

Dear Amy

13 December 2022

Uniting in Support for 16 days of Activism

The Cost of Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Gender Based Violence (GBV) poses a significant threat to the stability and development of South Africa. A study by KPMG¹ titled: *'Too costly to ignore – the economic impact of gender-based violence in South Africa,'* highlights that GBV costs the country over R28 billion a year, amounting to 1% of the gross domestic product. These costs are an accumulated total, based on a collation of loss of incomes, lost opportunities, forfeited taxes, health costs, justice expenses, and social service costs.

Recent statistics from the South African Police Service (SAPS)², found that GBV was at an alarmingly high rate, with more than 11 000 assault cases reported during the first quarter of 2022, between April and June. The ripple effects of GBV extend across social institutions and sectors. Health and justice departments do not have the capacity to handle the influx of cases logged in the system. Additionally, a significant amount of labour and time needs to be dedicated to raising awareness and supporting education around the intricacies of GBV. This groundwork is more often left to underfunded and under-resourced non-profit organisations (NPOs) that bear the burden of responding to immediate community needs and crafting plans for long-term support.

For victims, there are more sinister and hidden costs resulting from continuous exposure to GBV. Many women struggle to find jobs or stay employed because of intimidation from partners or restraining orders that are not effective in keeping them safe. In other cases, women have left work due to the mental trauma associated with GBV. Thus, further exacerbating existing forms of gender discrimination, poverty, and exclusion.

The private sector has a significant role to play in addressing these challenges and driving the elimination of GBV in South Africa. This can be done through collective and innovative solutions that address GBV both within corporate contexts as well as wider value chains, communities and other spheres of influence.

Collective Action Against GBV

There is a growing awareness around the need for collective and innovative solutions that address this grievous issue, thus contributing to a more equal, inclusive, and cohesive society. At the **National Business Initiative (NBI)** we know that business does not exist in isolation and is therefore impacted by the increasing social ills plaguing our country. To help fight the scourge of GBV and to amplify the private sector's response, the NBI has partnered with GIBS through the WE DARE network.

WE DARE is an international, multi-stakeholder and interdisciplinary network, that aims to:

- Facilitate the development of partnerships between researchers, industry, NGOs, policymakers, practitioners, and communities.
- Support the development of ground-breaking research and innovation that strengthens digital development and efforts to address GBV.

Key findings from WE DARE's first phase preliminary research suggest that a multi-faceted approach is necessary in supporting survivors of GBV, as communities face complex challenges when addressing issues of gender inequality, socio-economic precarity and lack of access to technology. The introduction of digital solutions to help eradicate GBV provides significant advantages. UNICEF, which forms part of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality, has committed to assisting in the development of bold advances that meet the need for technological innovation as part of the solutions required.

The development of safe digital spaces requires tailor-made and co-created solutions that facilitate education, economic empowerment and awareness in response to GBV, including active collaboration with women, addressing issues of access, literacy, and trust across South African communities. So how do we do this?

This crucial partnership with WE DARE aims to address this question by:

- Answering fundamental research questions with clearly defined pathways in which digital technology collides with the lived realities of GBV to create viable local solutions.
- Applying human-centred design in the co-development of digital solutions that are responsive to specific, locally identified challenges.
- Enabling partners to deliver co-developed projects that can result in meaningful and scalable impacts within African contexts.
- Strengthening capacity in digital research and innovation within the African continent.
- Developing new peer-to-peer learning models, mentorship and partnership for digital research and innovation between Africa and the UK.

National Business Initiative's Gender Equality Work with WE DARE

The NBI's GBV strategy relies on developing appropriate responses, dialogue, cross-sectoral commitment, and support for companies to understand and address issues of GBV within their organisational contexts, value chains and broader society. We also focus on harnessing multi-stakeholder approaches at a broader level, where companies take ownership and commit to updating relevant policies relating to GBV in the working environment.

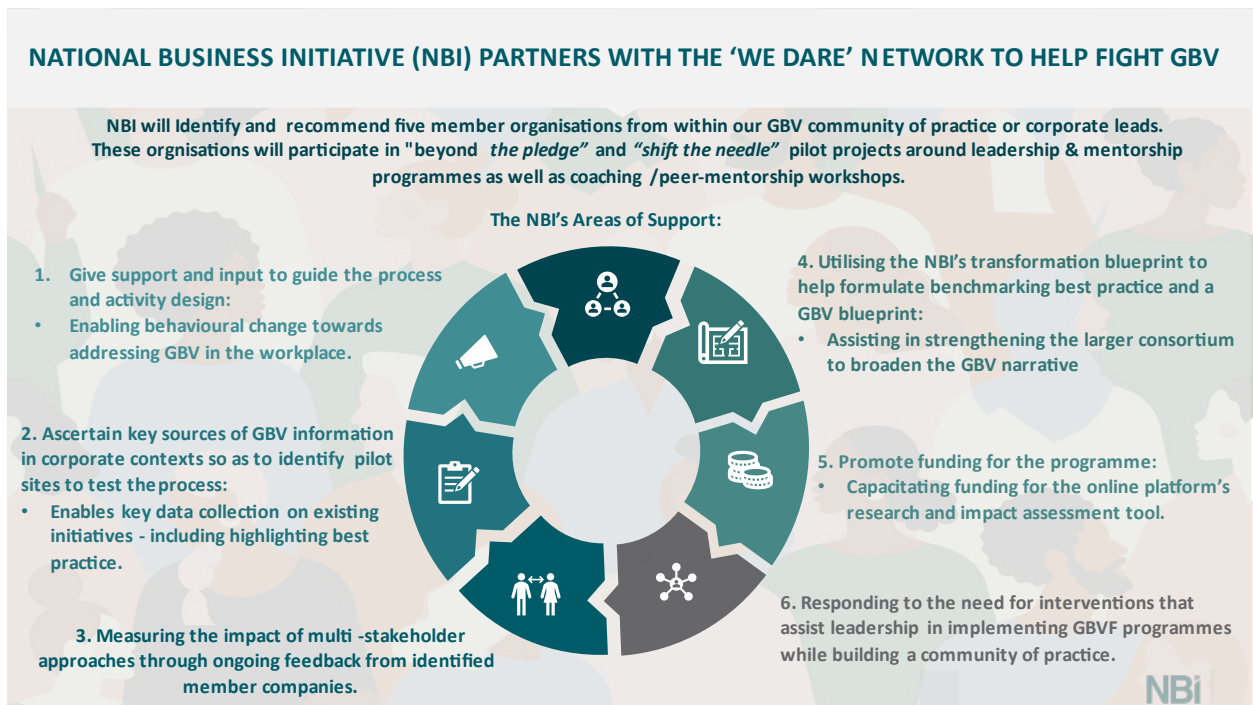
Companies have a strategic role to play in seeking solutions to entrenched GBV and can begin by declaring a 'zero tolerance' approach to GBV in all forms, whilst also strengthening existing interventions through collaboration and

accountability. This area of work is continuously developing with the objective of supporting the alignment of the GBVF National Strategic Plan as well as the UN **SDG Goal 5**: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls; **SDG Goal 8**: Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all and **SDG goal 10**: Reduced inequality.

Our core mandate in helping companies to address entrenched GBV include:

- Developing appropriate responses, dialogue, and support for companies to understand and address issues of GBV within their organisations, value chains and broader society.
- Harnessing a multi-stakeholder approach at a broader level, where companies take ownership and commit to updating policies and fundamentally addressing matters of GBV in the working environment.
- Strengthening social cohesion to formulate responses for community-based advancements.

Through this important partnership with WE DARE, the NBI will provide support by mobilising corporate support and membership participation.



The NBI will continue to collectively identify and implement interventions that contribute to the eradication of GBV whilst responding to the view that GBV is a human rights issue. We therefore urge South African companies to play a cohesive, cooperative, and active role in eradicating this shadow pandemic.

For more information about the NBI's Gender-Based Violence Pathway, partnership enquiries, participation in the WE DARE Pilot and further information and engagement on the NBI GBV Community of Practice Working Group, please contact: BridgetteM@nbi.org.za(Head of Social Transformation)

¹ KPMG (2014): Too costly to ignore – the economic impact of gender-based violence in South Africa, Available:

<https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/za/pdf/2017/01/za-Too-costly-to-ignore.pdf>

² SAPS (2022): SAPS Crimestats, Available: <https://www.saps.gov.za/services/crimestats.php>



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The National Business Initiative (NBI) is an independent and voluntary coalition of South African and multinational businesses launched in 1995 by the then President, Nelson Mandela.

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