



RIGHTS, EVIDENCE ACTION

**(REAct):**

Human Rights Violations

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

**KP REACH**

POSITIVE VIBES TRUST

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# FOREWORD

The enjoyment of the right to health is not just the physical possibility of accessing a medicine or medical service in case of illness. It includes a wide range of social, legal and structural factors that impact on agency, including the extent to which people are in the position to safely make informed decisions affecting their lives and leading a healthy life. Thus, the right to health is interlinked with all other fundamental human rights and freedoms, ranging from the right to life and the right to equality and non-discrimination on grounds of sex, gender, health status, gender identity or sexual orientation, to the right to be free from all forms of violence in both public and private spheres.

In Southern Africa, entrenched gender and social norms, as well as prejudices and stigma, limit people living with HIV and/or 'key populations' (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) individuals and sex workers) capacity to freely make informed decisions affecting their lives, including whether or not and when to access health care and treatment.

This group is at a heightened risk of violence and other rights abuses at a community level and within service provision due to, among other things, the normative societal context limiting agency and access to services.

In 2016, as part of a larger research project looking at the links between women's agency and gender violence, which remain intrinsically linked to women's risks and vulnerabilities to HIV and related rights abuses, AIDS Legal Network embarked on a research project to adapt/modify REACT to the Southern African context.

The 'findings' of our focus group discussions, ensures that the International HIV/AIDS Alliance human rights monitoring and response system is responsive to not only the country context of high levels of gender violence and other rights abuses in the context of and the response to HIV, but also to the context specific risks and vulnerabilities of key populations. It is this modified system that underpins the KP REACH work, and we hope that the Southern Africa partner organisations continue to embrace the spirit of adaptation and modify this tool to suit their contexts, programming and advocacy needs beyond the lifespan of any formal project, as has been seen in earlier iterations.

**Johanna Kehler**  
Executive Director  
AIDS Legal Network



We are very proud of how REACT has developed with the help of the communities and partners we work with. We believe this is a process that can holistically serve all our needs for better documentation of violations that build evidence for the betterment of the lives of those who experience othering.

Two elements of the REACT process are particularly exciting for us. Firstly, the documentation process is performed by the local community, doing their own analysis of data and deciding how the content produced can be used to resource and legitimise influencing agendas. Secondly, the process fosters

collaboration between unlikely allies, while trying to respond to the needs of those who have been affected. Both these intrinsic outcomes speak to the heart of what PV is trying to achieve: working in sustainable ways that leave behind something meaningful beyond the lifespan of the projects we engage in. This report gives insight into the process and value of REACT. We have enjoyed pulling the report together as a celebration of its achievements in the past year. We sincerely hope you will enjoy reading it.

**Flavian Rhode**  
Executive Director  
Positive Vibes Trust

# OVERVIEW

Collecting evidence of human rights violations is a vital component of the work of activists working across the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) and sex worker sectors. It is hard to reject advocacy work that is based on hard facts about the reality of sex workers and LGBT+ people's lives. It tells the story of why change is needed. When human rights violations are documented, it gives credibility to LGBT+ and sex worker organisations and communities asking for change.

Documenting human rights violations helps trigger reactions or responses that can help prevent such violations from being repeated. It also provides a mechanism with which to monitor states' compliance with international standards and keep track of how situations on the ground are changing.



## RIGHTS, EVIDENCE AND ACTION

Monitoring is a key means of collecting information: by tracking media reports; attending events; exchanges with peer organisations; etc. but also through the systematic collection of targeted data. There are many monitoring systems that collect data on human rights violations. REACT-Rights, Evidence and Action—is a secure, IT-based (using MARTUS), human rights monitoring and response system owned and managed by community-based partner organisations, based on principles of south-south peer-learning exchange.

Set up globally by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance and adapted for use in the Southern African context by Aids Legal Network (ALN) in 2016, REACT helps respond to human rights barriers to accessing HIV, healthcare and community support services by collecting relevant evidence to identify and provide or refer for individual emergency support, human rights-



based HIV programmes and to generate evidence for advocacy. The data collected builds the body of evidence on the impact of human rights violations that in turn, impact on the effectiveness of the HIV response, and provides a mechanism to inform and improve human rights-based HIV programming. This evidence is essential for advocacy and influencing governments and other actors to promote policy change and legal reform, and to support the rights of all people to access quality HIV, healthcare and community support services freely, a huge barrier for LGBT+ and sex worker communities in particular.

At a country level, REACT can help extend and improve the efficacy of partner organisations' human rights

programmes, including legal services, 'know your rights' initiatives, engagement with law enforcement officers and public health care officials, advocacy programmes to address gender-based violence, gender inequality and harmful gender norms, and programmes to reduce stigma and discrimination by providing an evidence base for REACT.

<< (see the sample poster promoting REACT from Out-Right Namibia).

REACT, through the KP REACH programme, is delivered by PV's partner organisations in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Namibia (see page 10 for our regional footprint).

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

KP REACH is a three-year programme at the end of year two of implementation. PV's role in delivering KP REACH is to provide capacity strengthening support to four 'key population' (KP) networks and deliver REACT and the Key Correspondent (KC) initiatives, drawing on its particular and unique approach to partnership and capacity strengthening. PV's primary way of working is to facilitate the co-creation and delivery of effective programmes and interventions to achieve mutual goals—including contributing to long-term impact at the level of individuals, organisations, communities, service provider and at a higher level, improved development practice and just, constructive national (and regional) policy.

The focus for the delivery of REACT then, is on improving the use of data collection/evidence, findings, knowledge



Members of the AP REACT team with PV colleagues at a planning session in March 2017 (back row: Fawzan, Marlow, Abigail, Warren, Nobhongo, front row: Francesca, Lee, Antony, Zuki, Amnah and Ben)

management, and the scaling up and duplication of best practice for more responsive national level programming and policies.

Initial programme activities in 2016 include the selection process, where community-based partner organisations nominated representatives to become REActors. A total of 59 REActors were trained in October and November 2016 over five days by ALN on human rights principles and responses, collecting evidence, managing information, implementing REAct structures and budget allocation and Emergency Fund guidelines and in the MARTUS IT system itself. Since then through attrition and movement of both individuals and organisations, the numbers per country have shifted and changed, the total number as at November 2017 is 57.

Subsequent activities in 2017 included additional REAct training in April in Namibia for new REActors, as well as



REActors at training in Johannesburg during October 2016.

mid-year reflection and learning events in May-June and August. This introduced an important trauma support component to assist REActors to acquire skills on how to 'contain' the trauma that a human rights survivor/client has suffered, and take care of self to ensure they do not suffer secondary trauma. It also explored challenges and discussed lessons learnt and best practice.

Partner organisations who are part of REAct provide direct emergency responses including financial support to human rights and violence-related needs among community members, and, in addition, can access a Rapid Response Fund (funded by the Elton John Foundation and available in 29 countries in Africa and the Caribbean) to respond to situations or events that threaten the provision, access and uptake of HIV services for men who have sex with men (MSM) and LGBT+ people. For more information see <http://www.aidsalliance.org/rapidresponsefund>.



REActors at training in Johannesburg during November 2016.

Each country also hosts a REAct committee, who convene quarterly to analyse and discuss the cases reported and make decisions on the human rights based programmes which must be implemented in order to best respond to the problems faced by the communities.

Finally, REActors attended four Linking and Learning Exchanges (LLEs) over the course of the year, which brought together REActors, KCs, network and other strategic partners to share learning and identify opportunities to collaborate on and strengthen the programme. This contributed to strengthened referral networks and building the evidence base and advocacy capability by identifying and telling stories about the work partners are doing or that highlight particular human rights issues for LGBT+ and sex workers in the region.



# WHERE WE WORK



## NAMIBIA

**1** Out-right Namibia (ORN)

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
Sexual activity between women is legal in Namibia. Sexual acts between men remains a crime in the country according to the Roman-Dutch common-law. Namibia kept this law on the books after it became independent in 1990. There are no cases in which this law was ever enforced yet LGBT+ people in Namibia face discrimination, harassment and violence. Sex work is illegal.

## SOUTH AFRICA

**3** Sisonke  
Gender Dynamix  
Zonwabele

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
South Africa's post-apartheid Constitution was the first in the world to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation: it was the fifth country in the world, and the first—and, to date, only—in Africa, to legalise same-sex marriage. Same-sex couples can also adopt children jointly and access IVF and surrogacy treatments. LGBT+ people enjoy constitutional and statutory protections from discrimination in employment, provision of goods and services and many other areas; although enforcement can vary. Nevertheless, LGBT+ South Africans, particularly those outside the major cities, continue to face challenges, including homophobic violence (particularly corrective rape), and high rates of HIV/AIDS infection. Sex work is illegal.

## MALAWI

**3** Community Health Advocacy Initiative Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP)  
Female Sex Worker Alliance

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
The Penal Code prohibits “carnal knowledge against the order of nature”, attempts to commit “carnal knowledge against the order of nature”, and acts of “gross indecency” with penalties of up to 14 years imprisonment. While a review of laws criminalising same-sex, sexual acts was promised in 2014, this has yet to eventuate. Instead, in 2015, the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Law came into force, banning all same-sex marriages and unions. While it was praised for raising the minimum age of heterosexual marriages from 16 to 18, it was also condemned for the exclusion of homosexual couples and language stating that one’s gender is assigned at birth. The law does not allow people who have undergone gender reassignment surgery to marry someone of that person’s prior gender and also draws comparisons of gay sex to rape and sexual harassment. Sex work is illegal.

## ZAMBIA

**4** Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign  
Friends of Rainika  
Zambia Sex Worker Alliance  
Trans Bantu

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
Same-sex sexual activity is illegal for both males and females. Zambia inherited the laws and legal system of its colonial master upon independence in 1964, and laws concerning homosexuality have largely remained unchanged since then. Same-sex, sexual conduct is covered by sodomy laws that also proscribe bestiality with punishment of up to 14 years imprisonment. Sex work is illegal.

## ZIMBABWE

**3** Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZI),  
Sexual Rights Centre  
Trans Research, Education, Advocacy and Training (TREAT)

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
Laws passed in 2006 criminalise any actions perceived as ‘homosexual’, i.e. it can be a criminal offense for two people of the same sex to hold hands, hug, or kiss. The ‘sexual deviancy’ law states that sodomy is any “act involving contact between two males that would be regarded by a reasonable person as an indecent act”, punishable by up to 1 year of imprisonment and/or a fine. Sex work and related acts, including solicitation, procuring, and keeping a brothel, are illegal but thriving. Police can arrest any woman walking (in the streets) after 7pm.

## BOTSWANA

**3** Botswana Network on Ethics Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA)  
Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (LeGabblo)  
Health Empowerment Rights (HER)

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
Both female and male same-sex, sexual acts are illegal in Botswana with penalties of up to 7 years imprisonment. However, in recent years, the LGBT+ community has become more visible and accepted among Botswana’s population. The country’s courts have also issued two landmark pro-LGBT+ human rights rulings: one ordering the government to register Botswana’s main LGBT+ organisation and another recognising a transgender person’s constitutional right to change their legal gender. Sex work is illegal.

## SWAZILAND

**2** Rock of hope  
Trans Swati

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
Sodomy is a common-law crime in Swaziland, with no other legislation recognising LGBT+ persons or protecting the right to a non-heterosexual orientation and gender identity. Same-sex couples cannot marry or adopt children. Sex work is illegal.

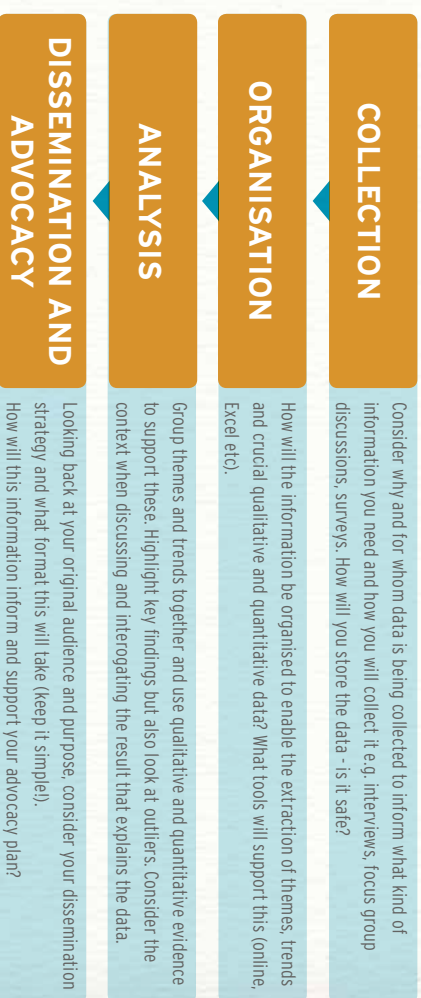
## LESOTHO

**1** The Peoples Matrix

**LEGAL CONTEXT**  
In 2012, male same-sex activity was legalised in Lesotho. Female same-sex sexual activity has never been outlawed. However, same-sex marriage and child adoption are limited to heterosexual couples. Sex work is illegal.

# DOCUMENTATION PROCESS: AT A GLANCE

The basic principles of documentation are:

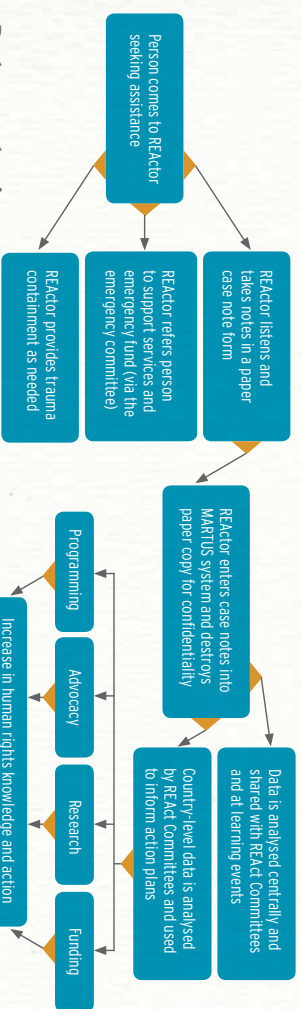


This is only the beginning of collecting large-scale data, but the value lies in it being community-led-by LGBT+ and sex workers in particular—and analysed/used. It is easy to generate graphs and tables, but the key in translating

it into action is to look at both the numbers and the narratives shared in the cases, and considering these against the external context and enabling environment within which these violations are taking place.

## Data collection process

Within REACT, the data collection process is locally-driven, owned and responded to, as depicted below. The system works based on a Reactor's understanding of human

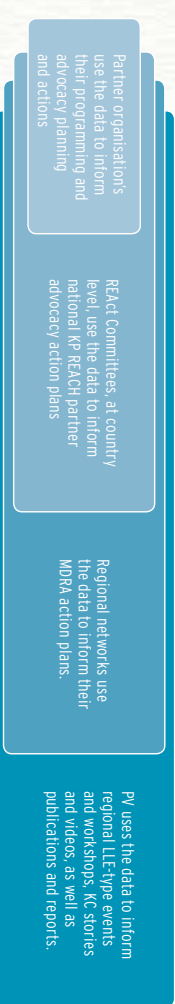


rights violations, hence the emphasis on this in the initial training.

## Data analysis

This happens at multiple levels (see below). The data is owned by each partner organisation, who uses it for analysis to inform their internal planning. For example, in Malawi, CEDEP reviews the data on a monthly basis to inform their own action plans. The REACT Committees

review the data on a quarterly basis to develop and inform advocacy action plans for KP REACH partners. The KP networks also use the data to inform their meaningful dialogue, representation and advocacy (MDRA) action plans.

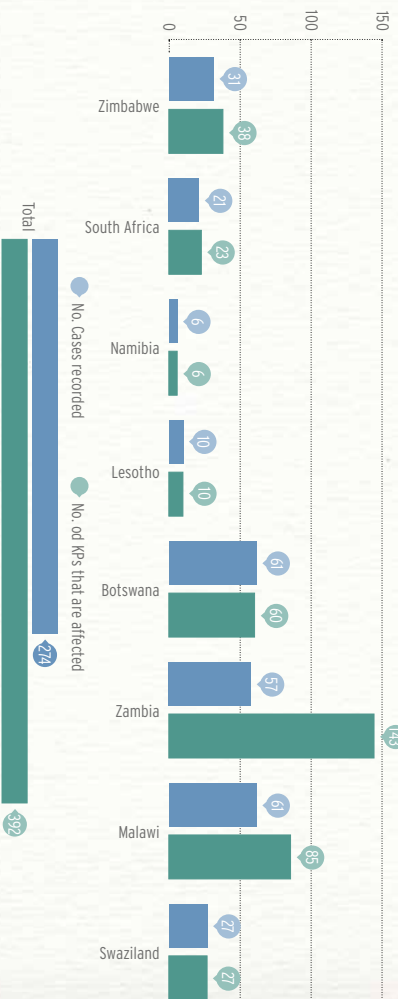


# WHAT IS THE DATA TELLING US?

For the period December 2016 to November 2017, a total of 274 cases were collected by REActors across the eight countries, with a total of 392 affected individuals. The most commonly experienced human rights violations recorded by REActors include violent assault or abuse (29.64%),

sexual assault (13.35%), harassment and intimidation (12.5%), and denial of health access (7.81%). Eighty (80) responses were provided and included legal (21.25%) and medical (35%) assistance, counselling (23.75%) shelter (13.75%) and assistance in reporting to police (6.25%).

## Number of cases recorded and KPs affected



Note: these are the top 4, out of 20 types of human rights violations recorded.

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS

The criminalisation of same-sex, sexual conduct in the countries REAct is being implemented in fosters a climate of state-sanctioned homophobia, resulting in abuse, discrimination and violence against LGBT+ and sex worker communities. Maintenance of these laws is itself a human rights violation, and enables further human rights violations because of the stigma and culture of impunity these laws create. Criminalisation has been found to violate the rights to: privacy; equality before the law and equal protection of the law; non-discrimination; and dignity. Criminalisation also engages the rights to: freedom from inhumane and degrading treatment; freedom of expression, assembly and association; freedom from arbitrary detention; health and other economic and social rights; and freedom from persecution.

*Please note that while the country snapshots are derived from real experiences, with consent given for their use, any identifying details, including names, have been changed to protect confidentiality.*





## Malawi

Since REActors commenced data collection in January 2017, 61 cases have been recorded affecting gay men (30), sex workers (33), trans persons (12) and lesbians (8). Fourteen (14) responses were provided. The snapshot below illustrates the recurring harassment and physical abuse experienced by members of the community.

Dulani went to his local drinking joint for a few beers. He arrived and sat at the bar, waiting for friends, but was approached by a young guy who said someone was looking for him outside. Dulani walked outside, only to be surrounded by a group of men who, it was quickly apparent, were not his friends. He was dragged to the toilets and beaten, then subjected to a degrading personal assault. Dulani was afraid to go to the police or hospital because he was afraid he would be arrested; his attackers had threatened they would report him to the police. Despite the clear violations of his rights to dignity and freedom from inhumane and degrading treatment, among others, Dulani was reluctant to take up the matter with police, deciding to relocate and start a new life with the support of the emergency fund.

## Zambia

Since REActors started data collection in January 2017, a total of 57 cases were recorded, affecting 17 gay men, 111 sex workers, 12 trans persons and 2 lesbians. Of these, twelve (12) responses were provided. A country snapshot depicts some of the challenges for sex workers in particular. Sex work is seen as a 'public nuisance' under the Public Order Act, and attracts a fine or possible jail sentence, depending on the circumstances and evidence produced.

Thembi was working in a township questhouse operating as a brothel. One Friday night, after an anonymous tip off by local residents about alleged 'immoral acts' that immigrant sex workers were reportedly conducting there, police officers raided the questhouse, rounding up the sex workers at the central police station in a heavily guarded, armoured vehicle. They were accompanied by officers from the immigration department. That night, 85 sex workers from two brothels in the area were arrested and detained without charge, violating their right to freedom from arbitrary detention. The local sex worker advocacy organisation organised legal representation, and the sex workers were able to be released.

The Zambia REAct Committee met in September 2017 and have planned actions that include partnering with key stakeholders to facilitate dialogues with health care workers and lawyers; engaging with regional police commissioners; rapid response initiatives to mitigate the current wave of homophobic and transphobic media scandalising and unethical reporting in the country; and monitoring what is happening via other organisations to ensure complementarity of support programming. Some of these interventions could take the form of sensitising police officials on the legal and human rights of LGBT+ people and sex workers, with the ultimate aim of changing attitudes and perceptions.

An article by KC, Reuben Siungwe, titled *Mass entertainment shows miss the message for key populations*, discusses behavioural change communication's evolution to embrace changes in sexuality, social lifestyles and communication channels, and the ongoing gap in terms of understanding the lived experiences of the sex worker and LGBT+ communities. This can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

The Malawi REAct Committee's discussion in October focused on strategies to better manage the emergency response fund, and a plan to hold quarterly 'talking sessions' with the aim of encouraging more LGBT+ and sex worker community members to come forward and report cases. This will potentially

include supportive police and lawyers to encourage collaboration and help reduce high levels of stigma, discrimination and abuse of people based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Other interventions could include legal literacy programmes for the LGBT+ and sex worker communities to enhance levels of knowledge and understandings of human rights and freedoms, including redress mechanisms as and when they are violated.

An article by KC, Chimweemwe Padatha, titled, *Same-sex marriage, Malawi's stance*, details some of these challenges further, and can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)



## South Africa

In South Africa, REActors recorded 21 cases, affecting 7 gay men, 6 trans persons and 10 lesbians. Two (2) responses were provided through partner organisations. Despite South Africa's Constitution being described as one of the most progressive in the world, with same-sex, sexual conduct decriminalised, and same-sex marriage and adoption legalised, stigma and discrimination is still deeply embedded in communities. Lesbians in peri-urban and rural communities experience multiple levels of persecution through the intersectionality of gender roles, sexual orientation and race. 'Corrective rape' and other extreme forms of violence continue to be perpetuated against these women, as depicted in the country snapshot below.

Uluthando was at home with her grandmother and six-year-old niece watching television. Suddenly, the door was kicked in by a man wielding a gun, who shot her. Uluthando cried, but the gunman was silent. He shot her a second and third time, at close range, in the forehead screaming 'tabane' (gay or homosexual)

and then disappeared into the night. Uluthando was immediately rushed to the hospital and was declared dead upon arrival. The man who shot Uluthando violated her right to life, dignity, freedom and security. He was later arrested through the help of community members. A REActor provided psychosocial support to her grandmother and six-year-old niece.

Stigma reduction programmes and community dialogue processes can assist in highlighting and addressing the causes, forms and implications of prevailing stigma, discrimination and other forms of violations in South African communities.

KC, Mmabatho Motsamai, addresses the issue of violence against lesbians further through her article. Her name was Simeleane, looking at the brutal rape and murder of the South African soccer star, as depicted in the screening of *Eudy Simeleane: A Life Cut Short* at the Batho ba Lorto Film Festival in Botswana. The article can be found at: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

## Zimbabwe

Many human rights violation cases recorded by REActors in Zimbabwe take place in urban centres, with unique violations occurring in peri-urban and rural areas. Of the total 31 recorded cases, trans persons (20) and gay men (11) suffered the highest number of human rights violations, followed by sex workers (5) and lesbians (2). Fifteen (15) responses were provided.

Chamai was walking to the shop, running errands for his mother. As he got closer, a group of teenage boys started staring at him. Walking past, he heard whispers of 'ngochani' (gay or homosexual). He decided not to confront them and instead adjusted the direction he was walking in. Unfortunately, that made the situation worse because they started following him, asking derogatory questions about his 'gayness' and taunting him. He never reported them to the police as he feared further stalking that may lead to physical violence. This incident illustrates violations against freedom of expression, from inhumane and degrading treatment and from persecution.

The Zimbabwe REAct committee has developed an action plan to undertake a contextual analysis as part of a broader advocacy strategy, which includes better utilising WhatsApp as a vehicle to share information about human rights violations, and create dialogue within communities and organisations; engage LGBT+ organisations to get input from their own human rights violation monitoring to get a better picture of what is happening at the national level to gain a better contextual understanding; map national partners' referral lists across the country to coordinate responses and increase the efficacy of the referral system, and better disseminate information and analysis coming from the REAct database and the Committee's analysis process to encourage more referrals and engagement with REAct.

An article by KC, Daphne Jena, titled, *Standing up for women's rights—someone had to*, details the challenges two women activists face in their endeavour for equal rights for the Zimbabwean LGBT+ community and how HIV/AIDS exacerbates the struggle in ways many haven't considered. It can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)



## Lesotho

Ten (10) cases were recorded by Lesotho REActors since January 2017. Of these, 2 gay men, 4 sex workers, 3 trans persons and 1 lesbian were affected. Two (2) responses were provided. The snapshot below speaks to the experience of sex work in Lesotho, which is illegal. The law is silent while sex workers experience violence from the police, the public, their clients and often their partners. They are repeatedly beaten up by police, robbed of their money and raped.

Mosela was arrested with some of her fellow sex workers while working one night in the city district. One of the police officers at the station locked her in a separate room from the others, and then forced himself on her throughout the night. She was released in the morning, where she tried to complain to the Officer in Charge, but he chased her away. Mosela was put in contact with a REActor, who assisted her to receive medical assistance and psychosocial support. Her rights to equal protection of the law, non-discrimination and dignity were violated, as well as her right to freedom from inhumane and degrading treatment.

At the October 2017 REAct Committee meeting, an action plan for early 2018 was discussed, which would see advocacy work in the form of public gatherings and sensitisation workshops for the community, health care workers and police. Content could include the legal and human rights of LGBT+ and sex workers to highlight the impact of discriminatory laws and practises on HIV realities, risks and needs in the context of HIV and 'key populations' and in turn enhance the protection of rights and access to justice.

An article by KC, Mamofuta Kale, *Criminalisation of sex work serves to objectify*, discusses the consequences of the Lesotho Government's attempts to eradicate sex work in further detail, where sex workers face constant abuse from Government officials and the public at large. It can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

## Namibia

In Namibia, 6 cases have been documented since April 2017. Two (2) affected trans persons and 4 affected gay men. Five (5) responses were provided. The snapshot below describe incidences of abuse of trans persons by their family members.

Lussy was forced to drop out of school after her grades started slipping and her attendance became erratic. Her situation at home was getting worse and affecting her ability to concentrate and participate. It soon escalated, with her parents finally kicking her out for being transgender, both threatening to kill her if she returned. Forced to sleep in police cells as she had nowhere else to go, she was eventually referred to a social worker who contacted a local LGBT+ organisation to provide assistance. REActors referred her to a shelter and psychosocial support services. Lussy's economic and social rights were violated in this case, as well as her right to dignity, freedom of expression and non-discrimination.

Gender sensitisation and awareness raising workshops for parents and families of trans persons and the community as a whole, as a possible intervention, would assist in demystifying social stigma and call for a transgender inclusive community.

KC, Mamofuta Kale discusses some of the challenges of coming out in, *When a parent's love is not always unconditional*. While the focus is on sexual orientation rather than gender identity and expression, it has some resonance with the experience described above in terms of issues of rejection. It can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

## Botswana

In Botswana, 61 cases have been collected since the REActors commenced data collection in January 2017. Gay men (9), sex workers (20), trans persons (11) and lesbians (23) were affected, with 15 responses provided. The data shows a high number of human rights violations against sex workers, perpetrated by both community members and clients. One of the challenges is that sex work is still criminalised in Botswana, so sex workers are afraid to report instances of abuse. This is highlighted in the snapshot below.

Ketso, a sex worker, arrived at a local bar one Friday night, looking for clients. There she met an older gentleman, who took her to a hotel nearby. Despite agreeing to use a condom, he forced her to have unprotected sexual intercourse with him after beating and tying her to the bed. She was found the next morning by the cleaner, and taken to the nearby

hospital. However, instead of assisting her, they called the police, who arrested her. A local human rights organisation heard about Ketso's situation and intervened, providing referrals to shelter, legal assistance, medical and psychosocial support. This incident violated Ketso's rights to health, dignity, non-discrimination, freedom from inhumane and degrading treatment and arbitrary detention.

Examples of interventions that could assist include conducting a legal literacy training, 'know your rights' for sex workers to gain a basic understanding of their human rights, supporting them to look at options for reporting perpetrators, getting social and medical support, and potentially seeking redress through the justice system. KC, Kenneth Chimombo, describes similar challenges for sex workers in Malawi in his article, *Sex workers are still abused by police officers*, which can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

## Swaziland

Twenty-seven (27) cases have been recorded since January 2017, with 12 gay men, 3 sex workers, 2 trans persons and 10 lesbians affected. Sixteen (16) responses were provided. Same-sex, sexual conduct is illegal in Swaziland, with high levels of discrimination against the LGBT+ community resulting in many LGBT+ persons concealing their sexual orientation, yet often, they are 'outed' by family members. Openly gay men face censure and exclusion, which could ultimately lead to eviction from one's home.

Youssef, young man from a rural area, was spotted in town with a man who was assumed to be gay by someone from his home village. When they got back to the village, they started spreading rumours that he was also gay. Youssef was subsequently confronted by his family and uncles, who threw him out of the house. Luckily his mother still supports him, but she is unable to influence the rest of the family, so, after being referred to a REActor in a local LGBT+ organisation,

he now stays in a home for that caters for men who have sex with men. He was also provided with psychosocial support. This incident violated Youssef's social and economic rights as well as his rights to privacy, non-discrimination and freedom of expression, assembly and association.

A stigma and discrimination reduction programme for the community which has a focus on sensitisation could assist in highlighting and addressing the causes and forms of family and community stigma as well as its implications for LGBT+ family members.

KC, Thuthu Maguqula, discusses some of the challenges for lesbians in Swaziland in, *Young lesbians in Swaziland are threatened and raped by family members*, which can be found on the KC website: [www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

# LESSONS LEARNT

Many lessons have emerged from delivering REAct through KP REACH, internally within PV, and externally across the partnership with organisations hosting REActors in-country. Some of these are detailed below for further reflection and action in 2018.

- The value of the LLE initiative and process, which draws a direct link to PV's ways of working and approach to working with partners, continues to be felt and gave the KCS and REActors an opportunity to meet crucial in-country partners. Partner organisations remained in contact with these external partners beyond the actual workshop connection itself, which has helped strengthen the programme's implementation in the eight countries and create important links to strengthen referral networks and look for collaboration opportunities in terms of programming and advocacy efforts. This was supplemented by a Director's Connect, designed along similar lines, to bring together partner organisations' leadership and look at ways to better integrate REAct into their own programming and planning processes.
- The value of the REAct Committees is already evident, and the strong foundation set for these by the initial and refresher trainings, mid-year knowledge sharing and learning events and LLEs, has already started yielding positive results, with locally-driven action plans and regional MDRA action plans informed by the REAct data, proving the value of using community-based monitoring systems to develop evidence-driven programming and advocacy initiatives. It is hoped this can extend into research projects to deepen the evidence base, such as ALN's research in South Africa into women, violence and access to health, as well as funding opportunities for partner organisations.
- One emergent issue, as REActors starting their work in earnest, was the issue of vicarious trauma, many of whom come from the LGBT+ or sex worker communities themselves, and some of whom may have also experienced similar violations. Support for REActors in terms of being able to compartmentalise but also to have points of contact for debrief or counselling is key, and mechanisms were put in place to provide this, including integrating this into the refresher training in mid-2017.

- Finally, there is recognition that there simply aren't enough REActors to cover all regions within their countries; many are housed in organisations located in urban centres. Limited resourcing to support travel costs to collect cases in peri-urban, rural and regional areas can mean that data is skewed and has some implications for building a representative (i.e. country-level) evidence base when the data is not representative of the entire country. There is also limited resourcing for programming in response to the human rights violations data.



## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The first eighteen months of implementation had a heavy focus on set up, training and ironing out processes and systems, laying a solid foundation for the actual delivery of REACT (supporting clients through the documentation process but more importantly, directing them to services and emergency assistance). Important data has already been gathered across the region, and is starting to be used for evidence-based programming and advocacy action plans, in collaboration with country-based partners and services, and regional KP networks.

The focus of the next phase will be to strengthen those relationships and networks, alongside continuing to build the evidence base, to deepen the work and ensure that, beyond the lifespan of the KP REACH programme, country partner organisations are well equipped to integrate REACT into their systems and processes to address human rights violations in their communities.

