



STEP UP ARK
COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

— PRESENTS —

Gender-Based Violence Guidebook 2025

A TOOLKIT FOR ADDRESSING GBV IN THE HARDAP REGION OF NAMIBIA

MADE POSSIBLE BY

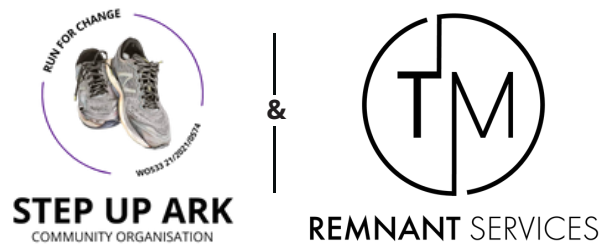


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guidebook is a Namibian made product that was created in Namibia by Step Up Ark Community Organisation (stepupark@gmail.com) with graphic design done by TM Remnant Services (tmulondo@outlook.com).



"All images used in this guidebook were created using Adobe Firefly 's AI Image Generator and then further edited in Adobe Photoshop to enhance the educational material presented.

These visuals aim to support the reader's experience and understanding, in alignment with the book's purpose." As transformative elements, these images therefore fall under fair use guidelines, supporting public education and awareness on gender-based violence in Namibia."

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to:

- The European Union (EU).
- The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
- DW Akademie.
- Namibia Media Trust (NMT).
- Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

This project has been made possible through the generous support of the (EU) European Union and esteemed partners. Their commitment to fostering social development and promoting sustainable initiatives has been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. We appreciate their trust and investment in our vision, which has enabled us to create this guidebook.



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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Step Up Ark Community Organisation and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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“
A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of.

—
- Nelson Mandela

”

INTRODUCTION

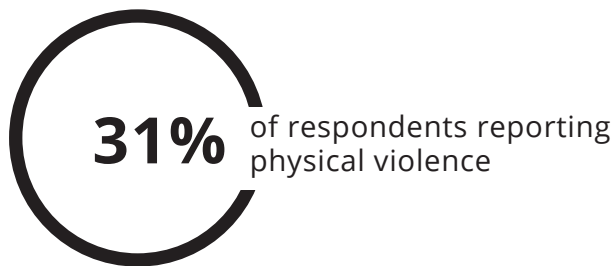
This guidebook serves to equip communities with relevant knowledge, stories and resources about GBV in Namibia. This book aims to address GBV in the Hardap Region through providing resources on various legal processes, storytelling, contact details of organisations to call for assistance, ensuring those affected by GBV know what they can do to escape these conditions.

What is Gender Based Violence?

“All acts perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys on the basis of their sex, which causes or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm, including the threat to take such acts”.

Gender Based Violence is a human rights issue endemic to Namibia and has a direct effect on the wider social and economic development of the country.

According to studies conducted by the World Health Organisation and the Namibian Demographic Survey, over a third of every partnered-woman in Namibia experiences physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner at some point, with:



SOURCES

(Basic understanding of Gender Based Violence, July 2020, Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, Pg 4.)

(Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Namibia: An exploratory assessment and mapping of GBV response services in Windhoek, Pg 1.)



GLOSSARY

Advocacy - Efforts aimed at influencing public policy, raising awareness, and supporting the rights of GBV survivors.

Activism - Actions taken to create social change, often by raising awareness, protesting or engaging communities to combat GBV.

Community Accountability - A collective responsibility within communities to address and prevent GBV, often through support systems and enforcing social norms that discourage violence.

Domestic Violence - Any act of violence within a domestic relationship, including physical, sexual, psychological or economic abuse, as recognized in the Combating of Domestic Violence Act.

Economic Abuse - Control or restriction of a person's financial resources, such as preventing access to money, education or employment, impacting the person's independence.

GBV (Gender-Based Violence) - Violence directed at an individual based on their gender, encompassing various forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, affecting mainly women and girls.

Hardap Region - A region in southern Namibia, noted for its unique cultural and social dynamics, often considered in studies on GBV.

Legal Frameworks - The collection of laws and policies, such as the Combating of Domestic Violence Act and Combating of Rape Act, which define and provide legal responses to GBV.

Legal Processes - The formal procedures survivors undergo to report and seek justice for GBV, including police reporting, obtaining protection orders and court proceedings.

Namibian Demographic Survey - A survey conducted to collect demographic data in Namibia, often highlighting issues like GBV prevalence, poverty and other social challenges.

Passion Killing/Crime of Passion - A violent act, often resulting in death, driven by intense emotional states such as jealousy or anger, typically within romantic relationships. It is a serious crime under Namibian law.

Physical Violence - Any intentional act causing bodily harm to another person, such as hitting, kicking or using force, punishable under Namibian law.

Policies - Official guidelines and measures aimed at preventing GBV, supporting survivors and fostering safe communities, often aligned with international standards.

Psychological Abuse - Forms of mental and emotional harm, such as intimidation, threats, isolation or humiliation, which can significantly impact mental health.

Raise Awareness - Efforts to educate the public about GBV, its effects, and prevention methods to create a more informed and proactive society.

Sexual Violence - Any non-consensual sexual act or attempt, including rape and assault, punishable under the Combating of Rape Act in Namibia.

Survivor - A term for individuals who have endured and overcome experiences of GBV, emphasizing resilience and recovery.

Systemic and Cultural Factors - Social norms, beliefs, and practices that perpetuate GBV, including gender roles, inequality and tolerance for violence in some communities.

World Health Organisation - A global health body that defines and provides statistics and guidelines on GBV, influencing policies and preventive measures worldwide.

Verbal Abuse - A form of psychological abuse involving the use of words to belittle or demean another person causing significant emotional harm, often used to control or intimidate the victim.

1 Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003

The Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003 establishes legal measures to protect men, women and children from domestic violence. It provides clear definitions of domestic violence which includes physical and economic abuse, sexual abuse, harassment and other forms of violence. Facilitates the issuance of protection orders, and mandates police and court responses to incidents of abuse. By promoting awareness and accountability, the Act benefits society by fostering safer home environments, encouraging reporting of abuse, and ultimately working towards the eradication of domestic violence.

Combating of Rape Amendment Act of 2022 2

The Combating of Rape Amendment Act of 2022 in Namibia addresses the crime of rape and aims to enhance legal protections for victims. The Act redefines and broadens the legal definition of rape, recognizing various forms of sexual violence. It establishes stricter penalties for offenders, emphasizes the importance of victim support, and mandates law enforcement and judicial procedures to prioritize the needs of survivors.

3 Child Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015

The Child Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015 in Namibia establishes a comprehensive legal framework for the protection and care of children. The Act aims to safeguard the rights of children, addressing issues such as child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It defines the responsibilities of parents, caregivers, and the state in ensuring the well-being of children and emphasizes the importance of the best interests of the child in all decisions affecting them.

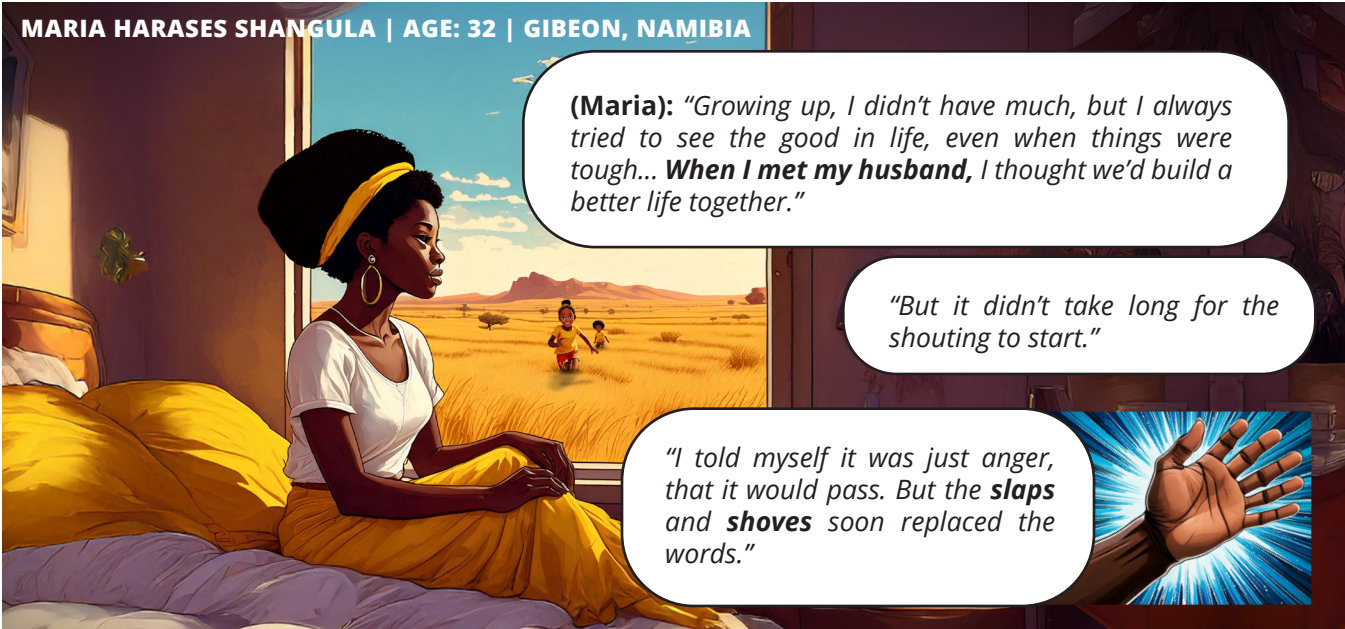
GBV SCENARIOS

On the following pages are illustrated scenarios depicting various forms of gender-based violence in Namibia's Hardap Region as well as in other parts in the world, these include:

1. **Domestic Violence Scenario.**
2. **Economic Abuse Scenario.**
3. **Psychological Abuse Scenario.**
4. **GBV Against Men & Boys Scenario.**
5. **Passion Killing/Crime of Passion Scenario.**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCENARIO

MARIA HARASES SHANGULA | AGE: 32 | GIBEON, NAMIBIA



(Maria): "Growing up, I didn't have much, but I always tried to see the good in life, even when things were tough... **When I met my husband**, I thought we'd build a better life together."

"But it didn't take long for the shouting to start."

"I told myself it was just anger, that it would pass. But the **slaps** and **shoves** soon replaced the words."



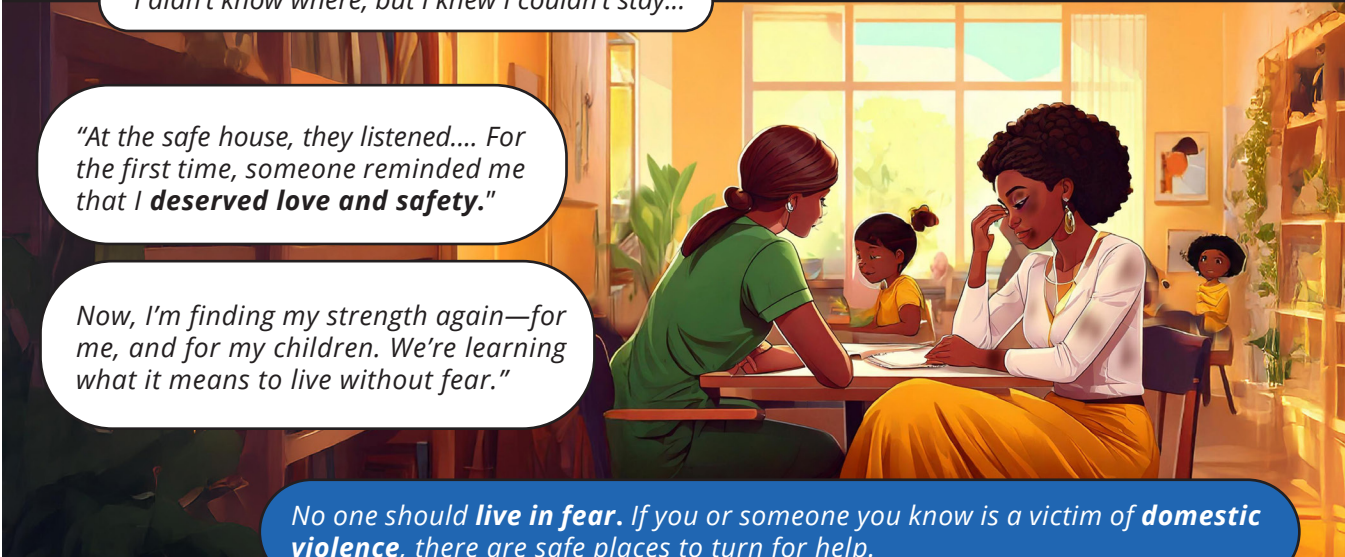
"I stayed because I thought it was best for my children. I thought a broken family was worse than a bruised heart. Then one night, in front of my little ones **he struck me harder than ever before.**"

"Something broke inside me."

"I realized that staying wasn't protecting them—it was teaching them to live in fear."

"That night I ran..."

"I didn't know where, but I knew I couldn't stay..."

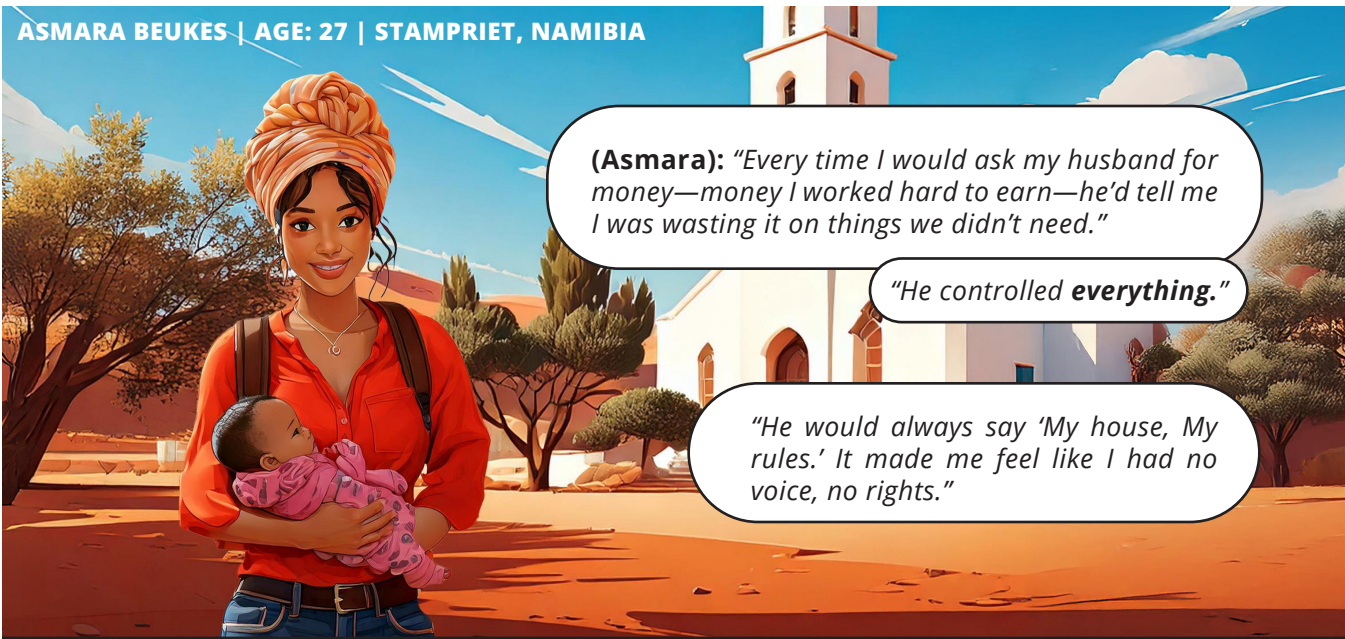


"At the safe house, they listened.... For the first time, someone reminded me that I **deserved love and safety.**"

Now, I'm finding my strength again—for me, and for my children. We're learning what it means to live without fear."

No one should **live in fear**. If you or someone you know is a victim of **domestic violence**, there are safe places to turn for help.

ASMARA BEUKES | AGE: 27 | STAMPRIET, NAMIBIA



(Asmara): "Every time I would ask my husband for money—money I worked hard to earn—he'd tell me I was wasting it on things we didn't need."

"He controlled **everything**."

"He would always say 'My house, My rules.' It made me feel like I had no voice, no rights."



"Even when our child needed medicine, **Hans** refused. I had to beg him, only to be accused of being irresponsible."

"As if I was planning to shop in Paris?!"

"I really love him neh, but yoh, sometimes I wondered if he loved his wallet more than his own family."

"One day, I heard about a community meeting about women's rights, so I decided to go."



"For the first time, I heard the words 'economic violence.' I didn't know what it meant, but as they explained, my chest tightened. Everything they described—**it was my life.**"

"That meeting gave me courage to seek help".

"With their advice, I started saving what little I could from my job. I even opened a bank account in my name. Now, I'm taking steps toward independence—for me and my child."

"I won't let anyone make me **feel powerless again.**"

Key Message: Economic control is a **form of abuse**. Everyone has the right to financial independence.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE SCENARIO

JULIA VAN STADEN | AGE: 22 | MARIENTAL, NAMIBIA

(Julia): "When I met Peter, I was in the 10th grade, and he was a senior."

"Tall, dark, and charming as ever."

"At first, we had a really adorable 'teen romance' kind of vibe, it felt like we were in a movie."

"But then, he started to change."

"Peter began telling me things like, 'Maybe you should wear a larger size, that shirt **makes you look fat**' or 'You should **stop speaking with Tim**, he's a bit suspicious'."

"Bear in mind...Tim is my cousin, ew!"



Tracking App

"Somehow, **Peter** always knew where I was, accusing me of cheating, he also isolated me from my friends and family."

"Honestly, I felt like I was **losing my identity**..."

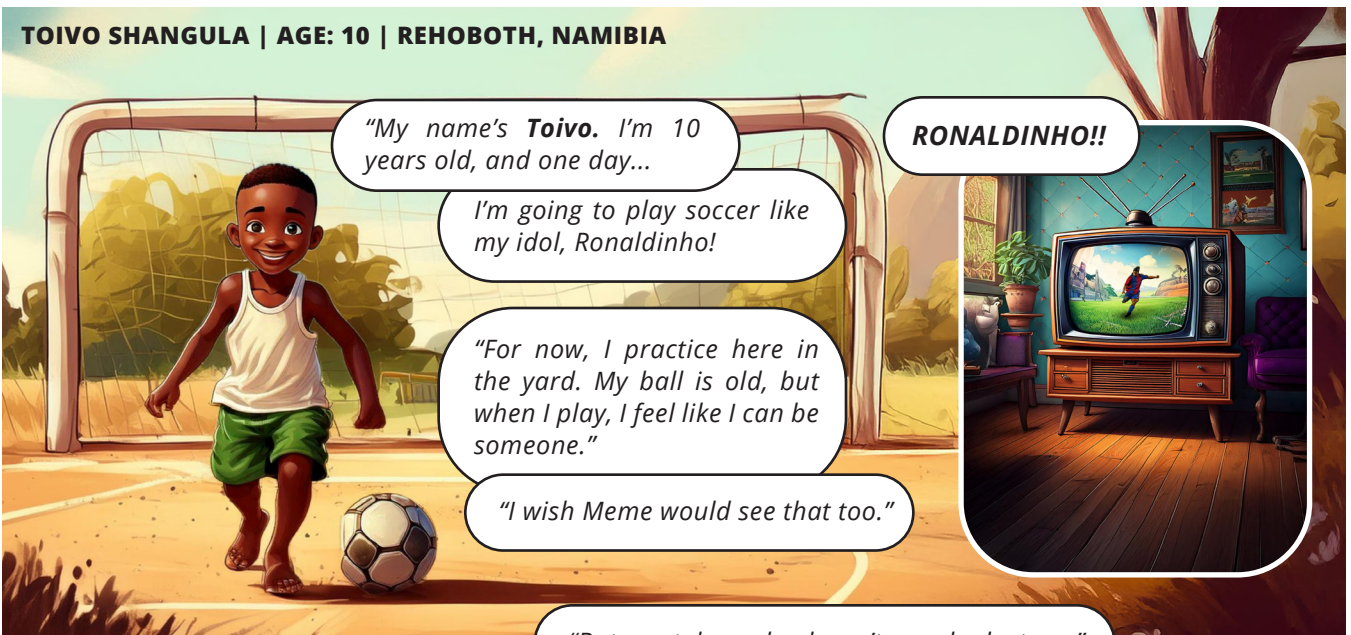
"One day, I read an article about **psychological abuse**, and realised that this was exactly what I had been experiencing. I sought help from a **local counseling service**."

"With their support, I was able to gather the strength to end things with Peter."

"Now, I'm learning to prioritise my mental health, so that I can finally **start a new life**..."

Key Message: Psychological abuse is real and damaging. It's important to recognize the signs and seek help.

TOIVO SHANGULA | AGE: 10 | REHOBOTH, NAMIBIA



"My name's **Toivo**. I'm 10 years old, and one day..."

I'm going to play soccer like my idol, Ronaldinho!

"For now, I practice here in the yard. My ball is old, but when I play, I feel like I can be someone."

"I wish Meme would see that too."

RONALDINHO!!

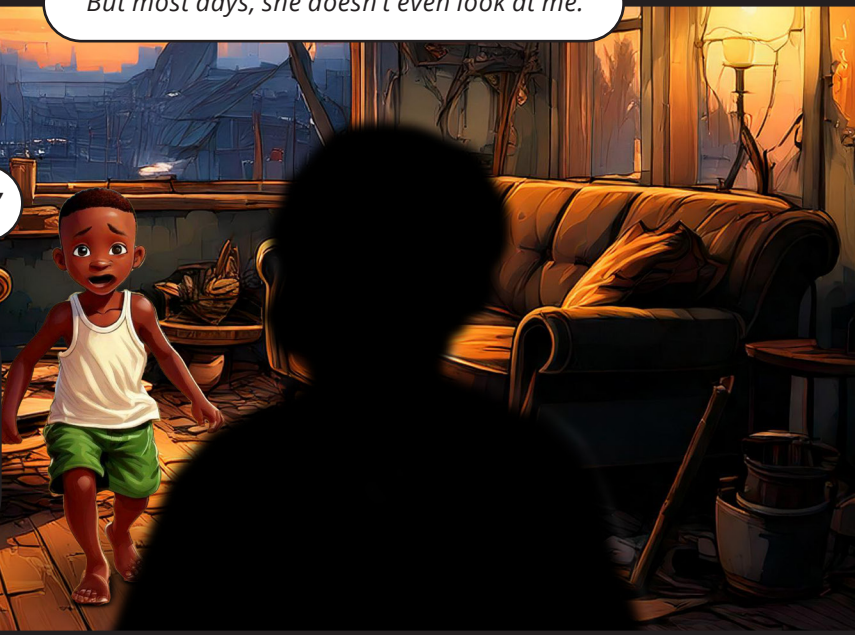


"But most days, she doesn't even look at me."

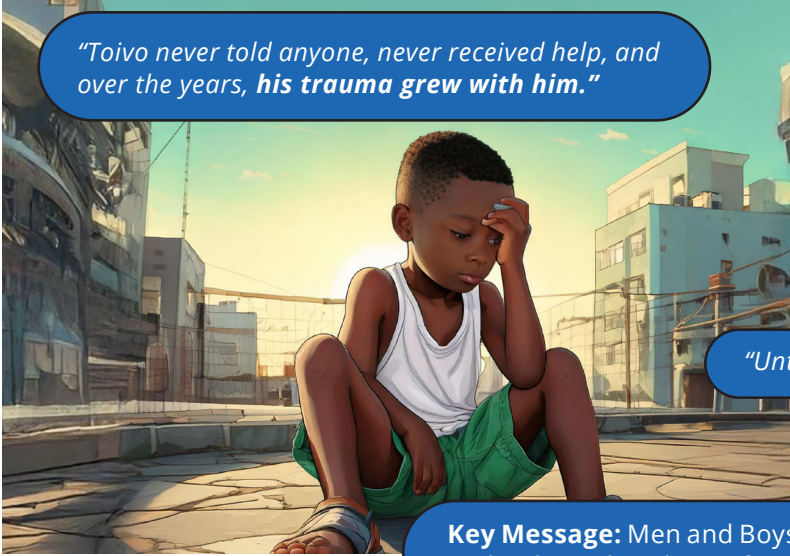
"She says I remind her of my dad. I don't know why that makes her so angry."

"To cope, she drinks...a lot."

"When she's mad, she hits me or calls me names. 'Sissy boy,' she says. **'Stop crying and be a man!'**
"I try not to cry. I try to be what she wants... but **it's never enough.**"



"Toivo never told anyone, never received help, and over the years, **his trauma grew with him.**"



"Until, one day he **continues the cycle...**"

Key Message: Men and Boys must be shown the same care as women and girls so that the **cycle of domestic violence** can be uprooted.

PASSION KILLING | CRIME OF PASSION SCENARIO

ANITA WITBOOI | AGE: 25 | KEETMANSHOOP, NAMIBIA

"Anita was only 25 when her life was taken by the hands of her ex-boyfriend when she tried to leave. **Despite her efforts to protect herself**, Anita became a victim of passion-killing."

"During the memorial service, her mother **Selma** stood up and gave a powerful speech to those in attendance."



(Selma):...and finally to the man that killed my daughter, I say...

...I forgive you.



"Selma's act of forgiveness gained much attention, sparking a conversation. Anita's story became a symbol of the urgent **need for early intervention and stronger enforcement of GBV laws.**"

"From Anita's tragedy, a brighter movement emerged."

Based on the **United Nations [16 Days of Activism]** campaign, each year, from November 25 to December 10, communities unite under the colour **orange.**"

"We march for **Anita and every woman** silenced by violence."

"Symbolizing hope for a future free from violence against women and girls."

"No more lives lost!"



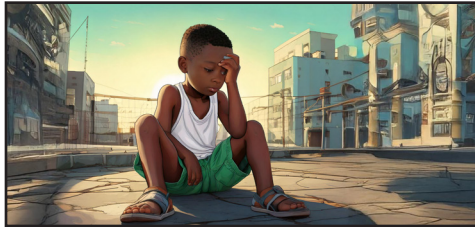
Key Message: "Passion-killing is a tragic reality that must be addressed. **Join the UNiTE campaign** to take action and wear orange in solidarity with survivors. **Together, we can end violence.**"

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

Advocating for the voice of the 'Male Child'.

The importance of advocating for the male child is one of many crucial preventative strategies that can be taken to hinder GBV through addressing root causes.

The story of Toivo illustrates the various forms of abuse men and boys in Namibia face, namely through:



1. Physical Abuse - His mother projected her anger towards Toivo's father by physically abusing him.

2. Verbal Abuse - His mother verbally assaulted the dignity of Toivo's manhood, damaging his self esteem.

Unresolved trauma in young boys like Toivo often resurface in adulthood, damaging family relationships and creating an unending cycle of violence.

Imagine a world where young boys like Toivo are nurtured and given a safe space to heal. His destiny might change from that of an abuser into one where he leads the way, creating spaces free of violence where healthy relationships thrive, where women and young children like Maria and their son and daughter are treated with **value and respect.**"



CALL TO ACTION

In 2008, The United Nations launched the **UNiTE [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence]** Campaign to end GBV by 2030. The signature colour of the campaign is **orange**. As a bright and optimistic colour, it represents a future free from gender-based violence.

From **25 November to 10 December** every year, UNiTE calls on people everywhere to wear the colour orange and take action to end violence against women and girls in communities, at home, in public spaces, in schools and workplaces, during conflict and in times of peace.

Therefore, whether you're a survivor, ally, or community member, we all have a role to play in ending gender-based violence in Namibia. Let's speak out, stand up and join the movement, by wearing orange in support of this cause.

— SOURCE —

(Orange The World, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/orange-the-world>)



HOW TO REPORT GBV CASES

Survivors don't always know what to do when faced with GBV, therefore, the following is a step by step guide on how to report incidents. Next to the step is also the relevant organisation that deals with the inquiry.



1. Seek Immediate Safety - If you are in immediate danger, try to move to a safe location. In situations where relocation is necessary, some towns have local shelters or safe houses.

Local shelters, safe houses, or community organisations - exist to provide emergency accommodation for survivors. *More on these on the next page.*

2. Contact the Police - Report the incident to the police. Inform the officers that you are reporting a case of GBV and provide as many details as possible, including the time, date, and location of the incident.

Women and Child Protection Units - are specialised police units that handle GBV cases, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. These units offer sensitive and private reporting environments.



3. Medical Examination and Evidence Collection - Visit a healthcare provider to receive medical treatment and collect physical evidence if you have been assaulted. The medical report can be used as evidence if you pursue legal action.

Most government hospitals and clinics - offer post-GBV care, including medical examinations and counseling for GBV survivors.



4. Apply for a Protection Order - If you are experiencing ongoing abuse, which legally restricts the abuser from contacting or approaching you. Police officers or legal aid centers can guide you through this application process.

Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) - in Namibia provides legal advice and support for protection orders. Some GBV Protection Units may also offer support in securing these orders.

5. Access Psychological and Counseling Services - Counseling services are essential for coping with trauma. Many NGOs and government facilities offer free or subsidized counseling for GBV survivors.

Lifeline/Childline Namibia, Women's Action for Development and Namibia Women's Health Network - offer a range of counseling and provide mental health support for survivors of GBV.

DIRECTORY

List of relevant organisations in Namibia that provide support and assistance to GBV survivors along with relevant information about them.

24-hour toll-free crisis line

Lifeline/Childline (Tel: 061 226 889) runs a national helpline-based counselling service in Namibia to assist GBV Survivors and children in vulnerable situations. There are two lines you can contact, namely:

Gender-based Violence Helpline
Dial: (+264) **106**

Lifeline/Childline Number Helpline
Dial: (+264) **116**

Healthcare & Police Services - Ministry of Health And Social Services:

Aranos Clinic
Tel: 063 267 900

Gibeon Clinic
Tel: 063 251 026

Kalkrand Clinic
Tel: 063 264 072

St Mary's Hospital
Tel: 062 522 006

Mariental Clinic
Tel: 063 245 281

Rehoboth Clinic
Tel: 062 521 900

Stampriet Clinic
Tel: 063 260 083

Rehoboth Police
Tel: 062 523 223
Cel: 085 343 4455

MHSS Social Workers
Contact Person - Ms. Welma Ahmet
Tel: 062 521 920/521 921/522 917

Legal Aid:

Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)
Partners with (MoJ) to assist with protection orders
Tel: 061 223 356

Government Bodies:

Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare

Rehoboth - Tel: 062 522 571

Mariental - Tel: 063 242 542

Mariental - Contact Person | Senior Inspector Simataa
Tel: 081 229 7851

Office of the Ombudsman

Handles complaints about abuse and discrimination.
Tel: 061 207 3111

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Partners with the (LAC) to oversee legal procedures.
Tel: 061 280 5111



CONCLUSION

Now, for a personal message from the founder of **Step Up Ark Community Organisation** that addresses the history of the organisation, what it aims to achieve, and the organisation's commitment to the cause of uplifting women and children in the Hardap Region of Namibia.



A Word from the Founder

During the challenging days of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, I encountered vulnerable children along my running route—children wandering in the cold without shoes, wearing tattered clothes, and even begging for food. Their struggles were a vivid reminder of the broader issues of poverty and vulnerability impacting families across Namibia. This experience sparked a dream within me, and **Step Up Ark** was born, driven by a commitment to be a source of hope and empowerment for women and families in the Hardap Region.

I believe that women have the power to transform their lives and lift those around them. My mission is not only to support women but to give them a platform to reclaim their voices and shape their own futures. Through our programs, we provide safe havens for women escaping violence, supporting their healing through **running events**, and delivering **vocational training** to help them achieve independence and resilience.

Step Up Ark is built on the belief that by addressing hopelessness, lack of skills, and unemployment, we can help break cycles of abuse and poverty. My vision extends beyond immediate assistance; I want to tackle the underlying factors that keep so many trapped in hardship. This guidebook is a reflection of our values—resilience, empowerment, and community—and I hope it will serve as both a resource and an invitation for all of us to contribute to a society rooted in dignity, safety, and hope for every individual.

Thank you and kind regards,

Mrs. Martha McNab
Founder | Step Up Ark Community Organisation



STEP UP ARK
COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

**GET INVOLVED.
STOP THE PAIN.
END GBV IN
NAMIBIA.**

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