

## The Effect of “The Men Assafety Promoters” Programme on Gender Based Violence in Gauteng Province

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**Abstract:** The Men as Safety Promoters (MASP) programme is one of the initiatives by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety to tackle crimes perpetrated by men against women and children. The aim of this study is therefore to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme in the fight against violence on women and children. MASP is specifically aimed at training and supporting the establishment of community networks of volunteers, comprising mostly men. The survey method was used for the research with focus on two sets of MASP stakeholders – the volunteer and community members in their MASP networks. The study revealed that there is a high level of agreement amongst MASP volunteers and community members who have been involved with MASP workshops or meetings, that the programme has realised its goals and objectives of establishing and training community networks of male volunteers to promote women and child safety. Additionally, respondents suggested that MASP requires improvement through meetings and supporting the MASP volunteers, such as incorporating payment for volunteers or providing other incentives as well as supplying volunteers with self-defence equipment such as walkie-talkies, torches and teasers. Finally, other suggestions included improved involvement from the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the programme as well as providing more accessible places for meetings between MASP volunteers and community members.

**Keywords:** gender based violence, volunteers, community members, volunteers cluster, community cluster, MASP activity

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### I. Introduction

The quantitative evaluation of the Men as Safety Promoters (MASP) programme forms part of the Gauteng Department of Community Safety’s evaluation plan of strategic initiatives implemented in order to establish whether the objectives of the interventions have been attained. The MASP programme is one of the initiatives by the department to deal with crimes perpetrated by men against women and children. The aim of this study was therefore to evaluate the effectiveness of the MASP interventions against violence on women and children. It is also important to contextualise MASP in relation to the Gauteng Safety Strategy (2014-2019). Pillar 2 of this strategy deals with enhancing social crime prevention, and its third strategic focus area includes the safety of women and children. MASP specifically is aimed at training and supporting the establishment of community networks of volunteers, comprising mostly men. The evaluation was conducted in line with the Provincial Evaluation Plan for the 2016/17 financial year. This evaluation is of strategic importance in relation to the Transformation, Modernisation and Reindustrialisation (TMR) imperatives of the Gauteng City Region.

The Gauteng Department of Community Safety’s Men as Safety Promoters project forms part of the provincial government’s Safety Strategy, specifically its Safety Promotion Programme. Citizen Safety is one of the three directorates that constitute this programme and one of its focal areas is the programme of Violence against Women and Children (VAWAC). The MASP project (generally designated a programme) resorts under the VAWAC unit. MASP, in turn, is one of the three VAWAC-related directorates; it stands alongside the development of a VAWAC Strategic Multi-Tool (to assist government gender practitioners to identify and rectify service delivery gaps) and the Child Safety DVD unit (Gauteng Community Safety, 2009/10 Annual Report: 27).

As noted briefly in the introduction, the aim of MASP is “to train and support the establishment of community networks of mainly men who volunteer to promote women and child safety through community engagements” (Gauteng Community Safety, 2011/12 Annual Report: 50). The networks “train and organize community members, who are mainly men, to engage their community on issues of gender and child abuse through word-of-mouth. The aim of the networks, generated at police station level, is to provide information to community members on the rights of women and children and the protective services available to them. They also aim at assisting both victims and perpetrators to seek help, while they challenge the underlying beliefs and prejudices that generate abuse. These three functions define the potential value of the networks.

MASP emerged gradually. The department’s 2007/08 annual report records that four Men as Gender and Child Safety Promotion Networks had been established. The *2010/11 annual report* notes that 24 MASP groups were established and 651 volunteers trained and the department was coordinating a Train-the-Trainer programme. The *2011/12 annual report* records further progress: 61 MASP groups were established (getting to 104 in total) and 1800 volunteers trained. In *2012/13* it was reported that a total of 4313 volunteers took part in the training, as in previous years exceeding the target numbers. The *2015 annual report* noted that 417 MASP groups have been established, monitored and supported, but that austerity measures had constrained MASP implementation in the first half of that year.

It is against this backdrop that it becomes imperative to assess the effectiveness of the MASP programme. In addition, it is crucial to establish whether the objectives of the programme are being achieved and to determine whether the volunteer and community member participants experienced that the MASP targets are being reached. It is thus important to move beyond the indicators of numbers of volunteers trained and established groups, towards establishing outcomes or even the impact of MASP in dealing with the scourge of genders based violence and child abuse perpetrated by men in Gauteng province.

## **II. Literature review**

### **2.1 Definition of key concepts**

#### **2.1.1 Impact evaluation**

An impact evaluation refers to an assessment of how the intervention being evaluated (in the instance MASP) affects outcomes. In addition, this type of assessment seeks to determine whether the said effects are intended or unintended. In other words, an impact evaluation provides information about the effects of an intervention. It can also be defined as an evaluation which looks at the impact of an intervention on final development outcomes, rather than only at project outputs, or a process evaluation which focuses on implementation (<http://www.oecd.org>).

An impact evaluation basically serves two objectives, namely, to establish lesson-learning and promote accountability on the part of implementers of a programme. Furthermore, this type of evaluation should answer questions about program design, that is, which bits work and which bits don’t. This is essential in order to provide policy-relevant information for programme redesign and design of future programmes (<http://devinfo.info>).

#### **2.1.2 Gender-based violence**

The terms “gender-based violence” (GBV) and “violence against women” are often used interchangeably. It is argued that most gender-based violence is inflicted by men on women and girls (European Institution for Gender Equality, 2017). Gender-based violence involves men and women, wherein females are usually the target and it is derived from unequal power relationships between men and women. The most pervasive form of gender-based violence is abuse of a woman by intimate male partners. This form of violence includes battering, intimate partner violence (including marital rape, sexual violence, and bride price-related violence), femicide and sexual abuse of girls. Other forms of gender based violence incorporate early or forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, sexual harassment and intimidation (Women Win, undated; <http://www.saferspaces.org.za>).

According to Safer Spaces, violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. They argue that this form of violation knows no social, economic or national boundaries. It is also asserted that GBV undermines the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence (<http://www.saferspaces.org.za>).

#### **2.1.3 Violence against children**

Violence against children manifests itself in many forms. These are physical, sexual, emotional abuse as well as neglect or deprivation. This form of violence also occurs in different settings such as the home, school, community and over the internet. A wide range of perpetrators are said to commit violence against children.

These include family members, teachers, neighbours, strangers and other children. Such violence not only inflicts harm, pain and humiliation on children; but it also kills (<https://data.unicef.org>).

## **2.2. A synopsis of initiatives by other entities to tackle gender-based violence**

This section provides an overview of efforts by several entities to address the scourge of gender-based.

### **2.2.1 Initiatives by the Sonke Gender Justice**

The Sonke Gender Justice has a unit called Sonke’s Community Education and Mobilisation (CEM). The unit works closely with men and women from all walks of life, in different communities across South Africa. The CEM seeks to address issues such as gender inequality, gender-based violence as well as the scourge of HIV and AIDS. This unit implements numerous national campaigns which are intended to mobilise communities to take action to promote gender equality and deepen democracy(<http://www.genderjustice.org.za>). Sonke Gender Justice also has project aims to address risk factors for violence against women and girls at individual, relationship, community and societal level. It recognises that masculinity may persuade men to resort to violence through various ways such as alcohol use, partner communication or mental health(<http://www.genderjustice.org.za>).

### **2.2.2 The United Nations Population Fund**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is an agency of the United Nations (UN) intended to advance gender equality and women empowerment in order to address the physical and emotional consequences of gender-based violence. The UNFPA offers psychosocial assistance, medical treatment and rape kits to survivors. They also promote the right of all women and girls to live free of violence and abuse (<http://www.unfpa.org>).

### **2.3. Initiatives by What Works to Prevent Violence Programme**

“The What Works to Prevent Violence Programme” is funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID), coordinated by the South African Medical Research Council. The programme currently supports research on a number of South African interventions in this regard. Its main objective is to provide evidence on what makes these interventions successful and how they can be replicated, adapted and scaled up(<http://www.saferspaces.org.za>).

The other one is Skhokho Supporting Success, a comprehensive school-based programme that is meant at preventing intimate partner violence among young teenagers between the ages of 13 and 14 years. The programme has different components that engage with high school learners in classroom sessions and after-school workshops. In addition, high school teachers, staff and caregivers get skills through workshops during weekends. Participants are trained in relationship skills through gender transformative interventions like positive discipline strategies, supportive styles of interaction and non-violent ways of conflict resolution (<http://www.saferspaces.org.za>).

## **III. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Approach**

#### **3.1.1 Data collection**

The survey method was used to collect data for the research. Two questionnaires were developed: one for community members who had attended workshops in the pre-selected MASP areas and the other for volunteers trained in the pre-selected areas. A random sample of 1000 respondents was selected of volunteers and community members associated with MASP workshops.

#### **3.1.2 Sampling strategy**

To address the specific research objectives, both MASP Safety Promoters who had been trained on the programme, and community members who had attended workshops or meetings, were selected from lists of names supplied by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety(DCS). The sample of 1000 respondents comprised 30% (i.e. 300) volunteers and 70% (i.e. 700<sup>1</sup>) community members. To achieve these numbers of respondents, systematic random samples of volunteers and workshop attendees were selected from the sampling frame of names attached to the DCS MASP areas. These names were supplied by the Department to the researchers and constituted the sampling frame for the research.

In the case of the community sample, sampling was based on worksheets supplied by DCS for MASP initiatives – for example, workshops and meetings – that had been carried out in the community mainly in 2015

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<sup>1</sup> The actual sample comprised 708 community members.

and 2016. The names supplied in these documents were of community members recruited for these initiatives. No information on any other MASP initiatives were supplied by DCS and thus the findings of the research are limited to the sampling frame of community members in the documents received. This sampling frame may thus not reflect the total population of people residing in the geographical areas of MASP community rollout. This is a sampling frame related limitation of the study, beyond the control of the researchers. In the case of the volunteer sample, the researchers relied on lists of volunteer names and contact numbers supplied by DCS. We assume that this list is complete and reliable and an accurate reflection of Gauteng Department Community Safety contact with volunteers.

The researchers worked to ensure that the samples would cover the South African Police Service (SAPS) areas characterised by high numbers of crimes of sexual assault. Accordingly, the areas specified in the lists of volunteers and community members provided by the department were matched with SAPS stations, and proportionately weighted by the 2014/15 published SAPS sexual crime statistics at station level. However, there were often insufficient numbers of volunteers and community members on the DCS lists to fulfil the required sampling quotas, and some individuals on the lists were not available at the given contact telephone numbers. Thus, random substitution had to be used from nearby MASP areas, with sampling continuing until the required sample sizes of volunteers and community members were obtained.

### **3.2 Data analysis**

The results of the research were analysed descriptively using a range of statistical processes and summarised using summary statistics, tables and graphics. The psychometric property of internal consistency reliability of each of the measurement scales was analysed using the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha and the complementary measure of the average inter-item correlation. As the results of these analyses suggested a high degree of consistency in the responses to the items within a measurement scale, it was possible, and indeed efficient, to investigate reducing the item-level responses to an underlying summary score per measurement scale. Responses to items requiring responses in years, for example the year that respondents remembered when first participating in a MASP activity, were tabulated and cross-tabulated to provide time-line information on awareness and reach.

The open-ended items requiring respondents to provide suggestions for MASP improvement were analysed thematically to derive sub-themes comprising responses with similar content. Thereafter, in a meta-analysis, the sub-themes were grouped into major thematic themes. Once the three main research questions had been answered, the component scores derived from the component analysis were used to identify clusters of respondents with similar responses to the perception and knowledge measurement scales. The multidimensional k-means clustering method was used to derive the clusters. The statistical packages of IBM SPSS v.24 and Dell Statistical v.13 were used to compute the statistical methods described.

## **IV. Results**

The results of the analyses are presented according to the following research objectives:

- Impact of the MASP programme in reducing crimes against women and children in areas where it was established;
- Communities’ awareness of the existence of MASP in established areas: awareness participation and reach; and
- Functionality of MASP programme.

### **4.1 Impact of the MASP programme in reducing crimes against women and children**

Results on the perceived impact and success of the MASP programme, revealed there is almost unanimous agreement amongst volunteer respondents that the MASP programme has had a positive impact on reducing crimes of violence and abuse against women and children, with responses evenly split between strong agreement and agreement. For example, when volunteers are asked whether MASP has reduced incidents of sexual abuse 45% strongly agree and 48% agree with this statement, making a total of 93% agreement. There is, furthermore, almost no disagreement (1%-2%) among volunteers as to the positive impact of MASP.

There is also strong agreement amongst community respondents on the impact of MASP, with approximately a third of responses in strong agreement, and two-thirds in agreement to the various statements. For example, again using the item on the perceived impact of MASP on reducing incidents of sexual abuse, 29% of community respondents strongly agree and 59% agree with this statement, making a total of 89% agreement. The small percentage of other responses are more often neutral (neither agree nor disagree), than disagreement or refusals, as the responses to the items show only 3%-4% disagreement.

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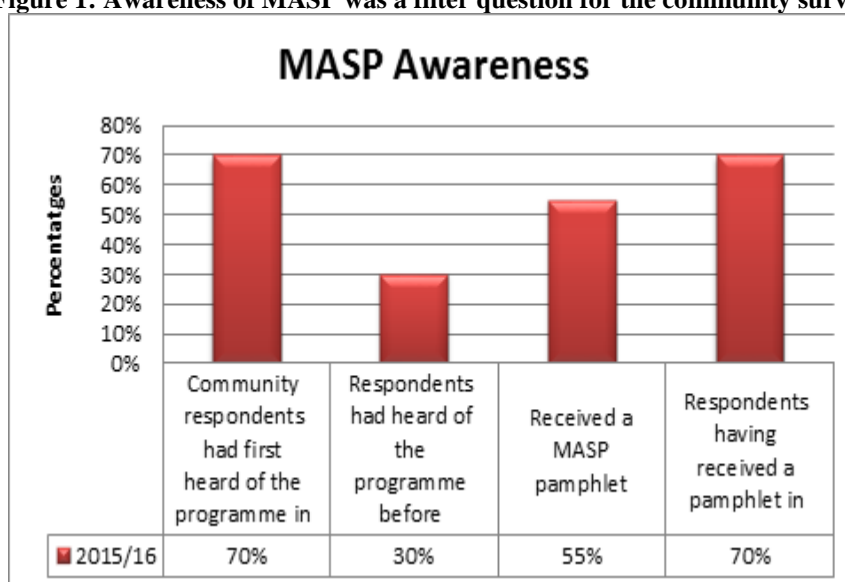
The perceptions of the respondents of the success of MASP in achieving its objectives are further illustrated. For example, 37% of volunteers strongly agree and 57% agree with this statement, making a total of 94% agreement to the statement that MASP raises male awareness of the vulnerability of women to real or threatened abuse. Similarly, 87% of community members agree with this statement (29% strongly agree and 58% agree). This trend of agreement is repeated across all seven statements in Table 2 assessing the perceived success of MASP in achieving its objectives.

#### 4.2 Community awareness of existence of MASP in established areas

The awareness of the existence of the programme in established MASP communities is examined in terms of awareness, participation and reach.

##### 4.2.1 MASP awareness

Figure 1: Awareness of MASP was a filter question for the community survey



Source: DCS data, 2017

Figure 1 shows that all community members contacted were aware of the programme. However, useful information on awareness was provided by responses to questions on three issues:

- When did they first become aware of the programme?
- Whether they had received a MASP pamphlet? and
- Accuracy of their knowledge of the programme.

On the issue of the timing of MASP awareness, 70% of the community respondents had first heard of the programme in 2015/16. However only 14% indicated they heard about MASP in 2014 and 11% for the period 2010 to 2013. The finding of the 30% of respondents who had heard of the programme before 2015 would indicate that almost a third of the community members in the DCS lists supplied had heard of the programme before their engagement with MASP in 2015 or 2016. On the issue of pamphlets, slightly over half (55%) had received a MASP pamphlet, with 70% of these respondents having received a pamphlet in 2015/16. Clearly, pamphlets on MASP are an important tool for community-level awareness of MASP. Finally, on the issue of the level of MASP knowledge, respondents were asked five factual or knowledge questions on the MASP programme.

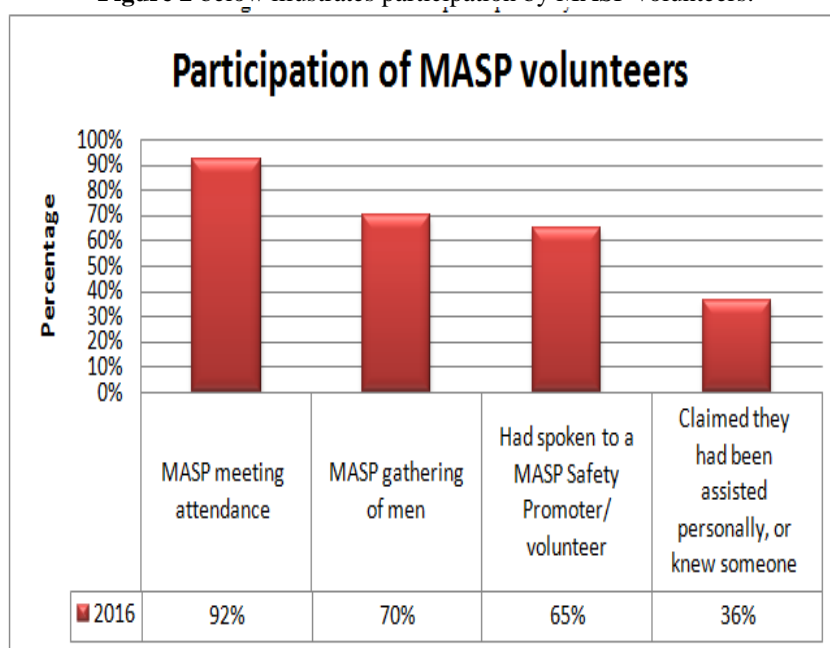
##### 4.2.2 MASP participation

The community interviews included questions on five types of MASP participation in 2016 and, in addition, they were asked if they had ever attended a MASP meeting or workshop, as well as the year of this attendance. Almost all (95%) of the community respondents said that they had attended a MASP meeting or



workshop, and, consistent with previous results, almost three-quarters of these meetings or workshops were claimed to have taken place in 2015/16.

Figure 2 below illustrates participation by MASP volunteers.



Source: DCS data, 2017

When asked specifically whether the volunteers have participated in a MASP meeting or workshop in 2016, 92% said they had. Their other responses to 2016 MASP interactions indicated that 70% had participated in a MASP gathering of men, 65% had spoken to a MASP Safety Promoter/ volunteer, while 36% claimed they had been assisted personally, or knew someone else who had been assisted by a MASP Safety Promoter/ volunteer.

### 4.3 MASP reach

In order to quantify the reach of the MASP programme, community respondents were asked to indicate the years when they had heard about the MASP programme for the first time, when they had attended a MASP meeting or workshop for the first time, and when they had first received a pamphlet. Respondents were first aware of the MASP programme was usually (in 87% of cases) the same year as when they received a MASP pamphlet. This finding suggests that most respondents in the particular sample supplied by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety received the pamphlet at the same or similar time as they heard about the programme and attended a meeting or workshop.

### 4.4 Functionality of MASP programme

Almost all the volunteers were highly complementary about the operation of the programme, recognising the occurrence of regular MASP meetings at their SAPS stations and police precincts (92%), that MASP networks of volunteers continue to be trained (92%), that the MASP programme is operating well in the community (94%) and that community members support the MASP network (94%). The volunteers perceive the Gauteng Department of Community Safety (DCS) as committed to the programme. For example, 97% believe that the DCS establishes networks of men to act as Safety Promoters within their neighbourhoods to address gender and child abuse in communities, and almost all recognise the DCS training of men to act as Safety Promoters within their neighbourhoods.

#### 4.4.1 Extent to which trained volunteers fulfil their MASP roles and responsibilities

The perceptions of volunteers on whether the MASP training they receive enabled them to fulfil their MASP roles and responsibilities are summarised below:

While almost all volunteers endorse the MASP training as enabling them to carry out their MASP roles and responsibilities, approximately 40%-45% strongly agree, and slightly more (51%-59%) agree. Volunteers are most positive to their training as helping victims in the community, with 45% strongly agreeing, while 38%-40% strongly agree on the other aspects of their role fulfilment.

The pattern of the volunteer responses is repeated in the responses to their personal experiences of MASP. For example, 42% of volunteers strongly agree and 53% agree that MASP has been effective in reducing abuse against women and children. Community respondents are slightly less positive in their perceptions of the potential of MASP, with approximately a quarter in strong agreement and 55%-60% in mere agreement. Finally, the knowledge levels of the volunteers were assessed as a further indicator of the adequacy of volunteer training. A measurement scale of 17 knowledge items, derived from the MASP Training Manual (as supplied by DCS), was used as the assessment tool.

#### **4.4.2 Improving the implementation of the MASP programme**

The third, and final, research question on improving the MASP programme is addressed in two sections. The first section examines the perceptions of volunteers and community respondents on the extent to which the MASP programme needs improvement in certain aspects, for example, recruitment of volunteers; setting up community meetings and communication with SAPS stations. The second section examines the open-ended questions on respondents' suggestions to improve MASP and, in the case of community members, their final thoughts on MASP.

#### **4.4.3 Aspects of the MASP programme perceived to need improvement**

The volunteers and community respondents were asked the extent to which they perceived that improvements were necessary (none/ a little/ a lot) on six aspects of MASP: recruitment of volunteers; setting up community meetings; communication with SAPS stations; facilities to accommodate MASP at SAPS stations; support of the DCS; and support of civic groups. At least a third (35%-44%) of the volunteers stated that there needs to be change on each of the six aspects listed, while approximately 50% of the community respondents responded similarly. The extent of improvement perceived to be necessary by the volunteers is notable in view of their almost unanimous support for the programme, and may indicate the respondents becoming more uninhibited in their responses as the interviews unfolded.

### **V. Conclusion**

In the light of the results, the study has concluded that MASP volunteers and community members strongly agree that the programme has succeeded in reducing crime against women and incidents of sexual abuse. Furthermore, the results pointed to the majority of volunteers and community members being aware of the MASP Programme.

The following recommendations for the Gauteng Department of Community Safety can be derived from this quantitative evaluation project of MASP: strategic allocation of MASP resources to bolster programme effectiveness, refresher training targeted at MASP volunteers to improve the effectiveness of the programme. It is further suggested that the Department of Community Safety should continuously support MASP volunteers to improve MASP impact. Furthermore, the study has recommended that marketing and awareness initiatives of MASP to amplify the profile of MASP.

As drivers of the MASP networks, volunteers need to have mastered the accurate details in the field of sexual crimes. The research and the detailed area analysis in particular, showed deficiencies in their state of knowledge: volunteers from Eldorado Park, Ivory Park, Sebokeng, Soshanguve and Tembisa scored relatively poorly on the knowledge test. Direct volunteer training should be extended and refresher courses should be offered to the volunteers who have already been trained. Furthermore, this finding demonstrates the need for targeted refresher training, with possible novel formats for essentials on myths versus facts, and on human rights and legal recourse. This need became clear out of the range of responses that showed sub-optimal knowledge levels among volunteers (but not surprisingly also community members), despite their belief in the MASP programme, their observations of its penetration and community reach, and enthusiasm to see the programme continued and extended.

Given the nature of a volunteer community programme such as MASP, volunteers need to be wholly supportive of their training. However, whilst almost all volunteers endorsed training as enabling them to carry out their MASP roles and responsibilities, approximately fewer than half strongly endorse the training as adequate for their role fulfilment. Thus, training initiatives need be strengthened. Such heightened measures, and in particular the provision of educational materials on gendered violence and the empowerment of victims, will support the volunteers in their actions of outreach and community network construction. The materials that the evaluation identified as important strategic tools in the further development of MASP might include details of legal recourse, and specifics of human rights pertaining to vulnerable women and children.

The elaboration of various forms of support - which will be likely to further improve MASP's impact - should be considered, both at the levels of volunteers and community members. Several areas were identified where volunteers advocated a MASP-remake. All the volunteers from Soshanguve and Tembisa supported major

changes to the programme, as did over half the volunteers who lived in Eldorado Park, Katlehong North and Vosloorus. Some volunteers expressed the need to have better integration into the South African Police Service structures in the province, and others cited having weapons such as teasers to protect themselves. These volunteers clearly need support and increased attention from the DCS.

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