



YOUTH STUDIOS

Newsletter Edition 4
October - December
2023



THE FUTURE IS COLOURFUL!

We took time to CELEBRATE our young, colourful clients' wonderful achievements- the BRAVERY it took to try something new, the GROWTH that came with consistency, and the COMMUNITY that you formed when you shared your struggles and your triumphs with other young people around you.

December saw us come together in all our wonderful colours to celebrate the graduates from Mebala's various programs. Participants from the Futuremakers Aspiring Entrepreneurs Program, Start-Up Growth Program, Business Finance Management Program, ESG Bootcamp, and our Social Sewing Program all received Certificates of Completion from their various programs. We are immensely proud of all the hard work from our students, and from the whole Mebala team.



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INVEST TO PREVENT



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INVESTING IN PREVENTION OF GBV

CAMPAIGN PRODUCED BY: NEO MOKGOSI MEBALA YOUTH STUDIOS BRAND AND MARKETING OFFICER

The 2024 theme for The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence was **"Invest To Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls"**.

In heeding this call, Mebala Youth Studios partnered with the Rotary Club of Gaborone and Agora Club to create a 16 Days Sewing Program, in which we trained 16 young women from the Gaborone West community basic sewing skills, teaching them how to sew re-usable fabric sanitary pads. The training sessions were facilitated by Linda Kleynhans; she and the girls formed a special bond over the time they all spent together.

This program intended to empower the young women with a technical skill that will enable them to earn money. It was also intended to address Period Poverty and environmental sustainability by educating our young ladies on eco-friendly menstrual products and reducing shame around menstruation.



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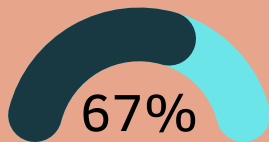
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Rotary
Club of Gaborone

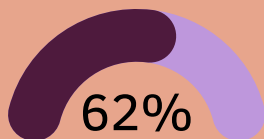


THE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE INDICATOR STUDY BOTSWANA

A representative sample of 639 women and 590 men across Botswana completed questionnaires in their preferred local language on behaviour and experiences related to GBV .



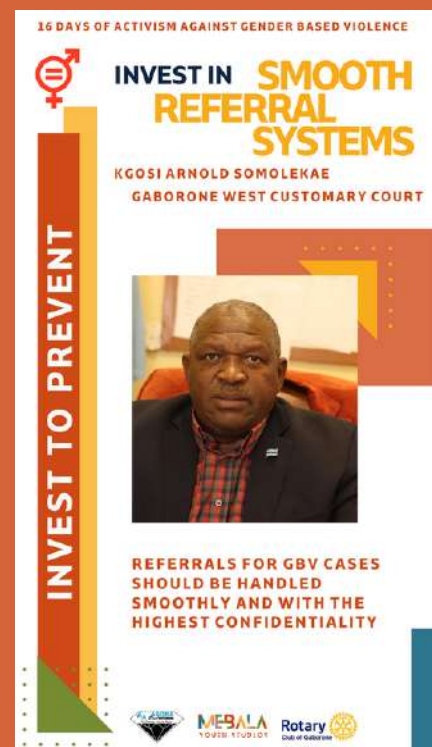
Of all women interviewed in the study 67% had experienced some form of GBV in their lifetime, while 44 % of all men said they perpetrated some form of violence.



The most common form of GBV experienced by women is Intimate Partner Violence with 62% women reporting lifetime experience.

Link to the study:

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/bw/GBV-Indicators-Botswana-report.pdf>




16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

**INVEST IN
CONSENT**


NATURE INGER

CREATE CONSENT CULTURE

INVEST TO PREVENT



**IT'S IMPORTANT TO
KNOW THAT YOU ARE
ALLOWED TO
WITHDRAW YOUR
CONSENT AT ANY TIME.**



The second part of our activities around 16 Days was to create a social media campaign discussing the theme of 'Invest to Prevent'. We interviewed different individuals and organizations and asked where they think we need to be investing in order to prevent violence against women and girls in Botswana.

As of 2023, Botswana has the highest rape incidence rate per capita. This statistic is alarming for numerous reasons; we are known to be a peaceful country the world over. The high rates of violence against women and girls in Botswana affects all spheres of social life, and the situation demands to be met with the utmost seriousness.

One of the problems we feel contributes to such high rates of GBV and such passive response to the situation is the use of language around gender based violence and sexual assault in our community. Statutory rape is often named as 'Teen Pregnancy' or reported in a 'Sugar Baby / Sugar Daddy' framework. Women are disrespected in their homes and workplaces; and that disrespect lays the groundwork for further violations of women's dignity and safety.

It is difficult for women who experience domestic abuse and sexual assault to find places of safety because they are often financially dependent on the people abusing them. Whether the abuser is a family member, a colleague or someone else, financial instability is an aggravating factor because often choices that guarantee safety will require some money.


16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

**INVEST IN
ENFORCEMENT OF
LAWS**


GAONE MORUTI

ROTARACT CLUB OF GABORONE

INVEST TO PREVENT



**THE SAME WAY LAWS AND
RULES WERE MADE TO BE
ENFORCED DURING COVID-
19, WE CAN MAKE AND
ENFORCE STRICT LAWS FOR
PERPETRATORS OF GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE.**



Participants in our campaign included the following incredible individuals:

Mr Topiwa Chilume, attorney and Chairman of the Board at Mebala Youth Studios,

Nature Inger, an activist currently running a project called Create Consent Culture funded by the US Embassy,

Chipo Gaobatwe, President of the Rotary Club of Gaborone

Kgosi Arnold Somolekae, Chief of the Gaborone West Customary Court,

Chirwah Mahloko, Human Rights advisor from Stepping Stones International

Gaone Moruti, Rotaract Club of Gaborone

Tumelo Tsele, founder of Boseja Girls NGO

Warona George, Criminologist and Youth Development Advocate


Thabi Letsunyane, activist against Gender Based Violence

Ludah Gaabinelwe, President of Agora Morula Club


Tumo Moremedi, an artist and debate coach

Charity Chinsinga, Centre and HR Manager at Mebala Youth Studios

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE




 **INVEST IN REPORTING**

TOPIWA CHILUME
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AT
MEBALA YOUTH STUDIOS




INVEST TO PREVENT

WE KNOW EACH CIRCLE OF FRIENDS OR A FAMILY UNIT HAS SOMEBODY WHO IS AN ABUSER- AT LEAST ONE- AND WE DON'T REPORT THEM. WE MAKE EXCUSES FOR THEM.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE




 **INVEST IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES**

CHIPO GAOBATWE
PRESIDENT OF ROTARY CLUB OF
GABORONE



INVEST TO PREVENT

INVEST IN YOUR SOCIAL STRUCTURES, BECAUSE WE COME FROM COMMUNITIES.



INVEST IN GIRLS

TUMELO TSELE
BOSEJA GIRLS

INVEST TO PREVENT



WHEN YOU EMPOWER A GIRL,
WHEN YOU EDUCATE HER,
WHEN YOU ENGAGE HER- YOU
ARE NOT ONLY EDUCATING HER
FOR HERSELF, BUT YOU ARE
EDUCATING THE WORLD
GLOBALLY.



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INVEST IN FAMILIES

CHIRWAH MAHLOKO
HUMAN RIGHT ADVISOR AT
STEPPING STONES INTERNATIONAL

INVEST TO PREVENT



IF WE MAKE HOMES SAFE
FOR CHILDREN, THEY WILL
GROW UP IN VIOLENT-FREE
HOMES AND, IN TURN, NOT
PERPETUATE GBV.



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Some of the areas for investment highlighted by participants in our campaign includes the following:

- Teaching consent from childhood;
- Educational and empowerment programs for women and girls;
- Accessible sexual and reproductive health services;
- Employment and entrepreneurship training and skills development in order to enable women to earn an income and reduce their dependence on potential abusers;
- Holding perpetrators and their enablers accountable both socially and legally;
- Educating the public about the Domestic Violence Act and how it is enforced in Botswana;
- Encouraging inter-generational conversations about gender-based violence;
- Investing in social workers and other social structures designed to support families and communities; and
- Heavy investment in engaging men and boys on the subject of gender-based violence and it's impact.

These interventions require sustained investment over a number of years if we hope to see any progress in our fight against gender-based violence. As Mebala Youth Studios, we commit to continuing the "Invest To Prevent" campaign for the rest of 2024 to highlight and draw attention to this issue as a priority of national interest, particularly for the youth. We need our young people to be informed and engaged if we wish to end this scourge in our communities.

"Invest in girls. I will definitely say we should invest in girls because when we invest in girls we not only invest in her alone, but we invest in her family, we invest in her community, and ultimately the whole nation."

Tumelo Tsele
Boseja Girls

I believe that we should also invest in the enforcement of laws regarding Gender Based Violence because the same way laws and rules were made to be enforced during COVID-19, we can use that same style and same approach to enforce and make strict laws for perpetrators of Gender Based Violence. Because what are we if we are not going to make sure that our people are safe, our women are safe, our children and even other men are safe."

Gaone Moruti
Rotaract Gaborone

"There is a need for investment in families to make sure that families are a safe place for children to be brought up in, and be moulded to have a behaviour that will end GBV. If we make homes safe for children, these will be children who grow up in violence-free homes and in turn they will also not perpetuate GBV."

Chirwah Mahloko
Stepping Stones International

Invest in your social structures, because we come from communities."

Chipo Gaobatwe
President of Rotary Gaborone

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

 **INVEST IN INVOLVING MEN AND BOYS**

THABI LETSUNYANE
ACTIVIST AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

INVEST TO PREVENT



WE NEED TO INVEST HEAVILY IN BRINGING MEN AND BOYS TO THE PARTY AND HAVING THEM PLAY THEIR PART AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

 **INVEST IN ACCOUNTABILITY**

WARONA GEORGE
CRIMINOLOGIST AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE

INVEST TO PREVENT



WE NEED TO INVEST IN ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES THAT MAKE SURE THAT PERPETRATORS DO NOT GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERPETRATE.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE



INVEST IN CONVERSATIONS

TUMO 'FANGZ' MOREMEDI
MUSICIAN AND DEBATE COACH



WE'RE LIVING IN A
COUNTRY THAT'S
DEALING WITH A
PANDEMIC OF GBV



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YOUTH STUDIOS



INVEST TO PREVENT

365 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



INVEST IN BEING OPEN

LUDAH GAABINELWE
PRESIDENT OF AGORA MORULA
CLUB IN BOTSWANA



LET'S TAKE OURSELVES JUST
AS YOUTHFUL AS OUR KIDS
SO THAT WE OPEN THAT
ROOM FOR THEM TO BE FREE
TO TALK, TO BE OPEN TO SAY
THEIR VIEWS AND OPEN UP
TO US



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INVEST TO PREVENT

"The reporting- the actual processing once such matters have been reported. Particularly for women- I'm not saying men can't be abused too, but in the case of women where they report- is it conducive? Is it safe? Do they feel comfortable? So we need to feed into what the Government has done for us and also make the situation conducive for such incidents to be reported. And I think once the reporting is at that level it also acts as a deterrent for would-be perpetrators of gender based violence."

Topiwa Chilume

Chairman of Mebala Youth Studios Board

"Age appropriate education surrounding consent really means that every child at every age is able to understand and grasp the concept really really easily. It is 100% a fact that consent can be taught at any age. I think there is a lot of fear and concerns that issues of sex or a sexual nature will be discussed with children and that is simply not the case at all.

Programs like this have had incredible results around the world, for example in Nairobi Kenya, one such program - run by an organization called No Means No - ended up showing results of 50% reduction in rape in that society, as well as a 49% reduction in teenage pregnancies. We really hope to achieve similar results here in Botswana and I would love to see the Government invest in such programs and projects all around Botswana so that we are able to reach everybody."

Nature Inger

Create Consent Culture



PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY VALUE CHAIN NETWORKING SESSION

On the 22nd of November 2023, Mebala hosted a Performing Arts Industry Networking Session. Performing artists often feel like they are working in a vacuum with little support. From production and programming to promotion and management, the question was: how can we improve the Performing Arts Industry Value Chain for local artists in Botswana?

Attendees at the session had a wide variety of interests and skills, ranging from copy and script writers to production companies, actors, graphic designers and more. Like most industries, the Creative Arts industry needs many different people to work together in order to create a high value industry that is able to sustain livelihoods.

Part of the reason why young creative people struggle to generate value in the Botswana economy is because many of them are isolated and operating in silos. Many creative practitioners don't know each other, and don't know what services and resources are available to people in their industry.

We need numerous and regular networking sessions where people with complementary skills can get to know each other, and share knowledge, skills and resources.





DISCOVERING AFRICA'S VIBRANT YOUTH

Venida Hudley undertook an incredible journey in 2023. After working in a billion dollar technology company, and working in the tech industry for more than 40 years, she set off on her own to explore the African continent. As she shares, African American's are often woefully misinformed about the people, culture and opportunities in Africa due to media that flattens African people with bias about underdevelopment. Stories of violence and crime, hunger and human struggle dominate the international narrative about African countries and their peoples.

Venida seeks to educate her fellow African Americans about the beauty and talent that fills the African continent by travelling to twelve countries and spending a month in each country volunteering with local organizations and creating content designed to educate Americans about Africa. Mebala had the wonderful fortune of meeting Venida on her journey and she generously offered to host a Masterclass on Sales as part of her volunteering efforts. Our attendees got to learn from Venida's years of sales experience in the tech industry, including many tips and tricks of how to learn from your customer about how to better serve them and make your sale!



CREATIVE MASTERCLASS ON HOW TO CREATE A WINNING CREATIVE PORTFOLIO

Mebala Youth Studios was proud to host a Creative Masterclass with the Founder and Creative Director at Indecisive, Ms Moitshepi Mokaila. An inventive powerhouse with skills in design, styling, creative direction and more- Mokaila took us through the ins and outs of How To Create A Winning Creative Portfolio; informed by her experience as a contestant in the Battle of the Ankara fashion competition TV show, and her acceptance to Parsons School of Design in New York.

Moitshepi shared insights from her journey as a designer; from applying to school, competitions, calls for proposals and more, Moitshepi has learnt how to craft and re-craft her portfolio to best suit the submission she is going after.

Our attendees were eager to share examples of their own designs, and we had a fruitful session outlining how to make the most of your existing work, how to get your foot into the door of opportunities, and how to represent yourself and your ideas when you can't be there to explain them. We look forward to having more sessions looking at the creative entrepreneurship journey from all angles.



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Keep connected with us! If you have any questions, ideas, information or partnership proposals, please give us a shout!

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SOCIAL LINKS

<https://www.youtube.com/@mebalayouthstudios>

**16 DAYS OF
ACTIVISM AGAINST
GBV CAMPAIGN**

<https://t.ly/GnJVk>

**SALES MASTERCLASS
AUDIO LIVESTREAM**

<https://t.ly/m73jH>