conceptualized as a nationwide initiative with three interlocking components, whereby standardised messages will be delivered to different target audiences through various channels. A series of video clips on the story of survivors' empowerment is at the core of the information to be disseminated. The episodes form the basis for conversations on VAWG.

**Digital/mobile solutions** consisting of a smartphone application and a feature phone solution/SMS will provide information on GBV, rights for women and girls, available services for survivors, and a forum for exchange and peer support. Complementary approaches through SMS will be implemented to reach women and girls without access to the internet and smartphones.

In the second component, a **radio soapie** will be aired on a national radio station with the aim to broaden the means of communication on GBV and to stimulate conversation among the broader society.

Thirdly, the audio clips of the soapie and videos within the smartphone app will be used for **community-based sessions** facilitated by civil society.

Further activities at community level will be to engage gate-keepers (religious leader, media and chiefs) to spread messages that will positively influence attitudes of women and girls, men and boys. Linkages with a sister-flagship project focusing on men will also be strengthened with the aim of a holistic approach to prevention of VAWG.

## Sharing Evidence

Despite global investment and publications that demonstrate progress in the past years, **evidence on which approaches are effective in preventing VAWG** - in which context, under which conditions and by means of which processes - is still much needed to inform policy-making and programme development.

The PfP flagship projects will be accompanied by operational research to **create relevant and practice-oriented information** through different forms of evaluations as well as lessons learned-studies that document processes and results. This will help to better understand what works under which conditions and provide useful information on how to replicate interventions.

The findings and lessons learnt will be documented and publicised so that they are shared among and used by practitioners in Southern Africa (research uptake). To this end, the programme will also support specific formats for **regional exchange** to promote scaling-up.

Published by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
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 Layout: GIZ  
 As at: July 2019  
 GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation  
 and Development (BMZ)

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