

## **SHE HIVE ASSOCIATIONS 2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



She-Hive strives to empower victims of domestic violence by providing psycho-social support, livelihoods and access to medical and legal services, through referral systems. The association advocates and lobbies for empowerment of survivors of domestic violence and those affected by it by providing them with psycho-social support ensuring that they are able to survive the aftermath of violence.

The aim is to work towards prevention of all sorts of violence against women and children thereby encouraging the society to eliminate cases of domestic violence through the use of slogan “Speak out; Domestic Violence is not private anymore”.

### **DATE**

**20/12/2023**

### **GOAL**

To do away with misunderstandings and myths about gender perspectives and educate our society about what feminism and gender equality is and encourage both men and women to be bold for change, change that will thrive them towards victory not sabotaging of each other while at the same time encouraging men to support, show respect, love and appreciate women in their journey of discovery.

## INTRODUCTION

The year 2023 proved how determined and focused She Hive Association is to pursuing its mission and goals. Its work in 2023 celebrates the unity, dedication and generosity as it takes a team to get the job done.

### TOGETHER WITH OUR PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS, IN 2022 WE....

#### 1. IMPLEMENTED THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS

- **Unmuting, Amplifying and Strengthening Echoes of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW)**
- **Content Management of Nokaneng App & SMS solution**
- **Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives**
- **Voice and choice Southern African Grants**
- **Community led monitoring services for PLHV at health facilities**

#### ➤ **Unmuting and Amplifying Echoes of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW)**

The project aim is to prevent Gender Based Violence (GBV) by creating safe spaces/platforms for joint consultations and discussions open to the public, especially Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) by unmuting and amplifying their echoes, strengthening them to voice-out their challenges through “I stories”. Their stories were documented as and when they were being narrated, and the underlying concerns and challenges noted for further action. The documented “I-stories” were used for advocacy and to influence policy reviews for inclusion of laws and policies that protect the rights of women and girls. AGYW were also given capacity through trainings to equip them with life skills, advocacy skills and empower them in general. The program was conducted in the four districts of Lesotho; Maseru, Leribe and Mafeteng and Berea.

The following activities were held: Focus group discussions on SRH and GBV service delivery in health facilities, AGYW dialogue with community leaders, Twitter space on social and legal issues around safe abortion in Lesotho, AGYW capacity buildings on Social and legal issues around safe abortion, a seminar on advocacy for SRHR Policy review and 511 AGYWs were reached. 2 Radio programs were conducted on the social status of abortion in Lesotho and in commemoration of International day of a girl child.

#### ➤ **Content Management of Nokaneng App & SMS solution**

She-Hive has been content providers and managers of Nokaneng application (a Partnership for Prevention initiative by GIZ) since 2018, promoting its usage to all its beneficiaries. It offers a smartphone application and a complementary SMS-based solution that informs about violence against women and girls. The overall objective of the Nokaneng flagship is to reduce the acceptance of and break the silence around violence against women and girls (VAWG) among women and girls. The specific objectives are to sensitize women and girls on gender based violence as well as their rights and to stimulate conversations and solidarity among them on issues related to violence against women and girls.

In the year 2023 She Hive administered and moderated the process of content management, monitoring the App and SMS-based solution and most popular questions and answers within the 'My advice' function of the App in order to tailor-make content for the App and feature phone solution, producing new content in a GBV sensitive and journalistic manner and supporting Nokaneng Activities and Distribution of Knowledge around digital solutions as a partner of Nokaneng.

Weekly motivational messages were designed and **nine (9)** push notifications have been produced as well as two articles.

The questions and concerns that came through the Nokaneng App and SMS fora served as proof that a lot of women and girls have found it as a safe space that the App has been intended to be. At least four (4) questions came in a month. The users were concerned about themselves, their family members, their neighbors, strangers they meet in public places (e.g. taxi rank, restaurants), and their friends in terms of protection against Gender Based Violence.

#### ➤ **Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives**

The aim of this project is to curb the surge of Intimate Partner Violence by popularizing and creating awareness of the counter domestic violence act 2022 and to strengthen the role of community leaders such that they have a better understanding of the CDVA and to advice and guide their communities. The project covered four districts namely, Maseru, Berea, Leribe and Mafeteng. On each district we popularized the act in 4 communities, adding up to a total of 16 communities reached. The project engaged with diverse groups of women and men, girls and

boys. It identified the varied roles played by women and men, girls and boys in the household and community. The community camps were inclusive of men, boys, (young) women and girls who were given equal opportunities while engaging at the camps. The camps took place in different places where at some village (Qibing), the village chief is a woman despite the chieftainship space being dominated by mostly men. In terms of age groups, some village chiefs were young men in the ages of 30 to 35. This gave balance to the targeted communities and gave varied experiences, problems and solutions.

### ➤ Voice and Choice Southern African Grants

This project aims at transforming societal norms and attitude change towards issues around abortion. It purely maintains the regulatory decriminalization of abortion and promoting the human rights, bodily autonomy and health. The project is targeted at Community leaders in Maseru, Mafeteng and Leribe. This is because they are PRIMARY recipients of most community level social ills including illegal issues, they are also mandated to look-out for the interests of their communities. Besides this, they are the most influential and policy implementers at grassroots. Their attitudes change will easily be replicated down to communities which they serve and eventually change in attitudinal attributes amongst societies who will help in forming movements in forming abortion policy agenda on its decriminalization. This will in turn give politicians a political will to eventually enact laws that decriminalize abortion. The action will help in reducing the high rate of unsafe abortions leading to high maternal mortality and neonatal mortality which Lesotho is the highest in SADC . It will also contribute towards the reduction of all forms of GBV, stigmatization and discrimination of young women towards SRHR issues. These will contribute towards the achievement of SDG goals 3, 5 and 10. The project aims to see:

1. A change in cultural, religious and social norms that result in negative attitudes towards abortion: Abortion related issues are a taboo and regarded non-religious, this project, therefore, hopes to change perceptions & attitudes of community leaders and general population about abortion and sensitize them on safe abortion.
- 2 . Process in parliament for the decimalization of abortion and domestication of the SADC SRHR policy: Abortion is illegal in Lesotho, except for cases of rape and incest. This illegality disregards the socio-economic factors faced by individuals, for any other cases. This project aims to engage policy makers in dialogues around abortion related issues and the impacts.

We have managed to implement the proposed activities. Namely; Twitter spaces, Questionnaire administrations, Seminars with village chiefs, radio shows and provision of psychosocial support. We have also been able to analyze data that was collected and we also managed to do the online poll.

In fulfilling our advocacy agenda, we discussed topics along “the broader context of reproductive rights in Lesotho? Do women have the right to choice and control over their own bodies? What are possible implications of legal abortion both structurally and socially?” on our twitter spaces, held radio shows during international day of a girl child discussing the importance of investment on a girls on knowledge on bodily autonomy.

Lastly, through its advocacy work on decriminalization of abortion, She-Hive is running a tik-tok campaign and where a female tik tok influencer from Lesotho to produce a tik tok video depicting how the legal, social and structural systems act as barriers for legalization of abortion affect young women, women as a whole and girls in general. This campaign will run throughout the 16 days of activism against gender based violence.

➤ **Community Led Monitoring project PLHIV Facility Feedback Tool**

She-Hive Association's mission is to empower survivors of GBV by providing them with psychological support, legal counselling as well as medical health services through referral systems. It is in working with survivors of GBV that we realised that GBV and HIV are closely correlated. Due to prevailing violence, reported and unreported cases and high prevalence of HIV in the country, we found it best fitting to intervene by strategizing and inventing different programs which assist women and girls infected of HIV to access quality HIV services. She-Hive Association, therefore, uses Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) which is a technique initiated and implemented to improve the quality of HIV services, as well as uptake and utilization of HIV services. CLM allows communities to themselves design, implement, and carry out routine, ongoing monitoring of the quality and accessibility of HIV treatment and prevention services at health facilities.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES 2023

- 1. CELEBRATIONS OF INTERNATIONALLY MARKED DAYS**
- 2. MEN-ENGAGE**
- 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT**
- 4. SHY CLUB**

### 1. CELEBRATIONS OF INTERNATIONALLY MARKED DAYS

Celebrations are beautiful and a part of everyday life and we do not miss the opportunity to celebrate internationally marked days that are in line with our mission. The year 2023 recorded a celebration of International Men's Day. For all these days awareness and advocacy was raised in line with 2023 themes for each day.

#### INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

On International Men's Day She-Hive Association celebrated Movember highlighting positive role models and raising awareness on men's well-being. Our theme for 2023 is "**Zero Male Suicide**", Together we can stop male suicide. This day and the messaging around the events that mark International Men's Day are intended to highlight or promote positive health seeking behaviours and progressive behavioural norms that are non-violent.

The scourge of Gender Based Violence (GBV) is categorised globally and indeed in Lesotho as a serious and worrisome public health issue, with statistics placing men as primary perpetrators and women and girls as survivors or victims. The event intends to engage men and win them as allies and partners in the struggle for gender equality. Thus we engage men for the benefit of women. Hence the association considers it necessary to commemorate this day annually and this year it was commemorated on the 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Two hundred and ten (210) people attended Movember, where ninety four (94) of them were males and hundred and sixteen of them were females (116). The day commenced with cycling, race and walk and a lot of physical activities followed. There were also awards given to best participants.

The activity encouraged men to be at the forefront of fighting against GBV, by prioritizing their mental health and well-being in order to beat the stereotype that men seek resolutions in criminal intent. From this day on, men ought to be positive male role models in all areas surrounding them i.e., at home, at work, as well as in their communities.

## 2. MEN ENGAGE

She Hive Association is a member of the Men Engage Network in Lesotho with other members being: GEM Institute, CRROA, Widows' Journey, Monna ka Khomo, Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association and Khotla Lesotho. For the year 2023, She-hive implemented "Mphahlolle" an initiative targeting cooperatives on work place harassment. Activities conducted aimed to transform the mindsets of men from being perpetrators to being protectors and of guidance to other men that violate rights of women and girls.

## 5. PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

### a) Individual Counselling

The Year 2023 registered a huge progress in client consultations where Individual cases were brought before a qualified social worker for counselling and enlightenment on how to handle any trauma and dilemmas of life individuals might have been through or is still going through. The psycho-social support officer provided sessions with the victim and the alleged perpetrator independently and ultimately with both parties as a form of mediation where circumstances required. The counsellor also assisted the client to re-adjust and uplift them emotionally so that they fit back into society and continue with their normal schedules. Majority of cases handled this year were of sexual abuse.

### **Monthly circles**

Monthly circles (group therapy) is where survivors of violence meet every month to share experiences and challenges they encounter on a day to day basis and how they manage or cope with the aftermath of abuse. A social worker joined the sittings and provided professional advice. These monthly circles are intended to create an atmosphere where everyone can feel comfortable about expressing their emotions without fear of being discriminated against, judged and stigmatized. Monthly circles were held once every month for the association's members and any other person who may have heard about the association through media or outreach campaigns or anyhow – (open for everybody interested).

## **6. SHY CLUB (SHE-HIVE YOUTHCLUB)**

This was initially established by survivors of Gender Based Violence with the intention to offer psycho-social support to their children, however it is currently inclusive of all children (both affected by violence and those who are not affected by violence) so as to break the stigma around children affected by violence. This was intended to help children to get therapy by engaging them in various activities. It was targeted at emotionally uplifting the lives of youths and children of victims of domestic violence. The club served as an open and safe space where youth can express their feelings and aspirations and even share ideas on how to handle the challenges they may come across.

On the 9th May 2023, the European Union Delegation to Lesotho and the French Embassy in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi in partnership with Transform Lesotho Initiative, She-Hive Youth Club and the National University of Lesotho had an event at the National University of Lesotho Auditorium. The purpose was for youth to share their

views and visions for the country basing themselves on the four topics namely: youth unemployment, youth participation, mental health, and climate change. Each topic had a lead facilitator and the audience was divided into four groups where opinions were exchanged among one another in order for them to be presented during at a later stage.

Young people outlined that mental health is gradually becoming a social problem which people a lot of people are ignoring. A lot happens in a nuclear family where hope there is hope for a better upbringing. Family members are not supportive enough towards maintaining a good mental health for their children. Parents abuse each other in front of their children, some even abuse their children as well. Young people resort to drug and substance abuse due the abuse they experience or see.

Youth therefore proposed that recreation activities should be organized within communities so that young people can go there and unwind. Free counselling services from professionals should be available in communities as well, often counselling is free in health centres where young people most of the time are not comfortable to seek such service at. If a center is placed within a community where a young person can get both counselling and recreation a lot of lives will be saved.

They further proposed on youth unemployment that both the private and public sector should not take advantage of young people through internships programs yet labor is still needed in those spaces. They (employers) should also revise their employment criteria of demand of 5 years' experience as it automatically disqualifies young people.

Lastly, the Government should create space to accommodate the inclusion of youth representatives in policy making bodies to ensure that their voices are heard, given the youth constitutes a substantial portion of the population. Encouraging youth advocacy can help youth stand up and speak out towards the issues of interest to their cause helping to raise awareness while also encouraging policy change. Overall, youth participation in both private and government policy making is essential for the development and progress of society. By providing opportunities for youth to get involved, we can ensure that their perspectives are heard and their contributions are valued.

## DONORS IN 2023

- ❖ Voice and choice Southern African Grants
- ❖ Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives
- ❖ Her Voice Fund- Global Network of Young People Living with HIV
- ❖ Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- ❖ Global fund for women
- ❖ PEPFAR

## PROJECT PARTNERS IN 2023

- ❖ Ministry of Gender Youth and Social Development
- ❖ Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- ❖ Lesotho Mounted Police Service
- ❖ Lesotho National Olympic Committee
- ❖ Modlokovana transport
- ❖ Aquaholic mineral water

- ❖ Vitality Health
- ❖ College of paramedics & Fire engineering
- ❖ Dona@Balos Chef School & Hospitality - Lesotho
- ❖ Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association

## CONTACT DETAILS

Name of the organization: **She Hive Association**

Address: Hoohlo extension, cemetery road 242

Phone: +266 22314531/57075354

Email:[info@shehive.co.ls](mailto:info@shehive.co.ls)

www.shehive.co.ls

 [www.facebook.com/shehiveassoclesotho](https://www.facebook.com/shehiveassoclesotho)



