

Evidence Accelerator Brief Series

Improving understanding of emergent and understudied forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in Botswana in alignment with the South African Development Community (SADC) GBV Strategy: A policy analysis

Lorato Palesa Modongo

Gender Research Office, African Union Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa

JHU Faculty Mentor: Anaise Williams, PhD

Gender/GBV Evidence Accelerator Fellowship Program

Johns Hopkins Center for Global Women's Health & Gender Equity

Why This Matters

- Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global crisis and a fundamental violation of human rights. Not only does it undermine social cohesion and destabilize communities, but it also perpetuates cycles of inequality.¹ Addressing GBV is crucial for improving public health, promoting social justice, and fostering sustainable development and wellbeing.²
- One of the strategic ways governments address GBV comprehensively, i.e., address prevention, protection, and response mechanisms, is through National GBV Action Plans.³
- National GBV Action Plans are critical for coordinating efforts across various sectors, including law enforcement, healthcare, education, and social services. They also help ensure accountability, track progress, and secure funding for long-term interventions.⁴ When national action plans are adequately resourced and effectively implemented, governments can have stronger legal frameworks, increased support for survivors, and greater societal awareness.⁵
- Given high rates of GBV across the Southern African region, in 2018, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Ministers responsible for gender equality and women's affairs approved a new strategy: the SADC Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing Gender Based Violence (2018–2030).⁶ It is meant to provide guidance for the development of National Action Plans for countries in the Southern African Region, as well as motivate a coordinated approach to addressing GBV in the region.⁷

Evidence Accelerator Brief Series

- In Botswana, a SADC country, GBV prevalence is high. Nearly 70% of women experience some form of GBV in their lifetime, based on measures of physical, sexual, and/or emotional IPV and non-partner sexual violence.⁸
- Critical gaps exist in strategy on understudied and emergent forms of GBV in Botswana, such as technology-facilitated GBV and intimate partner femicide, reflective of the general lack of attention to these types of GBV. For example, limited legislation exists on responses to online violence, or technology-facilitated GBV, which is not well understood as a gender-based issue.⁹ Further, intimate partner femicide, which is colloquially termed 'passion killing,' is not widely monitored in Botswana, though newspaper reports provide some information to reflect its prevalence.¹⁰
- Botswana needs a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to eliminate GBV, including an acknowledgement of understudied and emergent forms of GBV such as intimate partner femicide and technology-facilitated GBV. Botswana's previous National GBV Strategy (2015–2020) has ended, providing a critical window for informing the development of a new plan with improved scope.

Key Findings

The previous Botswana National GBV Strategy (2015–2020) had some gaps. A key notable gap in the previous Botswana strategy is the lack of focus on understudied and emergent forms of GBV. This gap results in lack of or limited programming and data collection of these forms of GBV. In this regard, it is critical for the next national strategy to address or highlight the emergent forms of GBV and encourage further research on these.

The SADC Regional GBV Strategy (2018–2023), which includes specific guidance on data processing and research, can be used to inform the next Botswana National GBV strategy in addressing understudied and emergent forms of GBV, as outlined below:

Evidence Accelerator Brief Series

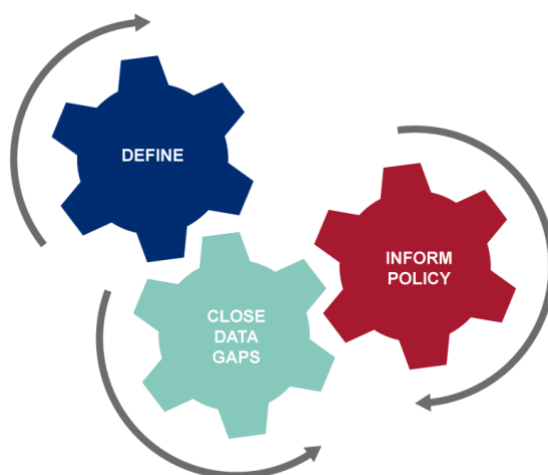
Botswana National GBV Strategy (2015–2020): Gaps	SADC Regional GBV Strategy (2018–2030): Inputs
The strategy mentions the need for data on and response to different forms of GBV; however, there are gaps in acknowledgment of diverse forms of emergent and understudied GBV. There is no direct articulation of prevention, legal and/or judicial protection, or knowledge management of technology-based facilitated GBV, including issues of online sexual harassment, cyberstalking, revenge pornography, and image-based abuse (sharing intimate photos without consent). The strategy mentions the legal implications of the murder of women, as outlined in the Domestic Violence Act, yet there are no specific guidelines or references to femicide specifically, including intimate partner femicide, or how murders of women are gender based.	The strategy talks about Member States' need for systematic and reliable data and information on GBV to assess the extent of violence and emergent forms of GBV It promotes multi-disciplinary research and analysis on the structural causes of GBV and its different types. It calls for improved collection, harmonization, and use of administrative data from the police, health, and judiciary sectors on diverse types of GBV.

Action Steps

Based on the above review, recommendations for the next Botswana National GBV Strategy are as follows:

- **Outline key definitions:** Define emergent and understudied forms of GBV, such as technology-facilitated GBV and intimate partner femicide, and acknowledge their role in overall GBV practice, prevention, and measurement strategies.
- **Address data gaps:** Strategically include support for research, data collection, and analysis on emergent and understudied forms of GBV.
- **Inform policy:** Strategically collect and use data to inform policy on emergent and understudied forms of GBV.
- **Guide practice and services:** Include guidance on prevention, response, and technical capacity building for relevant stakeholders and service sectors in addressing emergent and understudied forms of GBV.

Evidence Accelerator Brief Series



Methods

This analysis was a policy scoping review to provide recommendations for the next National Botswana GBV Strategy. First, GBV prevalence and challenges across the South African region and Botswana were explored. Next, in-depth analysis was done on the National Strategy to Ending GBV in Botswana, 2016–2020 accessed through the Botswana Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs archives. The different themes on GBV prevention, protection, care and support for victims, capacity development, knowledge management, and GBV response coordination were analyzed. This was analyzed in conjunction with the Botswana Domestic Violence Act (2008),¹¹ an act of parliament accessed through the Botswana e-laws website. Lastly, a thorough review was conducted of the SADC Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for addressing Gender based Violence,¹² accessed through the SADC website.

Suggested citation:

Modongo LP, Williams A, Wood SN, Thomas HL, Decker MR. Improving understanding of emergent and understudied forms of GBV in Botswana in alignment with the SADC GBV Strategy: A policy analysis. Johns Hopkins Center for Global Women's Health & Gender Equity and African Union International Center for Girls & Women's Education in Africa. Baltimore, USA, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and Gaborone, Botswana.

The Evidence Accelerators Program is supported by generous funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

References

1. Gqola, D. P. *The Female Fear Factory*. (2021). Auckland Park: MF Books
2. Okatch, D., Nthomang, K., & Jankey, O. 2022. 'Exploring the Gaps, Barriers and Challenges to the Implementation of Interventions for Child Survivors of Intimate Femicide: A Case Study of Mochudi, Botswana'. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, Vol. 7, November 2022, pp. 1

Evidence Accelerator Brief Series

3. Dale, A., Maki, K., & Nitiah, R. 2021. A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence. <https://lukesplace.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Action-Plan-Final-Report.pdf>
4. SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2021. https://genderlinks.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/6.2021VoiceandChoiceBarometer_GBV_FINALkcclmkcdl_072021.pdf
5. Abrahams, N., Mathews, S., Jewkes, R., Martin, J., & Lombard, C. Every eight hours: Intimate femicide in South Africa 10 years later! South African Medical research council brief, 2012. <https://www.samrc.ac.za/sites/default/files/attachments/2022-09/everyeighthours.pdf>
6. SADC Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing Gender Based Violence, 2019. https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2022-06/SADC_Regional_Strategy_and_Framework_of_Action_for_Addressing_Gender-Based_Violence_2018-2030.pdf
7. SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2021. https://genderlinks.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/6.2021VoiceandChoiceBarometer_GBV_FINALkcclmkcdl_072021.pdf
8. SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2021. https://genderlinks.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/6.2021VoiceandChoiceBarometer_GBV_FINALkcclmkcdl_072021.pdf
9. SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2022. <https://genderlinks.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Chap6-Baro2022-GBV.pdf>
10. Bagai K, & Faimau G. 'Botswana Print Media and the Representation of Female Victims of Intimate Partner Homicide: A Critical Discourse Analytical Approach'. African Journalism Studies, 2021;42(1), 17 – 35. doi: 10.1080/23743670.2021.1884581
11. Botswana Domestic Violence Act (2008). <https://botswanalaws.com/StatutesActpdf/2008Actpdf/DOMESTIC%20VIOLENCE%20ACT,%2010%20OF%202008.pdf>
12. SADC Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing Gender Based Violence, 2019. https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2022-06/SADC_Regional_Strategy_and_Framework_of_Action_for_Addressing_Gender-Based_Violence_2018-2030.pdf