

The National Shelter Movement of South Africa

**Who is NSMSA, what do
we do and how to partner
with the organisation
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Why are we here

- No one really wants shelters as this is a sign that something has gone wrong
- The female homicide rate in South Africa is roughly 24.6 per 100,000 population—nearly six times the global average.
- Despite enacted legislation and general government action, there has only been a 6% decrease in rape rates in South Africa since 1996.
- Roughly 28% of South African men admitted to raping at least one woman, and 46% of those admitted to being repeat offenders; further, 7.7% admitted to raping ten or more women or girls.
- Patriarchal culture and the historical precedent of inequality have exacerbated the inequality that exists between men and women in South African society.
- When viewed holistically, it is clear that the effects of gender-based violence influence all members of society, not just women.
- Mitigating gender-based violence requires treating it as a societal problem rather than assuming it is a "women's issue." Engaging men and empowering women in the fight for gender equality produces results—in communities where men are educated about gender-based violence, the status of women improves.

Sheltering Services

- "Shelters play a fundamental, mitigating role in responding to, and addressing, violence against women and their children. Shelters offer safe accommodation, they provide opportunities for healing and re-building, and play a significant role in interrupting and breaking the cycle of violence."
- Shelters provide critical services to those undergoing high levels of trauma – they provide a safe place to stay, psycho-social support, access to medical and para-legal services, skills development initiatives, and services to children. Shelter services to victims of domestic violence thus play a critical role in the care economy. Unfortunately, much of the services provided by the care economy are under-valued and under-resourced.

Who are we

- The National Shelter Movement of South Africa (NSMSA) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization serving as an umbrella body for 96 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Shelters across South Africa.
 - Head office is in Johannesburg
 - 3 Executive members
 - Dr Dangor – Head of the Executive
 - Advocate Bernadine Bachar
 - Anisa Moosa – National Co-Ordinator
 - 6 administrative staff
 - 9 provincial representatives
 - 98 shelters
- Established in 2008 during a national conference of shelters
- The NSMSA operates with provincial representatives elected to advocate and address the pressing issues surrounding gender-based violence and sheltering.

Vision and Mission of the NSMSA

- The VISION of the NSMSA is a society where women and their children are free and safe from gender-based violence.
- The MISSION of the NSMSA :-
 - is the united voice on sheltering of women survivors of gender-based violence and their children in South Africa.
 - It achieves this by engaging in
 - Direct service provision
 - Engaging in lobbying and advocacy at provincial and national levels
 - Policy and legislative changes
 - Networking with local, provincial, national and international stakeholders, and
 - Capacity building on gender-based violence
 - Research

Goals

- 1. Advocate & Lobby: The NSMSA advocates for legislative reforms and policy changes that safeguard the rights and interests of GBV survivors. It lobbies tirelessly for increased funding, improved resources, and heightened awareness surrounding GBV issues.
- 2. Establish Provincial Shelter Networks: Recognising the power of collaboration, the NSMSA fosters provincial shelter network forums to facilitate knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and coordinated responses to GBV crises at the grassroots level.
- 3. Ensure Gender Sensitivity: Central to its ethos is the commitment to ensuring gender sensitivity in all aspects of service delivery within shelters. The NSMSA champions programs and initiatives that empower survivors, foster resilience, and promote healing from trauma.

Goals

- 4. Develop Capacity: The NSMSA invests in the continuous professional development of shelter staff, service providers, and GBV workers. Through training, mentorship, and capacity building initiatives, it strives to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of shelter operations nationwide.
- 5. Engage in Legislation: Recognising the pivotal role of legislation in combating GBV, the NSMSA actively engages with policymakers, lawmakers, and stakeholders to shape gender responsive laws and policies that prioritize the safety and dignity of GBV survivors.
- 6. Offer Space - Mutual Support, Shared Experiences, and Common Challenges: NSMSA facilitates a supportive environment where shelter staff and survivors can find solidarity, exchange insights, and address common obstacles, fostering resilience and camaraderie within the sheltering community.
- 7. Conduct Research: NSMSA conducts rigorous research to deepen understanding of gender-based violence and femicide dynamics, inform policy decisions, and advance evidence-based solutions, driving systemic change and empowering stakeholders to better address the complexities of GBVF.

Key Initiatives and Achievements

- **Research Partnerships:** Collaborating with esteemed partners like the Heinrich Boëll Foundation (HBF) and researchers such as Lisa Vetten, the NSMSA has undertaken groundbreaking research projects. These endeavours, including the landmark 'Working to Enhance State Responsiveness to GBV' and 'Costing the Operations of Domestic Violence Shelters' studies, have shed light on the true costs and complexities of GBV sheltering in South Africa
- **Resource Development:** The NSMSA has developed invaluable resources such as the 'Letting our Power Glow' manual, designed to empower survivors with practical tools and psychological support. These resources are deployed across shelters to foster empowerment and resilience among survivors.
- **Capacity Building:** Through targeted capacity-building sessions and mentorship programs, the NSMSA invests in the professional growth and development of shelter staff and service providers. By equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge, the NSMSA aims to enhance service delivery and support mechanisms for GBV survivors.

Key Initiatives and Achievements

- **Advocacy and Awareness:** The NSMSA is at the forefront of advocacy efforts, organising protests, writing open letters to policymakers, and participating in high-profile events such as world conferences on sheltering. These endeavours aim to raise awareness, mobilise support, and drive meaningful change in the fight against GBVF.
- **Emergency Response:** During the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSMSA swiftly mobilised resources and support for shelters facing closures and operational disruptions. Through fundraising efforts and strategic partnerships, it provided critical funding for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and operational costs, ensuring that shelters remained operational and accessible to those in need.
- **Helpline Establishment:** In recognition of the urgent need for accessible support services, the NSMSA established a 24-hour helpline for women and children affected by GBVF. This lifeline provides immediate assistance, facilitates shelter placements, and offers vital support in navigating legal and protective avenues.

Impact and Future Direction

- The NSMSA's tireless efforts have yielded tangible results, fostering greater awareness, resilience, and support for GBVF survivors across South Africa.
- However, the journey toward a society free from violence is far from over.
- The NSMSA remains steadfast in its commitment to amplifying survivor voices, driving policy reforms, and building a future where shelters serve as beacons of hope and healing for all those affected by GBVF. As it continues to evolve and adapt to the changing landscape of GBVF, the NSMSA remains guided by its core principles of solidarity, empowerment, and advocacy. Through collaborative partnerships, innovative solutions, and unwavering dedication, it seeks to pave the way toward a brighter, safer future for women and children across South Africa.

Thank You

Questions and answers