

# **The Challenges of Interventions for Gender-based Violence and Femicide in Evaton, Gauteng- Perspectives from community members and activists**

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## **Background**

Despite the ratification of international treaties and national laws, South Africa continues to have alarmingly high levels of GBVF, which were worsened during the Covid-19 national lockdown. The 2020 crime statistics reported that one in five South African women were victims of GBVF and South African Police Services (SAPS) data from 2015-2020 showed that seven women are killed daily nationwide. GBVF has been shown to have adverse effects on the economy, survivors' physical and psychological health as well as their economic situation. Despite copious studies on GBVF, the voices of local community members and activists as key collaborators in such research have been excluded.

## **Objectives**

This study aimed to determine the known interventions to decrease or eliminate GBVF and their effectiveness in Evaton, a township in South of Johannesburg Gauteng province.

## **Methodology**

The mixed-methods study included forty (40) participants in a survey for the quantitative aspect as well as four focus group discussions for the qualitative component of the study. Community members participated in gender-specific focus group discussions, while activists had a focus group of their own to obtain data on interventions.

**Results:** Our findings showed that three main forms of interventions existed in Evaton, viz. government-led campaigns that normally occurred during the 16 days of activism against violence towards women and children, community-led campaigns in response to GBVF cases reported in the media as well as NGO-led initiatives to support GBV survivors. However, these interventions were stifled by social and cultural stigma against reporting GBVF, a lack of sustainability, decreased visibility, poor organisation and management as well as a lack of funding.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, our findings show that while the South African government has made strides in its efforts to eliminate GBVF, there are no sustainable community level programmes and interventions aimed at changing social norms and toxic masculinity that perpetuate GBVF.

**Advocacy message:** Therefore, we recommend the shift from government led GBVF awareness campaigns to locally informed community led social solutions aimed at changing social norms that work in partnership with governments and all relevant stakeholders in the GBVF sector.

Keywords: Gender-based violence; interventions; social norms; Evaton