



FirstRand Empowerment Foundation: Addressing Gender-Based Violence And Femicide

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) is a systemic issue in South Africa. Despite various efforts, further actions are necessary to address the magnitude of the problem.

The Gender-based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan (GBVF-NSP) is the South African government's strategy for tackling all forms of violence and abuse against women and children. **The GBVF-NSP focuses on six pillars: accountability, prevention, justice, response, economic power and research.**

Since 2021, the FirstRand Empowerment Foundation (FREF) **has invested more than R200 million into support for nine organisations addressing GBVF in South Africa**, in alignment with the goals of the GBVF-NSP.

The following two organisations are among the nine that have received donations from FREF:

Organisations	Nyamukara Empowerment	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
Contribution	FREF has donated R14 million to Nyamukara's Godisanang empowerment programme supporting GBVF survivors. The programme provides Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) -accredited sewing skills training to women in shelters, aiding their financial independence. The programme also offers psychological support, stakeholder engagement and digital literacy training.	FREF has donated R36.3 million to the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR). The CSVR is an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in South Africa and focuses on understanding and preventing violence and healing its effects. The CSVR's activities cover research, advocacy, psychological support and community collaboration. It aims to foster social cohesion and promote behavioural change to prevent GBVF, through interventions guided by evidence-based research. The centre partners with other NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) to coordinate efforts and ensure holistic support for survivors of GBV.

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Organisations	Nyamukara Empowerment	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
	For the period 2021 to 2023, the programmes key outcomes include:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 210 women completed sewing training, receiving start-up sewing packs; • 150 women received digital literacy training and equipment; • participants were able to attend and take part in market opportunity events like the Proudly South African Buy Local Summit and Expo; and • small enterprises, such as Umtha WamaHala Enterprise which has secured a three-year contract to supply school uniforms, were established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 CBOs were upskilled on advocacy, mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), research, fundraising, reporting and budgeting; • 6 278 GBVF survivors received MHPSS; • 1 193 personnel from government departments and civil society organisations received specialised training to improve their response to the complex needs of GBVF survivors; and • 10 650 people received Memeza personal alarms (a small handheld device that acts as a deterrent) with 170 communities receiving Memeza community alarms.

The Memeza personal alarm is a small handheld device that emits a sound of 140 decibels, which acts as a deterrent. This has contributed to a **reduction of up to 67% in sexual offences in the vulnerable communities where the devices have been deployed.**