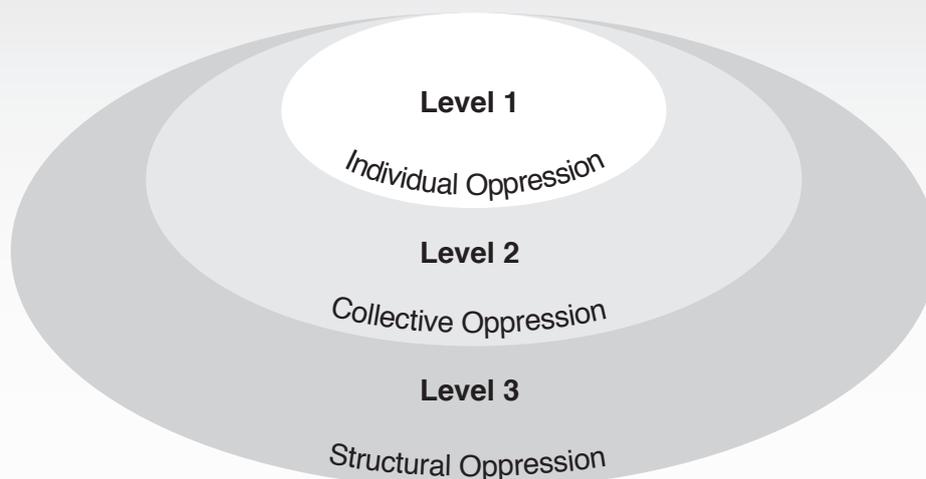


## **About this booklet**

This Comic book will tell us 4 stories of four very different people. Each story will help us understand better, the 3 levels of **Gender Based Violence (GBV)**.

- **Individual Oppression:** Each of the people in our story have been subjected to Gender based violence (GBV) as individuals on a personal level
- **Collective/Social Oppression:** Together in a society our attitudes and behaviour towards different groups of people causes everyone to suffer from **Gender Based Violence (GBV)** in our **communities**.
- **Structural/Institutional Oppression:** The society we live in and the structures that support this society form the roots of Gender Based Violence at a broad Socio-Economic Level.

Below is an illustration of the 3 levels that we will use through the Comic:



## **Difficult Terms**

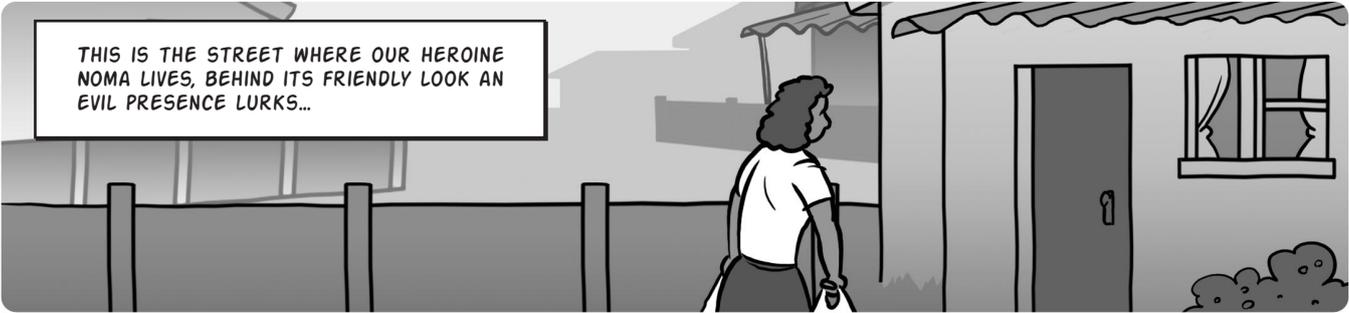
In order to understand the economy and women's issues there are some new words that you will need to know, we have underlined these words and included definitions of these terms on the two last pages.

## **Noma the Critic**

The booklet has comments or questions in the right hand corner by Noma. She will say things and ask questions for you to think about.

These questions can be used as starting off points to hold study groups discussions on the content and your understandings or opinions on the information in the book.





THIS IS THE STREET WHERE OUR HEROINE NOMA LIVES, BEHIND ITS FRIENDLY LOOK AN EVIL PRESENCE LURKS...



I HAVE BEEN STANDING AT THE TAXI RANK FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF WAITING FOR THE TAXI WITH THESE HEAVY BAGS OF FOOD, I JUST NEED TO SIT DOWN FOR 5 MINUTES BEFORE I START SUPPER, JON WILL PROBABLY ALSO BE LATE SO IT SHOULD BE OKAY.



I HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD ALL DAY, MY BOSS MADE ME MIX DUGGA AND LAY THE BRICKS SO HE DIDN'T HAVE TO PAY FOR A LABOURER, MY BODY IS SORE AND I AM TIRED OF WORKING LIKE A DOG FOR NO MONEY WHILE THE BOSS GETS RICH.



WHAT'S THIS? WHY IS DINNER NOT READY?



I'M...I'M.. SORRY I ONLY JUST GOT HOME FROM WORK, THE TAXIS WERE LATE AND I HAD TO GO SHOPPING FOR FOOD.



SHOPPING HEY...? REALLY? WHY WAS MY TAXI ON TIME AND YOURS LATE?

I DON'T KNOW, I'LL GET SUPPER GOING STRAIGHT AWAY.



YOU WEREN'T SHOPPING... WHERE WERE YOU? TELL ME NOW!



I WAS SHOPPING I WAS WITH PATIENCE ALL THE WAY TILL HER STOP, I SWEAR IT!

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! MY BOSS TREATS ME LIKE DIRT ALL DAY AT WORK AND NOW I COME HOME TO A WIFE THAT RUNS AROUND.

**SLAP!**

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) and INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

'Gender-Based Violence' and '**Violence Against Women**' are not the same thing. Violence against women is a type of gender-based violence. Because of Women's status in society survivors of gender-based violence are normally women, violence is directed at women because they have less power. Violence against women (VAW) is one type of Gender Based Violence (GBV). There are other types of GBV that we will look at in the book.

## Individual Oppression

The story of Sarah is the story of a lot of women all over the world. Because Sarah was born a woman, society has expected her to play a specific role. This has meant that she has not been completely free to choose what she wanted to do with her life and who she wanted to be. She has taken on the roles society expects her to play. She believes that in order to be good, she must do what society expects of her including obey her husband and put up with the abuse. She is afraid of what will happen if she left – her fear forces herself to stay where she does not want to be – she **internalises her oppression**. Her husband is her oppressor and uses this to his benefit and as an excuse to beat her. Another term that would be used to explain the violence Sarah is experiencing is **Intimate Partner Violence**.

## Collective Oppression

In every society in the world, women are expected to get married, have children be mothers and carers, cook, clean etc... Women are taught this from when we are born – women are oppressed by what society expects of them. Because of this, men often think that they are entitled to certain things from women, that women belong to them. But society does the same to men, men are told that they should not do things that are feminine, they are in charge. If they do feminine things or are unable to 'control' their family society says they are not real men – There is nothing that can excuse Jon's behaviour but it's important to understand how social expectations give abusive men an excuse to behave the way they do and to understand that these social expectations also ultimately oppresses men and women.

## Structural Oppression

There are different structures in society that work together to reinforce oppression. Strict Religion reinforces the role of women and children to obey and the role of men to provide, it also equates women with children. Our economic system is based on the unpaid reproductive work of women. If women were not there to raise children there would be no workers to exploit and no one to care for workers when they get sick. The state reflects social inequality and makes access to justice too expensive for women like Sarah, she has nowhere else to live and is stuck economically in the house with Jon.

Because of this oppression, on three levels, Sarah finds that she has little power in society.





SHO! SIPHO, YOU GAVE ME A FRIGHT COMING UP BEHIND ME LIKE THAT IN THESE DANGEROUS STREETS OF OURS!



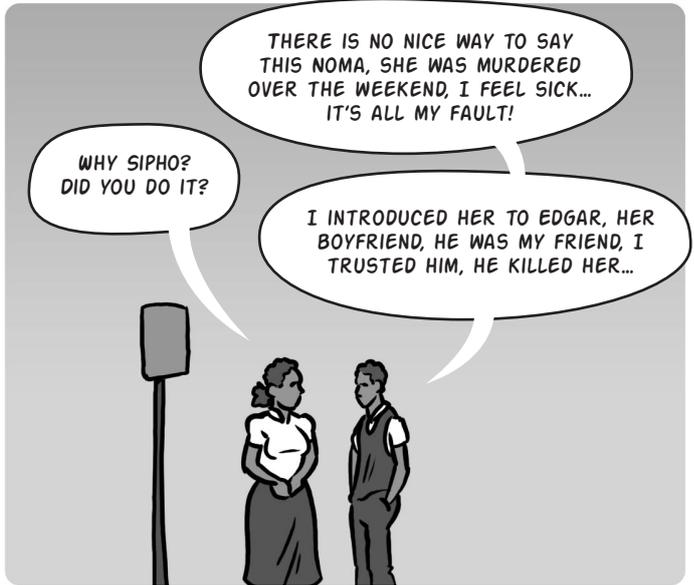
I AM SORRY COM NOMA, I HAVE BEEN SO SAD LATELY I HAVE NOT BEEN PAYING MUCH ATTENTION TO THOSE AROUND ME.

I AM SORRY TO HEAR SIPHO, ARE YOU NOT WELL? WHERE IS YOUR SISTER THEMBI?



THAT IS WHY I'M SAD, SHE IS NO LONGER WITH US.

NO! YOU CANNOT MEAN THAT, WHAT HAS HAPPENED?



THERE IS NO NICE WAY TO SAY THIS NOMA, SHE WAS MURDERED OVER THE WEEKEND, I FEEL SICK... IT'S ALL MY FAULT!

WHY SIPHO? DID YOU DO IT?

I INTRODUCED HER TO EDGAR, HER BOYFRIEND, HE WAS MY FRIEND, I TRUSTED HIM, HE KILLED HER...



I CAN'T GET THE PICTURE OUT OF MY MIND, MY FRIEND OVER MY SISTER STRANGLING HER, HE SAID IT WAS A RITUALISTIC MURDER TO PREVENT HIS BUSINESS FROM FAILING, HOW CAN SUCH THINGS HAPPEN?

Like the term ‘**Violence Against Women**’, **Femicide** is another form of GBV. It means the murder of a person because they are a woman.

## Individual Oppression

Thembi paid the ultimate price for being a woman, she paid with her life. Like with Sarah, Thembi lived in society which frowns on women who are on their own. A woman on her own is viewed as a strange thing and sometimes referred to as a spinster/lefetwa (insult) if she is old and not married or even called a witch. Thembi was afraid of leaving in case her boyfriend hurt her and afraid of being on her own. She had already been hurt by her boyfriend but she stayed with him rather than have her friends think they were better because they had boyfriends and she didn't. – She forced herself to stay with a man she did not want to be with – she **internalised her oppression**. Her boyfriend was her oppressor and her murderer.

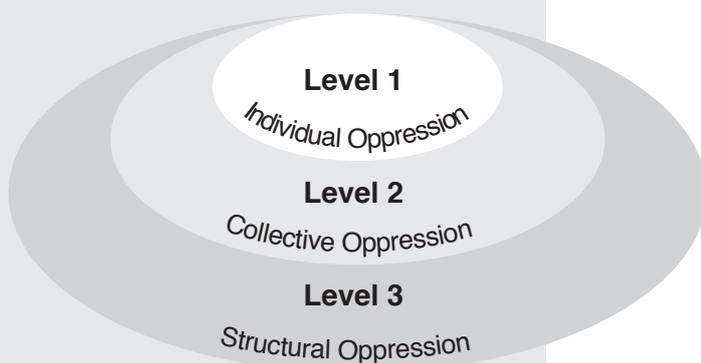
## Collective Oppression

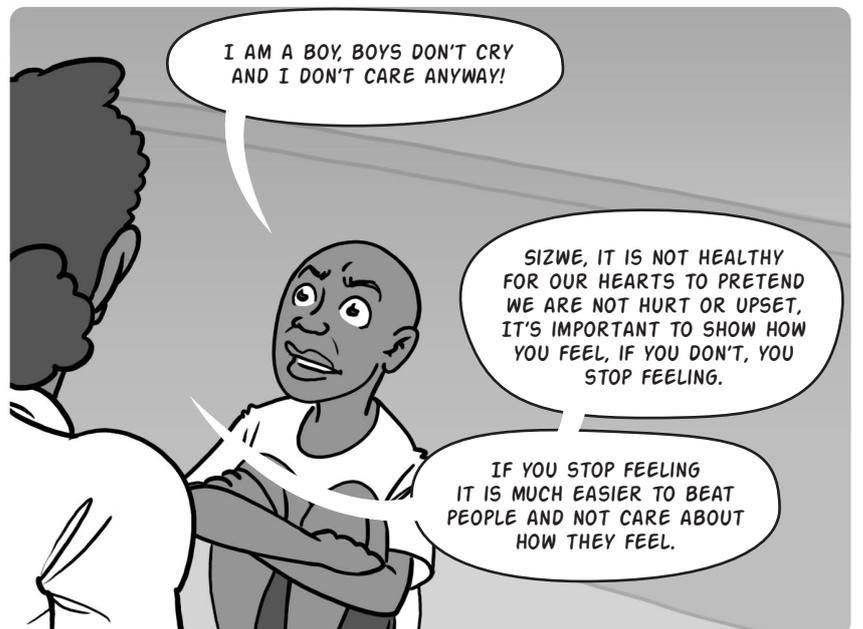
In almost every society in the world, little girls are brought up to want to be married in a pretty dress and have boyfriends, we are taught that this is what we must aspire to so we often stay in relationships that hurt us and hurt the people we love. Thembi's brother is a man who is devastated by the loss of his sister, Thembi's boyfriend did not truly love her but her brother did. Gender based violence always impacts on everyone associate to the person who is being hurt. It is a social problem not just a woman's problem, it's everyone's problem.

## Structural Oppression

There are different structures in society that work together to reinforce oppression. Capitalist society values money above all else. Capitalist Society is so obsessed with profit that it spends millions on security to arrest a hungry person taking bread from a shop. In the state the police are expected to carry out arrests, evict homeless people from empty land and defend property with their lives. Capitalism enforces inequality between people with money and without and this makes having money very important to a lot of people, especially men who are told if they do not have money they will not get girlfriends. Women have less access to jobs or well paying jobs, money and power in society this makes women more vulnerable than men in a violent society.

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE LIVE IN A VIOLENT SOCIETY? DO YOU THINK THAT THIS PLAYS A ROLE IN GBV?





# VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS AND CHILDREN

Violence against girls and children is another form of Gender Based Violence. But if not all children are girls then how can it be GBV? Understanding GBV means understanding that it is about power. It is about the power in society that men have over women and also about the power men and women have over children/both boys and girls. A society that says the man must be obeyed by women and children and children must obey adults enforces the understanding that men/adults are more valued and entitled.

## **Individual Oppression**

Sizwe is a young boy who lives in a violent home. His dad gets angry quickly, especially when he has had a bad day at work. Sizwe does not know his dad very well because during the week he comes home and watches TV while Sizwe and his mom work around the house and do homework. Sometimes over the weekend he and his dad will watch the soccer on TV but most of the time his dad goes out to watch the soccer with his friends. This is when Sizwe is happiest at home because he can relax a bit and not fear any violence against him or his mom. Sizwe often gets headaches and tummy aches because of the stress he lives under – it is not healthy to live like this.

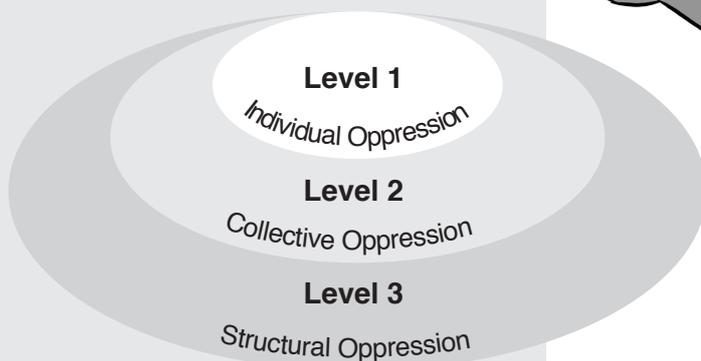
## **Collective Oppression**

Society tells children that they must respect Adults which is good if all adults are good but not all adults are. If women and children are denied a voice in society it is difficult for them to tell others when they are being hurt or abused. Women and children often do not talk about their experiences for fear of not being believed. They also think that this is the way things should be and when they grow up they behave in the same way as their parents and elders do. This means that society does not change and the cycle of violence continues.

## **Structural Oppression**

There are different structures in society that work together to reinforce oppression. Schools and other institutions in society treat children as inferior. Children are dressed in school uniforms so they all look the same, they are told what to do and are not given a chance to develop their identity and express themselves. Children need to be nurtured and taught by adults. Children do not learn from being punished, they learn from being loved and valued. If a child is valued s/he learns to value others.

DO YOU AGREE THAT CHILD ABUSE SHOULD BE CALLED GBV?  
IF YES WHY? IF NO WHY?





When people attack, hurt, rape and murder other people because of their Gender Identity/who they are this is called a Hate Crime. It is the same thing as a Hate Crime committed by a racist. Violence against someone because of who they are, because they do not fit into what you think people should look like, how people should act or what people should do is a Hate Crime.

## Individual Oppression

Kwezi is a lesbian person. She was born a woman and she feels sexually attracted to women. Kwezi feels most comfortable when she is with another woman. This goes against everything society has taught Kwezi but since she was born she knew in her heart how she feels. Kwezi, believes so strongly in her own feelings that she is willing to challenge the whole of society and risk her life for who she is. Kwezi is a very brave woman who is being oppressed because she chooses to live her life in a way that is different to the way society thinks she should.

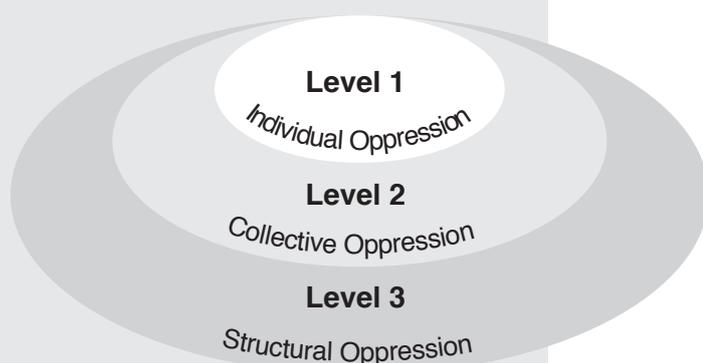
## Collective Oppression

When we talk about GBV we also need to talk about how society forces people into one of two gender identities based on the sex they are born – you are either born a boy or a girl. We have been told since birth, that boys and men are supposed to like, act, think, dress, talk, walk, eat, etc differently from girls and women and vice versa. A person's gender identity is who they are, it is their choice and their right to be who they are. When society treats any person as less than another or tells a person to be something they are not, society is oppressing that person. Just because you are Hetrosexual (straight) does not mean everyone else should be and does not give you the right to force others to be like you.

## Structural Oppression

There are different structures in society that work together to reinforce Hate Violence. Many (not all) parts of Religious society condemns LGBTI people. Strict Religion says it is not natural to feel different to the sex you are born but since the beginning of time people have felt different. LGBTI people are just living the life they want to live and it is their right to do so. LGBTI people challenge the notion of masculinity and femininity (what it is to be a man or woman), this in turn challenges Patriarchy and the power men get from society. Because of this society treats LGBTI people very badly.

DO YOU THINK ANYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL YOU HOW TO LIVE YOUR LIFE AND WHAT CLOTHES YOU SHOULD WEAR? WHY OR WHY NOT?



**Gender-based violence (GBV):** is any verbal or physical act that results in bodily, psychological, sexual and economic harm to somebody just because they are female or male. GBV can be done by an intimate partner, a family member, a neighbour, an acquaintance or a stranger. GBV happens because one person chooses to exercise power and control over another person.

**Violence against women (VAW):** is any behavioural, verbal or physical act directed at a woman or girl that causes physical or psychological harm, humiliation or deprivation of liberty and that perpetuates female subordination.

**Intimate partner violence (IPV):** describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse.

**Gender identity:** A person's inner sense of an authentic gendered self.

**Hate crime:** An incident that is perceived as being motivated by prejudice or hate. The perpetrators seek to demean and dehumanise their victims, whom they consider different from them because race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, health status, nationality, social origin, religious convictions, culture, language or other characteristic.

**Heteronormativity:** The privileged position associated with heterosexuality based on a normative assumption that there are only two genders, that gender always reflects the person's biological sex as assigned at birth, and that only sexual attraction between these 'opposite' genders is considered normal or natural.

**LGBTI:** lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

**Patriarchy:** A social hierarchy that privileges men over women and masculinity over femininity.

**Femicide:** the killing of a woman or girl, in particular by a man and on account of her gender.

**Internalised Oppression:** When people are oppressed, they often internalize (believe themselves) the myths and misinformation that society tells them.