Potters House for Women (PHW)

Masibambisane Community-Based Survey Results: Incidences and Drivers of Gender-Based Violence & Femicide

2024

What is GBVF?

Gender-based violence includes physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse based on someone's real or perceived gender identity. Femicide is murder based on real or assumed gender identity.

This report explores the socio-economic conditions and prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) within the community served by Potters House for Women (PHW). Based on 117 household surveys conducted by GBV monitors from the organisation, the data provides insights into the challenges related to GBV and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The findings reveal notably high levels of educational attainment compared to national averages, yet financial insecurity remains a significant concern for most respondents. Economic and psychological GBV emerged as the most common forms of violence, underscoring the profound socio-economic challenges that limit survivors' ability to leave abusive relationships.

We spoke to

117

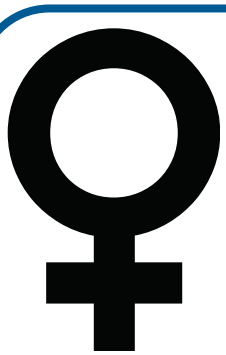
people in the community

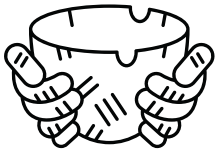
53 **youth**

58 **adults**

6 **elderly people**

Potters House for Women (PHW)





66
in 117 experienced
economic GBV

51
in 117 experienced
psychological GBV

13
in 117 experienced
physical GBV

5
in 117 experienced
sexual GBV

What are Socio-Economic Rights?

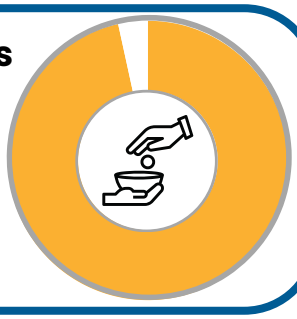
Socio-economic rights are guaranteed by the Constitution and include access to food, healthcare, water, sanitation, education and social security (grants) - the government must provide these rights to EVERYONE in South Africa.

The most common form of GBV was **economic**, followed by **psychological**, then **physical**, and lastly, **sexual**.

Financial insecurity was the highest risk factor.

113

of the 117 people we spoke to reported financial challenges to meet their basic needs.



Financial insecurity has serious implications for survivors of GBV. Survivors may remain dependent on their abusers for financial support, making it harder for them to leave abusive relationships. Additionally, the lack of income can prevent survivors from accessing essential services.

68

in 117 respondents said that they faced food insecurity

87

in 117 respondents **completed matric**, higher than the national average

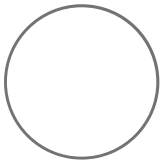
It was found that respondents relied heavily on social grants.

24

in 117 respondents relied upon grants, with the **Child Support Grant** being the most common

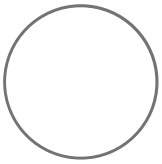
The findings from the Potters House for Women (PHW) community highlight serious socio-economic challenges that intensify the impact of gender-based violence (GBV). High rates of economic violence and psychological abuse, coupled with significant food insecurity, contribute to a cycle of financial dependency that traps many survivors in abusive situations. Despite the community's higher-than-average educational attainment, persistent financial insecurity and low conviction rates for all forms of GBV impede meaningful progress.

The conviction rates for sexual, psychological, and physical GBV are notably low, mirroring national trends and highlighting the need for stronger legal protections and support systems. Addressing these issues through targeted economic empowerment, improved legal accountability, and tailored GBV prevention programs for both youth and adults is essential for fostering safety, independence, and long-term recovery for survivors.



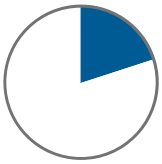
0 in 51

perpetrators of **psychological GBV** were convicted.



0 in 13

perpetrators of **physical GBV** were convicted.



1 in 5

perpetrators of **sexual GBV** were convicted.

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Introduction

This report explores the socio-economic conditions and prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) within the community served by Potters House for Women (PHW). Based on 117 household surveys conducted by GBV monitors from the organisation, the data provides insights into the challenges related to GBV and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The findings reveal notably high levels of educational attainment compared to national averages, yet financial insecurity remains a significant concern for most respondents. Economic and psychological GBV emerged as the most common forms of violence, underscoring the profound socio-economic challenges that limit survivors' ability to leave abusive relationships. Despite slightly better-than-average conviction rates for sexual GBV, low overall conviction rates across all types of GBV hinder justice for survivors and highlight the need for comprehensive legal and support systems.

Demographics

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 58 were adults, 53 were youth (aged 18 to 34 years), and 6 were elderly individuals. This age distribution closely mirrors the national averages, although the lower number of elderly respondents may reflect a different socio-economic dynamic in the community. Youth and adults face distinct challenges related to GBV, with younger individuals more vulnerable to dating violence and intimate partner violence, while adults may struggle with financial dependency. Tailoring GBV prevention and support programs to meet the specific needs of these age groups is essential for addressing the unique risks they face and fostering long-term safety for survivors.

Socio-Economic Conditions and Link to GBV

Education Level

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 87 (8 out of 10) had completed at least matric, which is significantly higher than the national average of 5 out of 10. While higher educational attainment is a positive sign for the community, it must be complemented by economic empowerment and access to resources to ensure that survivors of GBV can achieve independence. Without adequate financial support and services, even those with education may struggle to escape abusive situations and rebuild their lives.

Income Levels

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 113 (almost all) reported some level of financial insecurity, meaning their income was either just enough or not enough to meet basic needs. This is higher than the national average of 9 out of 10 people. Financial insecurity severely limits the ability of survivors to leave abusive relationships, as they may lack the resources to support themselves independently. Reducing this widespread financial vulnerability is crucial for enabling survivors to rebuild their lives and achieve long-term safety.

Grant Dependency

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 24 (2 out of 10) reported that their primary household income came from grants, slightly lower than the national average of 3 out of 10. The most common grant was the Child Support Grant, received by 16 people. While grants provide essential financial support, they often offer only minimal income, which can still leave survivors of GBV dependent on their abusers. Expanding economic opportunities and support services is essential for helping survivors gain financial independence and escape abusive dynamics.

Food Security

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 68 (6 out of 10) reported experiencing food insecurity, which is higher than the national average of 4 out of 10. Food insecurity exacerbates the challenges survivors face, as dependence on abusers for basic necessities like food can trap them in abusive situations. Addressing food insecurity is critical to empowering survivors, providing them with the stability they need to leave abusive environments and regain control over their lives.

GBV Analysis

Sexual GBV

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 5 reported experiencing sexual GBV, with most incidents attributed to previous partners. This rate is in line with national averages. 1 perpetrator of rape was convicted – slightly higher than the national conviction rate. The low number of convictions highlights ongoing challenges in prosecuting sexual violence cases. Survivors may still face barriers in seeking justice, and the absence of widespread legal accountability may discourage others from reporting these incidents.

Psychological GBV

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 51 reported experiencing psychological GBV, mostly by previous partners. This rate is higher than the national average. The absence of any convictions for psychological GBV in the community highlights a significant gap in legal accountability. Psychological violence, which often involves emotional manipulation and control, can have long-lasting impacts on survivors, leaving them feeling powerless and isolated. Stronger legal protections and support systems are needed to address this prevalent form of abuse.

Physical GBV

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 13 reported experiencing physical GBV, primarily by previous partners. This rate is consistent with national figures. None of the 13 perpetrators of physical GBV were convicted - a conviction rate lower than the national average. This lack of accountability for perpetrators further discourages survivors from reporting abuse and seeking justice, allowing cycles of violence to persist.

Economic GBV

Of the 117 people we spoke to, 66 reported experiencing economic violence, significantly higher than the national average of 4 out of 10. Economic violence, which often involves controlling a partner's finances or restricting their ability to work, traps survivors in abusive relationships. Addressing economic GBV is critical to empowering survivors, enabling them to achieve financial independence and rebuild their lives.

Implications of Low Conviction Rates

The low conviction rates for physical, psychological, and sexual GBV in this community are consistent with national trends and have significant consequences. Perpetrators may feel emboldened by the lack of legal repercussions, allowing cycles of violence to persist. Survivors may lose faith in the justice system, leading to a reduced likelihood of reporting abuse or seeking help. The inability to secure convictions can compound the emotional and psychological damage suffered by survivors, reinforcing feelings of helplessness. Moreover, survivors may hesitate to pursue legal protection or assistance, prolonging their exposure to violence. The absence of accountability can normalize harmful behaviours, hindering efforts to shift societal norms around GBV.

Suggestions for Potters House for Women (PHW)

- Expand Financial Resilience Programs: Offering financial literacy and skills development programs could help survivors gain economic independence, reducing reliance on abusive partners.
- Strengthen Legal and Psychological Support: Increasing access to legal aid and mental health support could improve outcomes for survivors, helping them rebuild their lives.
- Community Education: Raising awareness about psychological and economic abuse could encourage earlier reporting of abuse, helping survivors seek help before violence escalates.
- Collaborate on Social Protection Measures: Engaging with national organizations to strengthen social safety nets could ensure survivors have the financial and material resources they need to leave abusive relationships.

Conclusion

The findings from the Potters House for Women (PHW) community highlight serious socio-economic challenges that intensify the impact of gender-based violence (GBV). High rates of economic violence and psychological abuse, coupled with significant food insecurity, contribute to a cycle of financial dependency that traps many survivors in abusive situations. Despite the community's higher-than-average educational attainment, persistent financial insecurity and low conviction rates for all forms of GBV impede meaningful progress. The absence of convictions for psychological and physical violence underscores gaps in legal accountability and support systems. Addressing these challenges requires targeted economic empowerment initiatives, stronger legal protections, and comprehensive support services to help survivors break free from abuse and achieve long-term safety and independence.

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FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

creating GBVF free zones
Masibambisane

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