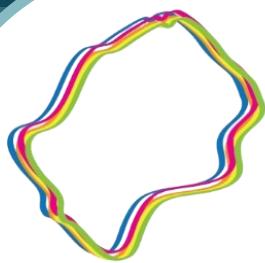


points of V.I.E.W.S



THE PEOPLE'S MATRIX
ASSOCIATION

participatory data analysis and interpretation from
community monitoring of incidents of violence and
violation in LESOTHO

JULY 2025

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participatory data analysis and interpretation from community monitoring
of incidents of violence and violation in LESOTHO | JULY 2025

Developed through collaboration between THE PEOPLE'S MATRIX ASSOCIATION
(Matrix) and POSITIVE VIBES

V 1.1 JULY 2025



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BACKGROUND | monitoring community experiences of violence and violation through V.I.E.W.S

Since 2016, in collaboration with Positive Vibes, community organisations in East and Southern Africa – and, progressively over time, in West Africa and Central America – have supported constituencies of people living with HIV, adolescent girls and young women, sexual and gender minorities, sex workers and people with disabilities to participate in monitoring of healthcare services, facilities and systems; to grow in confidence to hold service providers and policy makers accountable to their professional and statutory obligations: their reasonable duty of care to citizens. Monitoring is an effective strategy to position and maintain communities at the centre of public health that includes responses to HIV; to amplify voice, to reinforce agency, to equalise power, to strengthen influence on – and enable contribution of communities to – quality improvement of services for which they are the direct end-users, consumers and beneficiaries.

In 2021, Positive Vibes expanded its collaboration with communities to develop ma'Box. ma'Box is a virtual suggestion box – an online platform (www.mabox.co.bw) – that places the power for monitoring and accountability in the hands of community members. Operated by communities, through organisations like the People's Matrix Association ("Matrix")¹, ma'Box allows service-users to give immediate, real-time feedback on their user-experience and satisfaction at specific health facilities on specific days. ma'Box users have the option to remain anonymous or to leave their preferred contact details for follow-up and feedback (by a designated Matrix team member), managed through an integrated Follow-up and Feedback system built into the ma'Box platform. Service-users can access ma'Box independently – even from the privacy and comfort of their home,

provided they have access to the internet through WiFi or mobile data – or they can be assisted to interact with the platform by a community Peer Monitor stationed at monitored facilities and equipped with a data-enabled device to promote and facilitate feedback. Findings from this participatory community monitoring are shared periodically with health facilities to inform remedial action and to guide quality improvement interventions that make services more accessible and acceptable to clients².

from ACCESS TO HEALTH to ACCESS TO RIGHTS, SAFETY AND JUSTICE

Health and wellbeing – and dignified, respectful, equitable access to services – are not restricted to health facilities. They are, instead, more broadly environmental, determined by the socioeconomic and political context, conditions and circumstances that surround each facility, and in the communities in which service users, their neighbours and their peers live. Physical and psychological safety and security, and confidence that basic rights and freedoms will be respected and protected, are key factors to creating an enabling environment for access to care and services. When these rights are violated – or confidence for access is inhibited by violence, or through negligence or inaction by duty bearers in response to reports of violence – people withdraw and retreat. Service uptake declines as civic engagement wanes.

Violence and violation³ can be difficult to demonstrate substantively and systematically to

² By July 2025, over 10 400 service users in Lesotho have given feedback on ma'Box since the launch of the platform.

³ Violence against diverse populations – especially amongst minority rightsholders – takes many forms, often perpetrated casually and callously, and with impunity: the physical violence of assault; the psychological and social violence of homophobic, transphobic or gendered discrimination; the socioeconomic violence of eviction from home, or expulsion from school, or withdrawal of employment opportunities. The effects and impacts of such violence are aggravated and amplified in environments where state entities and structures are, for a variety of reasons, insufficiently able to fulfil, protect, defend, and uphold the rights of citizens – individuals and communities – to dignity, privacy, non-discrimination, equality under the law, and security of the person, and to adequately facilitate access to public safety and to justice.

¹ Established in 2008 and registered in 2015, The People's Matrix Association (Matrix) is an LGBTIQ organisation working to create an enabling environment in which people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions have equitable access to dignified healthcare and justice in Lesotho. Based in Maseru, the organisation pursues its objectives by promoting solidarity and cooperation within the LGBTIQ community; through collaboration with other community-based, civil society and human rights organisations in Lesotho; through strategic partnerships in the Africa region and worldwide; by delivering programmes and services that respond to the health and human rights needs of LGBTIQ people in Lesotho; and through advocacy engagement with public policy and strategy.

decision-makers and duty-bearers who may be reluctant to act in the absence of evidence that laws, policies, prevailing attitudes in the structural and institutional environments of a country and amongst public servants and state actors, and sociocultural norms in communities have harmful impact – directly and indirectly – on rightsholders. Victims and survivors of violence and violation, in turn, are often reluctant to report those incidents, especially where those acts are perpetrated against them by people or structures of greater power. Reporting can evoke deep feelings of shame and stigma, anxiety about recrimination and punitive retaliation, fear of not being believed, and a disbelief that any relief or recourse will be possible.

Based on lessons learned from the successful implementation of ma'Box for community monitoring of service delivery at health facilities, Positive Vibes developed V.I.E.W.S, the “violating incident early warning system”, an expansion of the ma'Box platform. V.I.E.W.S allows users to report incidents of violence or violation, to describe the effects of that experience, to rate the responses of institutions when that incident was reported, and to request follow-up contact for additional support, referral, or emergency intervention.

On V.I.E.W.S, data is collected and collated in a secure back end with the power to filter and analyse information, and to generate a variety of customisable reports around:

1. **Performance** | the number of incidents reported on V.I.E.W.S over time, and the effectiveness and efficiency of follow-up.
2. **Demographics** | the profile of community members reporting incidents of violence or violation on V.I.E.W.S with respect to their:

- Sexual orientation
- Gender Identity and expression
- Intersex status
- Sex worker status
- HIV status
- Age
- Disability status
- Displacement (migration) status
- Drug use

3. **the Incident** | the nature of the violating incident, including:

- the type of incident
- behaviours accompanying or motivating the incident
- where the incident occurred
- who perpetrated the incident
- whether the incident was witnessed by others
- whether the incident was reported
- the impact or effect of the incident on the individual
- whether the individual believes the incident constitutes a violation of their human rights

Matrix initiated V.I.E.W.S on ma'Box in Lesotho in December 2024.

PROCESS

In Lesotho, Matrix commenced its monitoring of community experiences with violence and violation through V.I.E.W.S on ma'Box in December 2024.

In July 2025, Matrix initiated its first participatory data-analysis and interpretation exercise, convening community members from diverse population groups to review V.I.E.W.S data, and to analyse and interpret it – discussing as a community, from a community perspective, through the unique lens of community experience – what the data might mean, and what it might imply for programming and advocacy that promotes rights, inclusion, safety and access to justice.

In Maseru, with process and technical support from Positive Vibes:

1. On the 21st July 2025, a small core team of Matrix teammates convened to review the V.I.E.W.S back-end data, to collate and prepare data into graphs for presentation and discussion with a broader community stakeholder group, and to develop an analytical framework for discussion.
2. On 22nd July 2025, members of the Matrix constituency and community – some with experience of filing an incident report on V.I.E.W.S; some representing diverse population groups with insight into the lived experience of their community – gathered to review the prepared data, to verify and validate (or refute it), to analyse and interpret it, and ultimately to make recommendations for action in response. Participants reviewed performance, demographic and incident data, applying the suggested analytical framework:

- What do we OBSERVE?
- What do we think it MEANS? How do we INTERPRET / UNDERSTAND it?
- Does this MATCH OUR EXPERIENCE? If our experience is different, HOW DO WE EXPLAIN THAT?

- What does that MEAN FOR US? Why is this important TO US?
- What QUESTIONS are raised for us? What are we CURIOUS TO KNOW?
- What are we LEARNING? Programmatically? Operationally? Strategically? Tactically?
- What MESSAGES do we need to construct/communicate?
- What RESPONSE is necessary to make our healthcare and programming more ACCESSIBLE, ACCEPTABLE and APPROPRIATE?

Findings from this cycle of V.I.E.W.S monitoring and the qualitative analysis and characterisation of experience by community members will inform a high-level Multistakeholder Convening in September 2025, during which time Matrix and community members will present V.I.E.W.S data to institutional stakeholders that will include government ministries, Members of Parliament, senior law enforcement and public health administration officials, United Nations agencies, and international development partners.

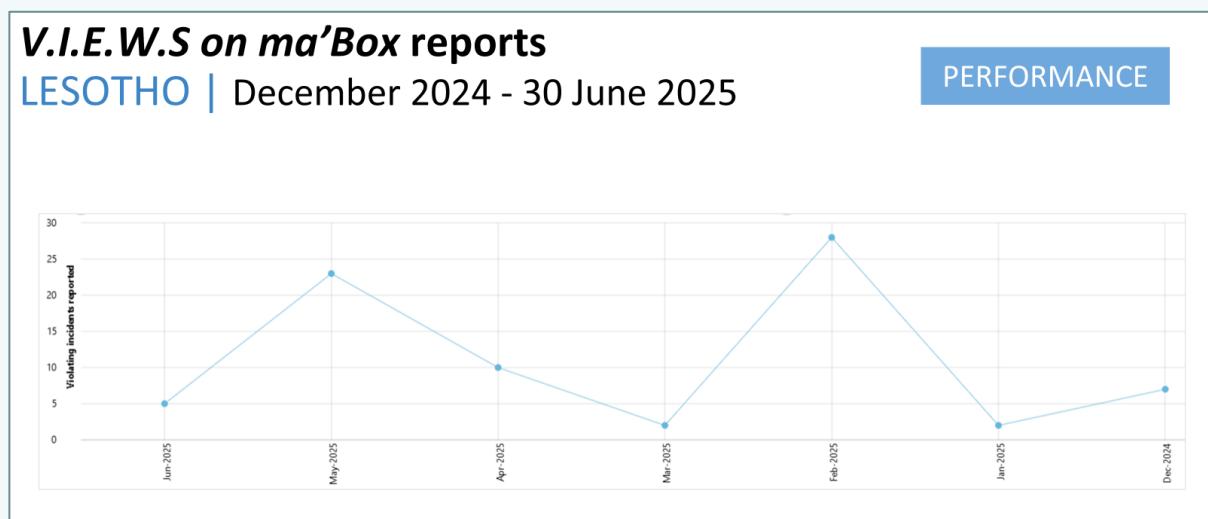
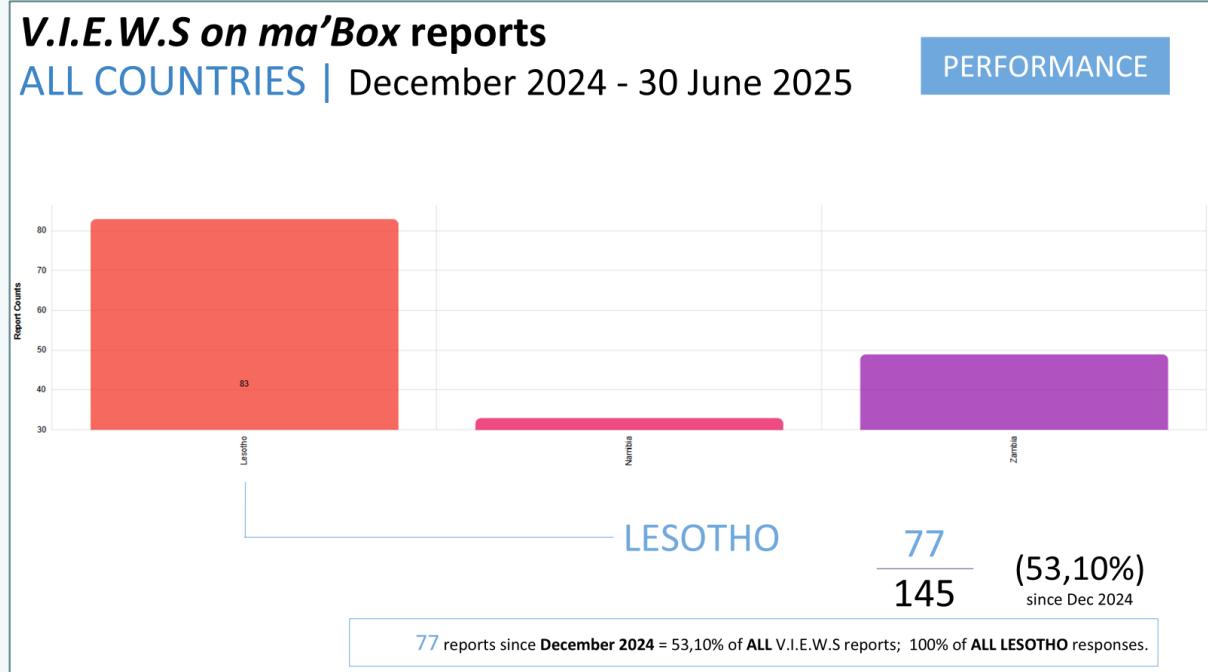
V.I.E.W.S FROM THE TOP

top line findings, observations and priorities from VIEWS data

Lesotho must **enable better access to justice, to social protection, and to public safety**, for marginalised communities through:

- **STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING **LEGAL PROTECTIONS** for sex workers.**
- passing laws and implementing policies to give effect to **LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION (LGR)** for the transgender community.
- **PROTECTING AND DEFENDING TRANSGENDER MEN** from sexual assault.
- **EXPANDING MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES AND SUPPORT SERVICES** suitable for marginalised communities who suffer deep psychological harm from violence and violation.
- **DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING SUPPORT INITIATIVES** for parents and family members who may not have the necessary skills with which to understand, and to respond appropriately and supportively to LGBTIQ young people in the home and family environment.
- **SUPPORTING COLLABORATION and PARTNERSHIPS** between LGBTIQ and other civil society and community organisations to improve the frequency and quality of reporting of incidents of domestic, social, institutional and structural violence in Lesotho.

PERFORMANCE



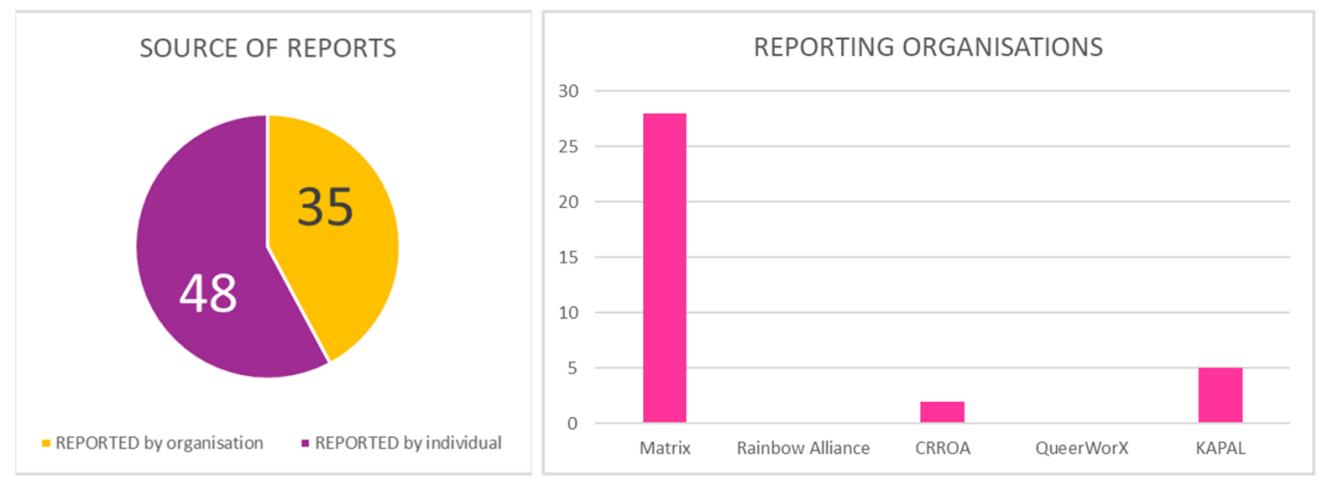
Reviewing PERFORMANCE of V.I.E.W.S in its debut period – the extent to which the opportunity to report experiences of violence and violation on the platform was taken up by community members – participants in the data-review exercise:

1. Appreciate that Lesotho is not acting in isolation. Instead, it is an innovator and pioneer, piloting V.I.E.W.S as a new strategic intervention alongside only a small number of other countries in the region, Zambia and Namibia⁴. By comparison with its peers, Lesotho – with 77 respondents in a six month period – has performed remarkably well in this first cycle of implementation.

⁴ Zambia and Namibia commenced implementation of V.I.E.W.S in December 2024 and May 2025, respectively.

2. Affirm that in concept and in practical implementation, V.I.E.W.S is establishing a safe space where people who may not have had other options to express their voice and share their experiences feel free to report adverse events and be offered rapid response.
3. Suggest factors that have contributed to this strong debut performance of V.I.E.W.S in Lesotho, many such factors related to common and persistent systemic and structural obstacles presented to minority populations by Lesotho's sociopolitical context, including:
 - the criminalisation of aspects of sex work that increases their vulnerability, exposes them to exploitation and abuse by clients and service providers, and deprives them of recourse through law enforcement when their rights or safety are undermined.
 - domestic violence (including psychological harm through verbal abuse and social rejection) directed towards LGBTIQ young people by parents and other relatives in the home and family environments.
 - increased visibility and profile of V.I.E.W.S amongst community members through the engagement of a Peer Monitor⁵ to raise awareness about the system, promote its uptake, and assist prospective respondents to file reports.
4. Note that, despite evidence that community members are adopting V.I.E.W.S as a reporting system, community participation is sporadic and inconsistent from month to month. Anecdotally, social violence and structural violation towards minority populations – sex workers and transgender women in particular – far exceed what is currently represented on V.I.E.W.S. Reviewers suggest this underreporting is partially owing to:
 - limited awareness amongst communities about V.I.E.W.S. Marketing, advertising, promotion, visibility, and information about the platform and its purpose must be strengthened to prepare communities to participate.
 - low confidence amongst communities that public systems, including public safety, law enforcement and the justice system, will respond to protect individuals who report adverse events, discouraging them from formal reporting.
 - fear amongst community members – who typically have lesser social mobility, financial independence and power – of retaliation or other punitive consequences of reporting an adverse incident.
 - cultural and religious justifications for violence towards or violations of the rights of LGBTIQ people that create deep internalised acceptance of and normalisation of harmful practices by individuals who have such practices perpetrated against them. Victims and survivors of varied forms of violence are reluctant to confront these powerful systems of oppression expressed through discrete incidents.
 - the impact of the US government stop-work order, funding freeze and widespread programme and project terminations in January 2025 to, amongst other effects in Lesotho, significantly reduce the operational capacity of KAPAL, a sex worker organisation partnered with Matrix, and with it the organisational capacity for community mobilisation.
 - slow case management⁶ disappoints individuals who have submitted a report on V.I.E.W.S, expecting more rapid responsiveness and resolution and, in turn, reduces the reputation of the platform and the confidence with which other community members might engage.

⁵ Peer Monitors are trusted, connected members of the community engaged to promote V.I.E.W.S., to raise awareness about the platform, and to assist community members to submit reports of adverse events. Peer Monitors are equipped with a data-enabled device (a cell phone; a tablet) that can be offered to community members who wish to complete a report but may not have their own device or internet access. Although it is preferred for respondents to self-administer the survey – with support from a Peer Monitor to clarify questions or terminology upon request – some community members prefer to narrate their story to a Peer Monitor who guides them through V.I.E.W.S as a systematic way to document their experience. Alternatively, community members who have the URL (www.mabox.co.bw) can access V.I.E.W.S independently and report an incident at their convenience, without any interaction with a Peer Monitor.



5. Are encouraged that, proportionally, more individuals are self-reporting incidents from their direct lived experience than are organisations documenting known cases of violence and violation. Reviewers are encouraged that this shows a good early understanding of V.I.E.W.S by some sections of the community, a level of faith and confidence in the system, and an early willingness of individuals to report difficult experiences.
6. Note that although several organisations are listed on V.I.E.W.S as “reporting organisations” with the capacity to record and document known cases of violence and violation, Matrix dominates. Reviewers:
 - reinforce the impact of the severe and dramatic cuts in United States funding to Key Populations programming in early 2025, and the specific effect of that loss of funding to undermine the capacity of KAPAL to reach and mobilise sex workers, a key constituency whose experience of routine violence and violation is vastly underrepresented in this first V.I.E.W.S cycle.
 - recommend that Matrix more deliberately engage CRROA, QueerWorX, and Rainbow Alliance to present and to demonstrate V.I.E.W.S, to discuss its relevance and benefit to the organisations and their respective and collective constituencies, and to strategise around cooperative implementation and support in subsequent cycles. The organisations are well placed to advocate for and to promote V.I.E.W.S amongst their respective constituencies but may not yet have achieved the optimal level of awareness themselves.
7. Appreciate that V.I.E.W.S includes an integrated Follow-Up and Case Management function. Individuals who report adverse incidents need not feel isolated or abandoned in that experience but can choose to leave contact details and request follow-up contact; that offer of support and,

⁶ Individuals submitting a report on V.I.E.W.S do so anonymously to contribute their experience to data on violence and violation – there is no requirement for identification – unless they choose to request follow-up contact and intervention through the Integrated Follow-Up System on V.I.E.W.S.

depending on the circumstances, intervention can be a significant incentive for disclosure and reporting⁷.

Reviewers acknowledge the strong performance of the case management function in this first cycle of V.I.E.W.S implementation. Of the 25 requests for contact and follow-up, only 8% (n = 2) were not yet followed up – largely because individuals were not responsive to follow-up calls at the numbers they provided – by the time of the data analysis exercise. All other cases have been referred or resolved, or are currently being investigated to determine an appropriate response.

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FOLLOW-UP

Record Code#	Country	Reporting As	Reporting Organisation	Implementing Organisation	Region	Specified Region	Incident Date	Incident Time	Geographical Area	Incident Venue	Perpetrator	Status	
1056	Lesotho	I am reporting as an individual	I am reporting as an individual	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		07/11/2024	16:34	Mazenod Ha Paki, Maseru, Lesotho	My own home	Relative / family member	Resolved	View
1055	Lesotho	I am reporting as an individual	I am reporting as an individual	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		04/01/2025	23:24	Mohalalitoe, Maseru, Lesotho	My own home	Other (please specify)	Case in progress	View
1054	Lesotho	I am reporting as an individual	I am reporting as an individual	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		04/01/2025	23:24	Mohalalitoe, Maseru, Lesotho	My own home	Other (please specify)	Case in progress	View
1050	Lesotho	I am reporting as an individual	I am reporting as an individual	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		02/12/2024	22:34	Maseru West, Maseru, Lesotho	On the street	Client / customer	Referred	View
1047	Lesotho	I am reporting as an organisation	Crime Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Association (CRROA)	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		15/10/2024	11:31	Leribe English Medium High School, Hlotse, Lesotho	School	Teacher	Not followed up	View
1046	Lesotho	I am reporting as an organisation	Crime Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Association (CRROA)	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		15/10/2024	11:31	Leribe English Medium High School, Hlotse, Lesotho	School	Teacher	Not followed up	View
1045	Lesotho	I am reporting as an individual	I am reporting as an individual	The People's Matrix Association	No data collected		10/12/2024	09:27	Mazenod, Lesotho	Police station	Police officer	Case in progress	View

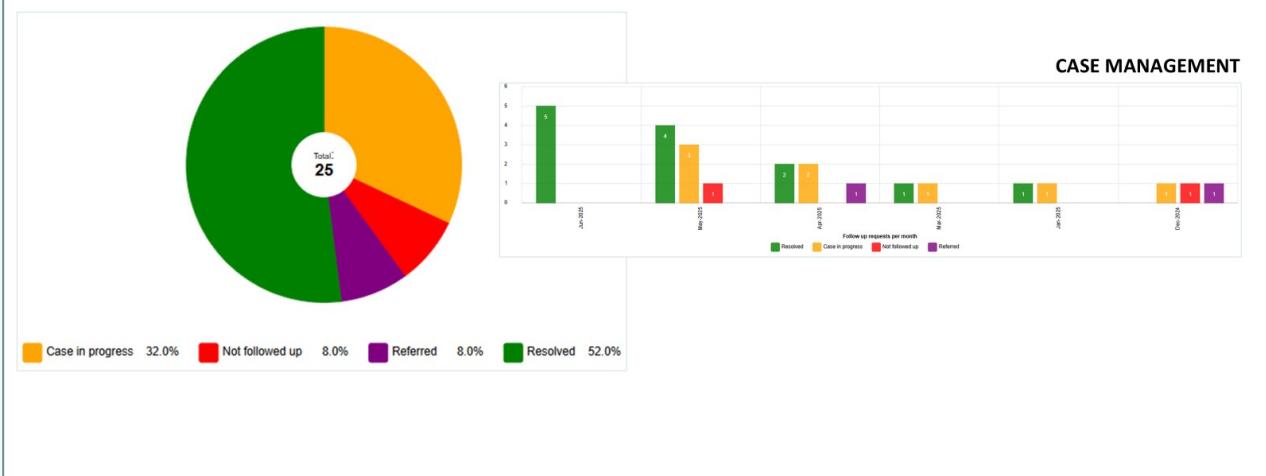
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FOLLOW-UP



⁷ the availability of a supportive response is arguably a moral and ethical responsibility of organisations inviting community members to be vulnerable, to invest trust, to express confidence, and to exercise courage to report and describe incidents that are traumatic and have profoundly impacted the individual and their circumstances.

8. Recommend strategies and adaptations to implementation in subsequent cycles of monitoring and documentation through V.I.E.W.S to improve reach into and mobilisation of community members and to improve accuracy and comprehensiveness of data that reflects and represents the lived experience of sexual and gender minorities and sex workers in Lesotho. Reviewers suggest:

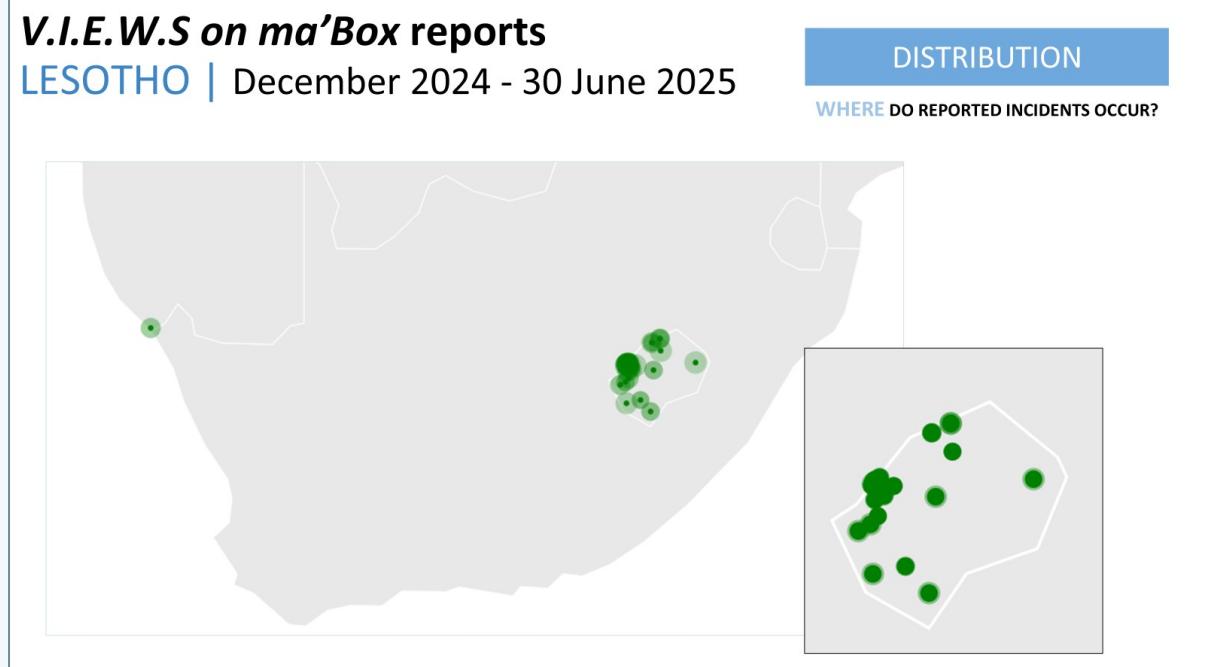
- increased community outreach by reporting organisations, including Matrix, KAPAL and others, to interact directly with sex workers at community level, raising their awareness of V.I.E.W.S and offering many without smartphone access the opportunity to record their experiences.
- leveraging social media and other digital platforms to engage LGBTIQ populations and promote individual self-administered reporting through V.I.E.W.S.
- training community-based organisations around gender-based violence (GBV) and intimate partner violence (IPV), how these can be characterised and expressed, and how V.I.E.W.S can be relevant to quantifying the scale of the issue, and to qualifying the nature of this type of violence and its impact.
- utilising national events and other major events – for example, IDAHOBIT and Pride – to strategically promote V.I.E.W.S and expand awareness and sensitisation.
- clarifying in messaging to community members that participation in V.I.E.W.S does not consume large amounts of mobile data.
- activating the Matrix district structures to expand information and awareness of V.I.E.W.S and to support reporting and documentation of incidents in areas with poor internet access.



findings

location and demographics

LOCATION



Location data provides important information about the geographic distribution of incidents experienced and reported by respondents on V.I.E.W.S⁸. Reviewing data on LOCATION of reported experiences of violence and violation on V.I.E.W.S in Lesotho, participants in the data-review exercise:

1. Are pleased that reported incidents are not confined only to Maseru, but are distributed more broadly across the map, reflecting a range of experiences, groups and individuals.
2. Note that incidents are, however, concentrated in Maseru and Mafeteng where Peer Monitors supporting the engagement of communities with V.I.E.W.S are stationed.
3. Suggest that, in its debut period, information about V.I.E.W.S. is not yet adequately disseminated in other districts like, for example, Leribe; subsequently, fewer reports of locally occurring incidents are received from these areas.

⁸ When reporting incidents on V.I.E.W.S, respondents are asked to identify the location where the incident occurred. Locations are geo-tagged so that incident distribution and concentration can be mapped.

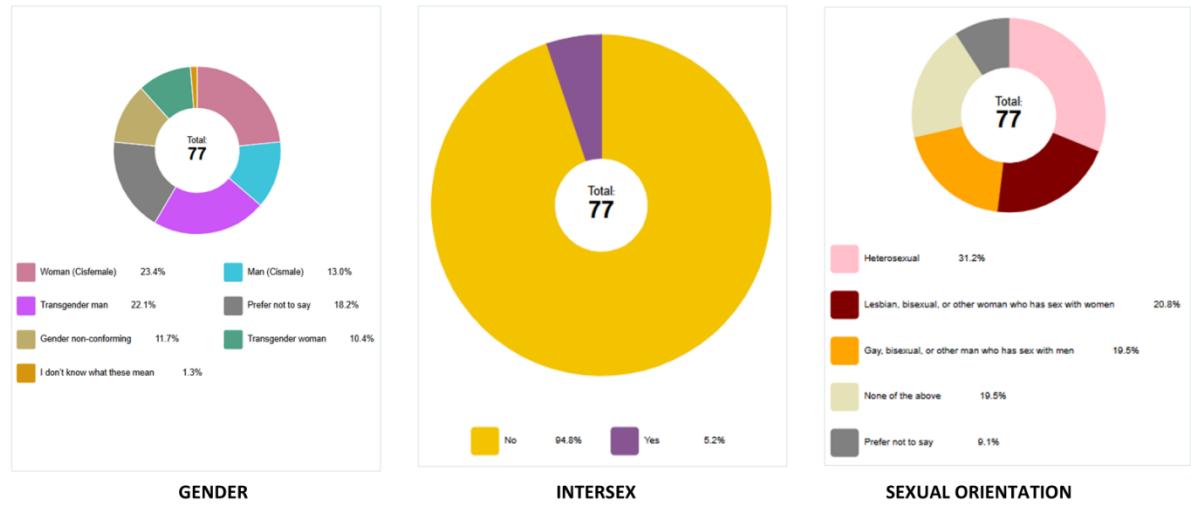
DEMOGRAPHICS

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DEMOGRAPHICS

WHO IS REPORTING INCIDENTS?



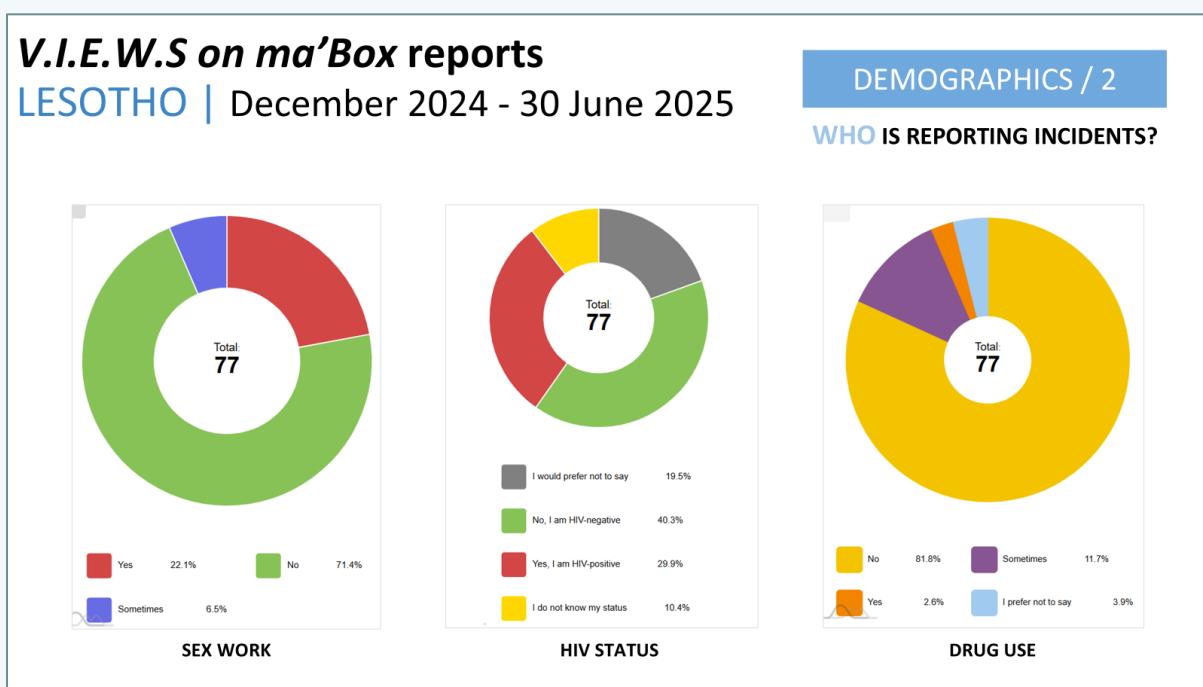
Demographic data provides important information about the profile of respondents experiencing incidents of violence and violation and reporting those incidents on V.I.E.W.S. Analysing demographic data, participants in the data-review exercise note that by:

GENDER,

1. Cisgender women comprise the highest proportion of reports (23.4%).
2. A surprisingly high number of transgender men (22.1%) and gender non-conforming persons (11.7%) who tend to be largely individuals assigned female at birth have filed reports on V.I.E.W.S. This high prevalence of female-bodied trans-diverse persons on V.I.E.W.S is quite different to those populations' low visibility and poor representation in health facility monitoring data, showing the extent to which trans men may not be presenting for services at health facilities and their general vulnerability to violence.
3. Only 10.4% of reports originate from transgender women who, anecdotally, experience routine violence in many forms. Reviewers question whether, in this debut period, V.I.E.W.S is adequately reaching the core constituencies of the Matrix community and suggest efforts are needed to strengthen community awareness of the system, and to promote its relevance.
4. 5.2% of respondents identify as intersex. Although this is only a small proportion of the overall sample, and intersex people are a relatively small minority within an already small group of gender minorities, it is sufficient to make this population visible in ways they are not prominent in facility monitoring data. Intersex people are less likely to present at public facilities for sensitive, often invasive or intrusive sexual and reproductive health services, but may be more likely to be the targets of domestic, social or institutional violence because of their sex characteristics or other characteristics.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION,

5. Respondents are diverse, across the spectrum of sexual orientation.
6. Heterosexuals comprise the highest proportion of identifying respondents (31,2%), but not overwhelmingly so, as is commonly the case with health facility monitoring. Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, for example, comprise 19,5% of reports on V.I.E.W.S.
7. Significantly, 20,8% of respondents are lesbian, bisexual and other queer-identifying women⁹ who typically have low visibility in health facility monitoring data – that tracks uptake of services at facilities where sexual and reproductive health services are offered through the entry point of HIV-associated services – but appear more prominently in a community system that reflects experiences of violence.



SEX WORKER STATUS,

8. 28,6% of respondents on V.I.E.W.S identified as people who do sex work. Reviewers suggest that sex workers in Lesotho are subject to high levels of violence and should comprise a higher proportion of respondents on V.I.E.W.S to correspond with their lived experience.
9. Reviewers recommend more targeted communication and awareness-raising strategies in subsequent periods to raise the visibility and profile of V.I.E.W.S amongst sex workers, and to improve its accessibility to them.

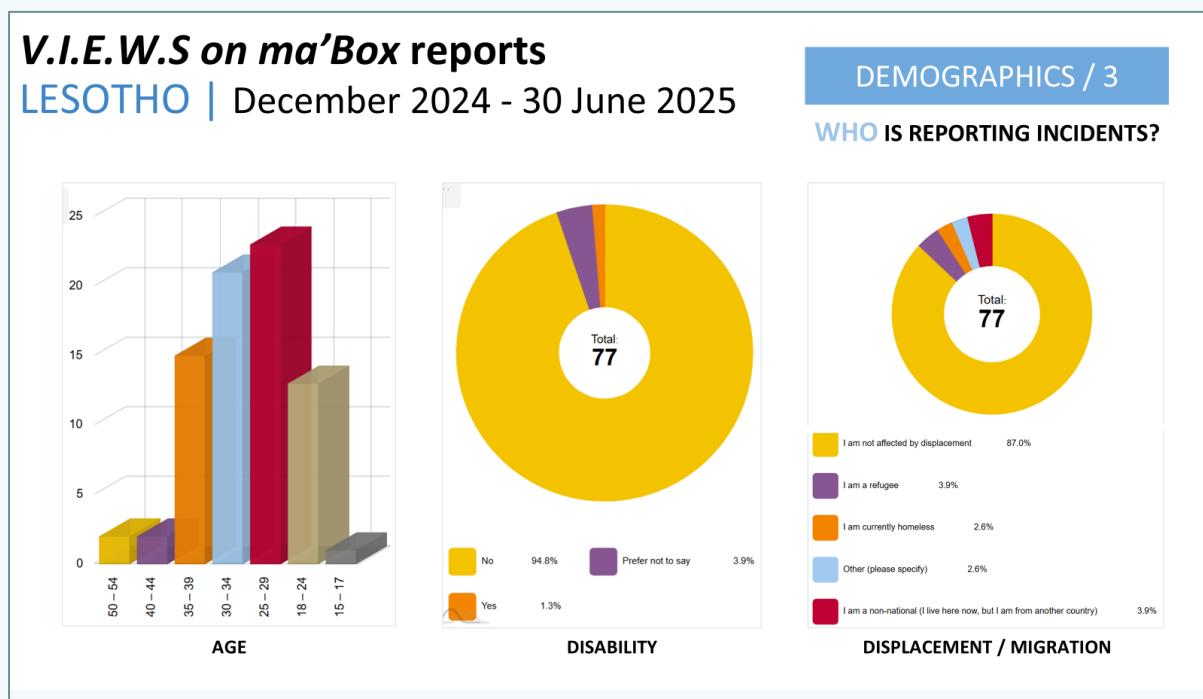
⁹ 20,8% of respondents on V.I.E.W.S identify as LBQ women, by sexual orientation. By gender, 23,4% of respondents identify as cisgender women. Data suggests then that most women reporting in this period are queer women. The visibility and representation of queer women who report incidents of violence is considerable.

HIV STATUS,

- At a minimum, 29,9% of respondents on V.I.E.W.S in this period reported being HIV+. A further 19,5% of respondents selected “prefer not to say” – as opposed to “no” – suggesting HIV+ respondents may constitute as many as 50% of reports. Reviewers suggest there may be a still higher proportion of HIV+ respondents experiencing and reporting experiences of violence who, as an effect of stigma, are concerned to disclose their status on the system and select “no” instead.
- Reviewers are encouraged that as many as 30% of respondents are comfortable and confident enough to disclose their HIV status, recognising the relevance of V.I.E.W.S to make visible the experiences of people living with HIV who are vulnerable to violence that only increases their vulnerability to HIV and its impacts, and reduces their access to healthcare, justice and other services.

DRUG USE,

- An unexpectedly high number of respondents – 18,2% across “yes”, “sometimes” and “prefer not to say” responses – indicated they used drugs, despite the high levels of stigma and judgement associated with that behaviour in Lesotho where “...people would rather say they are sex workers than disclose that they use drugs.” V.I.E.W.S is, potentially, a powerful platform – and increasingly trusted and credible – to promote disclosure that makes marginalised, difficult-to-reach populations visible.



AGE

- The majority of respondents on V.I.E.W.S in this period are in the 18 – 39 age group that would be most comfortable with the Peer Monitor or familiar with the civil society organisations supporting LGBTIQ+ people and sex workers at community level.

14. Young people below the age of 18 are under-represented in the reporting data despite, anecdotally, being subject to high levels of violence and violation. Reviewers recognise that:

- young people often experience abuse from family members or known individuals close to their family. The proximity and intimacy of those relationships make reporting difficult. At the same time, V.I.E.W.S becomes a powerful, relevant tool that offers individuals in that age group a safe, anonymous, secure channel for reporting.
- procedurally – as it has done with its health facility monitoring data – Matrix has discouraged its personnel, including Peer Monitors, from engaging with young people who are below the legal age to consent to participation in a survey or reporting tool. While this potentially misses individuals who are vulnerable, it is a measure to safeguard the privacy and welfare of children and to protect Matrix as an organisation from any misinformed accusations of improperly “promoting” or “recruiting” young people that may stem from the appearance of interaction without parental or guardian oversight.

DISPLACEMENT STATUS,

15. V.I.E.W.S illustrates that a number of non-nationals and other individuals of fragile residential and national identity status – a small proportion of the sample (13%), but sufficient to establish the relevance of this demographic category – are reporting experiences with violence or violation. That set includes non-nationals (who may be foreign or migrant workers, or in transit through Lesotho to another country), refugees seeking asylum and people experiencing homelessness.

16. Reviewers suggest that non-national migrants in Lesotho (at least some of whom may be LGBTIQ+ or doing sex work) may underreport experiences of violence out of fear of stigma, or concern of punitive consequences directed towards them by local authorities whose policies and practices are not inclusive for or accessible to foreign nationals. They (like people with disabilities) become marginalised voices amongst domestic populations who are subject to violence.



findings

population-specific
experiences of violence and
violation

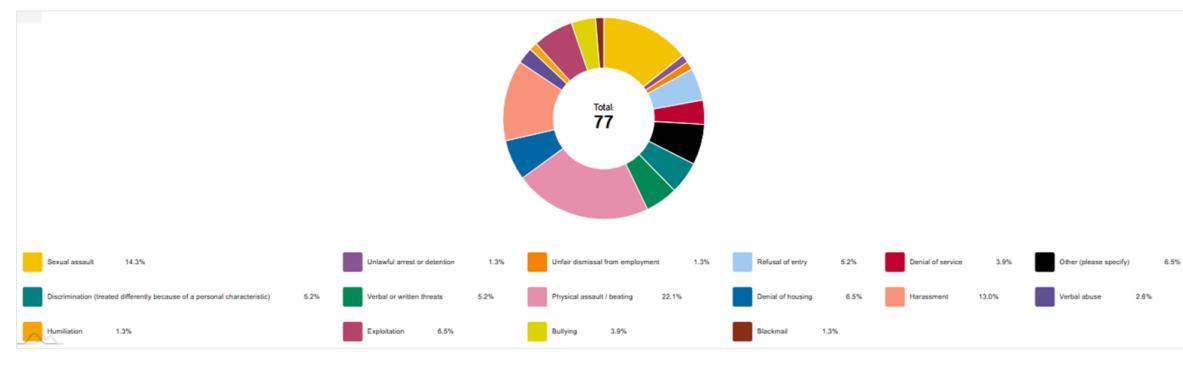


DIFFERENT
POPULATIONS EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE
DIFFERENTLY

VIOLATING INCIDENTS | what were communities experiencing?

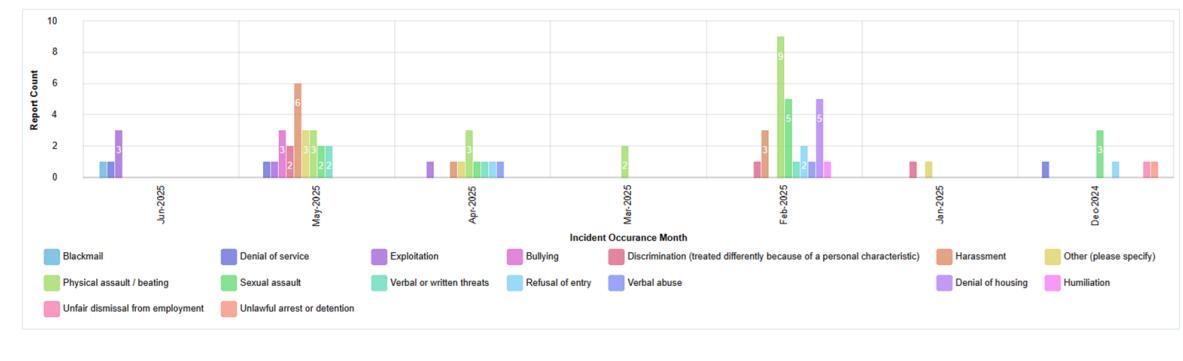
V.I.E.W.S on ma'Box reports
LESOTHO | December 2024 - 30 June 2025

VIOLATING INCIDENTS
WHAT **WERE COMMUNITIES**
EXPERIENCING



V.I.E.W.S on ma'Box reports
LESOTHO | December 2024 - 30 June 2025

VIOLATING INCIDENTS /2
WHAT **WERE COMMUNITIES**
EXPERIENCING

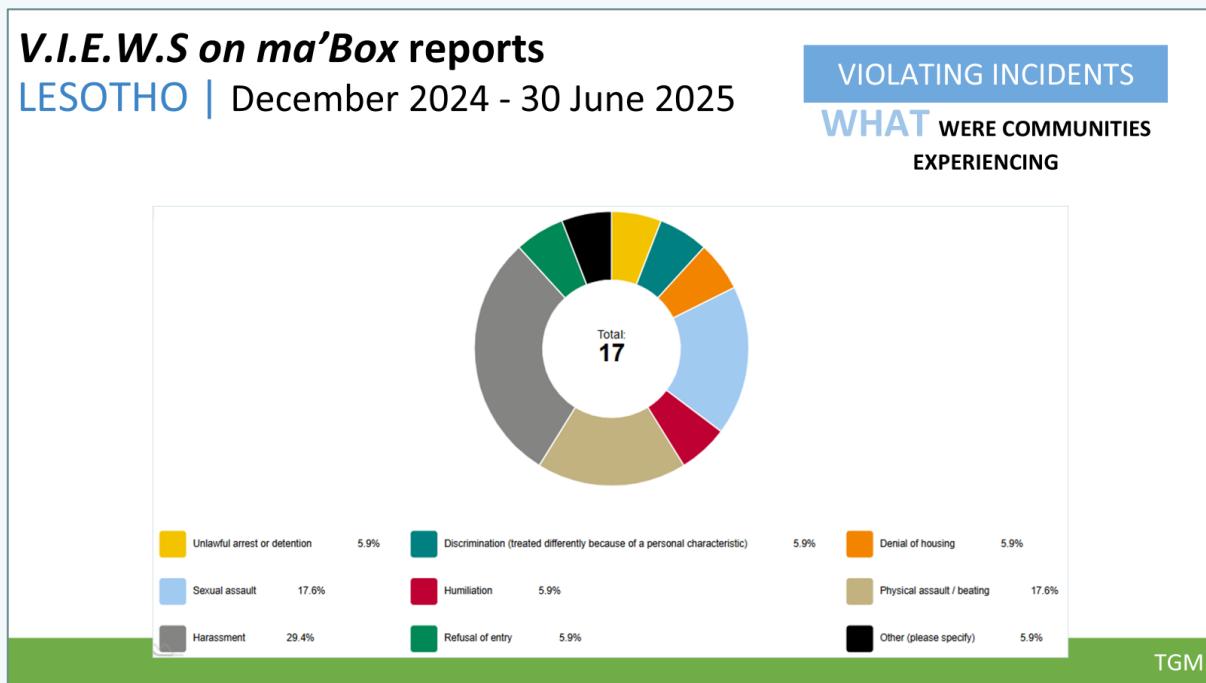


Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Note that when viewed collectively across all 77 reports filed on V.I.E.W.S during the period under review, community members experience a variety of types of violence and violation. Experiences are as diverse as communities themselves.
2. Observe that although experiences and types of violence vary, three categories of violence are most common:

- 22,1% of respondents report physical assault and beatings.
- 14,3% of respondents report sexual assault.
- 13% of respondents report harassment of some kind.

3. Recognise that, disaggregated by population, violence manifests in different patterns and in different concentrations.



- Amongst transgender men:
 - almost 30% report harassment
 - 17,6% report physical assault
 - 17,6% report sexual assault

Community members confirm that a large number of transgender men, especially, experience so-called “corrective rape” that is seldom disclosed or discussed. Reviewers are both alarmed by the prevalence of sexual assault reported amongst transgender men on V.I.E.W.S, and encouraged by its uncommon visibility, recognition and acknowledgement.

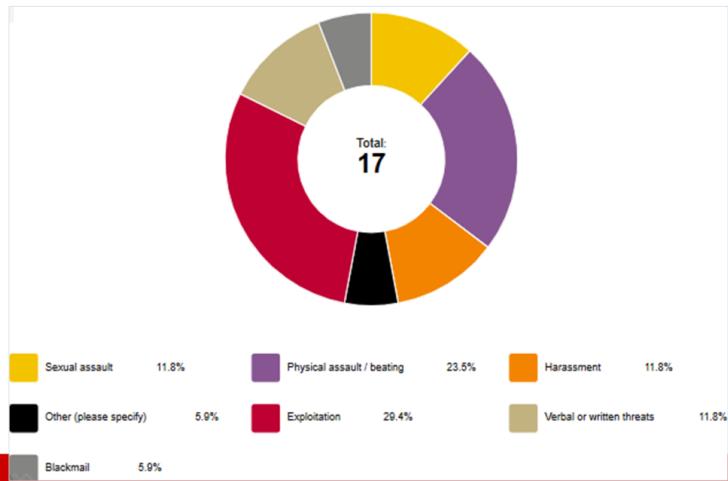
- Amongst sex workers:
 - almost 30% report exploitation
 - 23,5% report physical assault
 - 11,8% report sexual assault

Reviewers reflect that the economic vulnerability of sex workers and their criminal exposure with limited legal protections and legal recourse make them profoundly vulnerable to manipulation, threats, physical violence and exploitation (engaging the services of sex workers before abandoning them without payment for those services).

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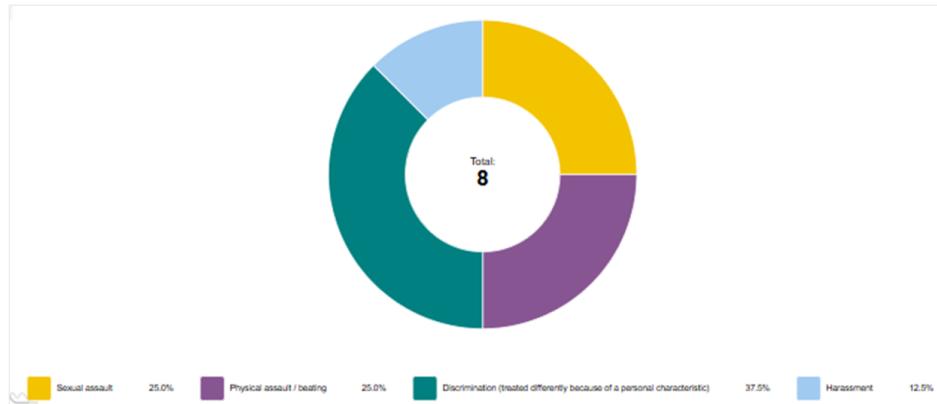


SW (Y)

V.I.E.W.S on ma'Box reports

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VIOLATING INCIDENTS
WHAT WERE COMMUNITIES
EXPERIENCING



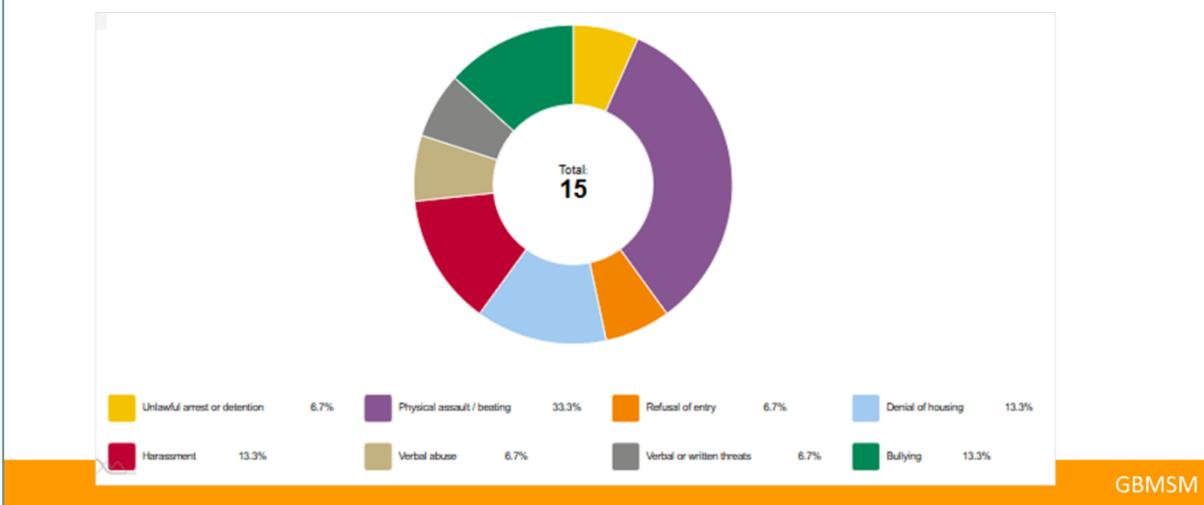
TGW

- Amongst transgender women:
 - 37,5% report discrimination, being treated differently because of their gender identity and expression. Discrimination is not only casual; it is socio-structural, with transgender woman being denied access to education and to economic opportunity and employment.
 - 23,5% report physical assault, with significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of trans women.
 - 11,8% report sexual assault

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VIOLATING INCIDENTS
WHAT WERE COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING



- Amongst gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men:
 - almost 33,3% report physical assault and beating. Physical violence towards gay and bisexual-identifying men is prolific, common and normalised.

"I have experienced physical violence from high school..."

"...at home, my uncle used to beat me a lot to correct me to be a man..."

"The physical violence is reported, unlike the verbal and bullying, because it is somehow seen as a valid case of violence..."

"If we were all taking violence seriously, the incidents would be more than what we see in the data."

"I remember reading a post on Facebook of a gay guy who was beaten up. The comments were so negative."
 - 13,3% report denial of housing that includes being driven from their family home by domestic stigma, discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse by other members of the household.

"I have experienced being kicked out of the house..."

"Many people relocate to Maseru to run away from family violence."
 - 13,3% report harassment and bullying, respectively.

"Bullying and harassment happen daily, and we have normalized them so much that we do not report incidents."

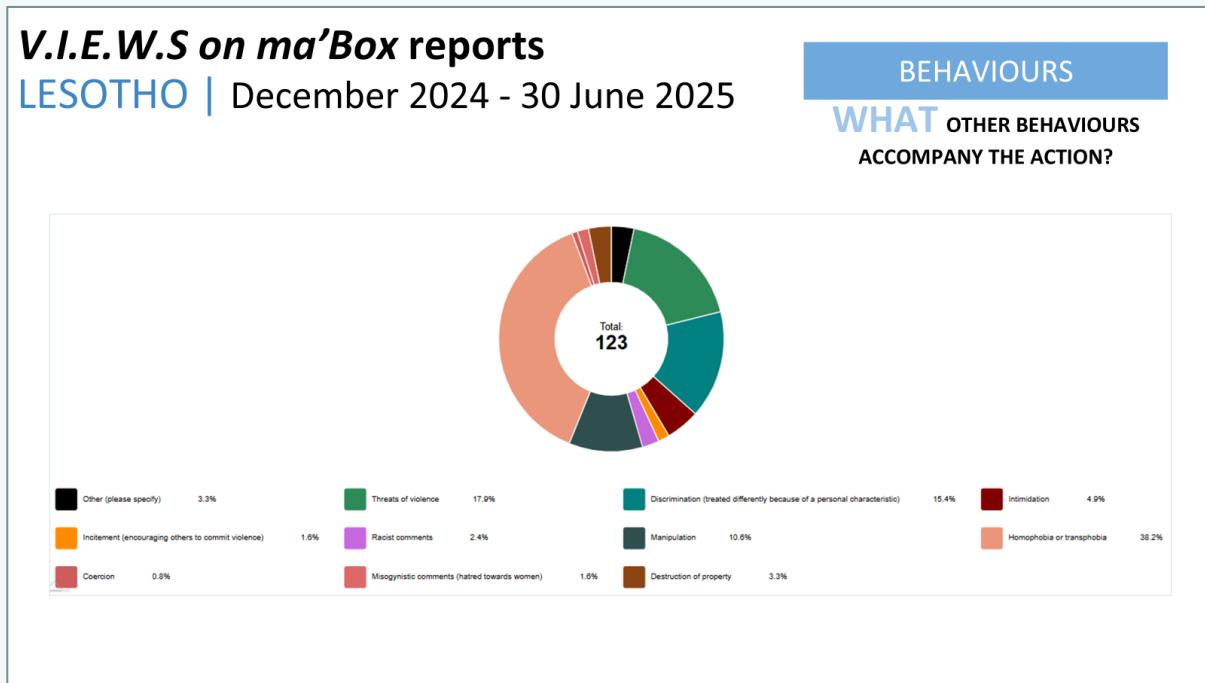
"Verbal abuse is underreported because we have normalized it and given up on people's behaviour towards us. We have developed resistance to some kinds of violence."

BEHAVIOURS | what other behaviours accompany the primary incident?

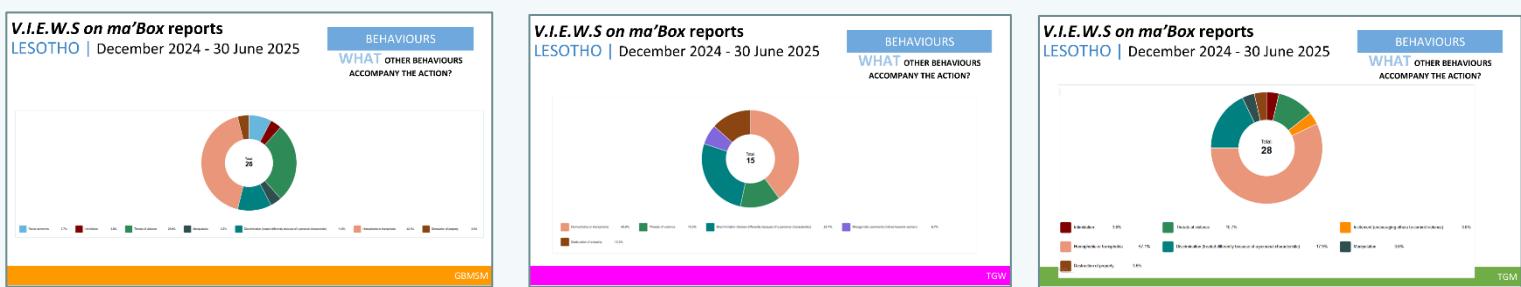
The primary act of violence is seldom isolated. More commonly, it is accompanied by – in fact, often motivated by – other complementary behaviours, actions or attitudes that compound the offence, that make the experience more complex and often more harmful and toxic, and that shed light on the intentions of the perpetrators of that action.

Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Recognise that, overwhelmingly, recognisable homophobia or transphobia accompany violence perpetrated against community members, most commonly expressed through discrimination and an intimidating threat of violence, the latter being common to the experience of sex workers as well.



2. Note that, even disaggregated by population, homophobia and transphobia are consistently the primary basis – with discrimination and threats of violence – for violence towards diverse sexual and gender minorities: transgender men, transgender women, and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. Culture and religion are cited as the dominant factors amongst a society ignorant of the facts related to gender and sexual diversity.

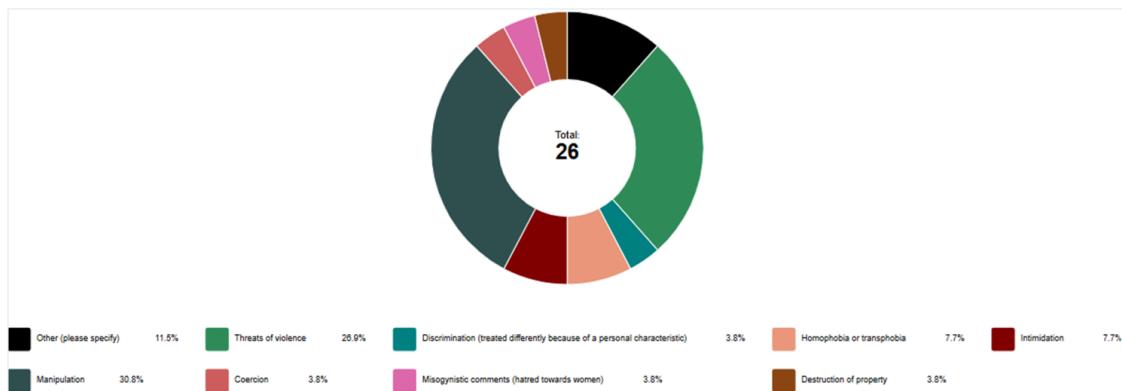


V.I.E.W.S on ma'Box reports

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BEHAVIOURS

WHAT OTHER BEHAVIOURS ACCOMPANY THE ACTION?

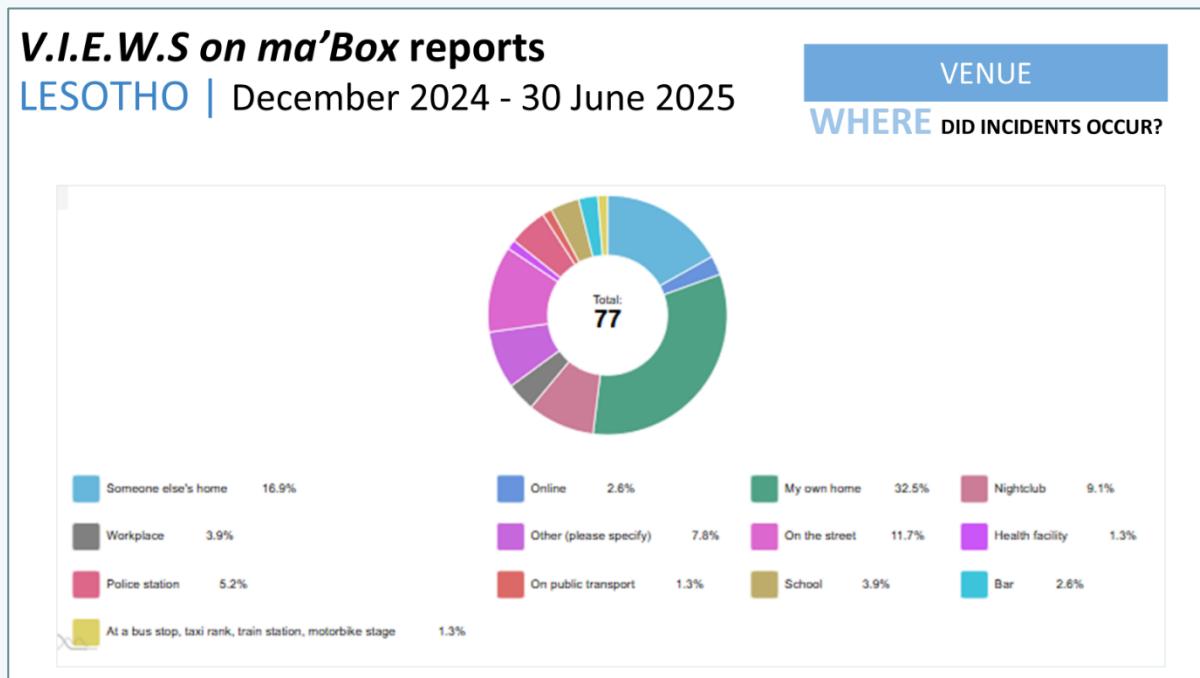


SW (Y)

3. Observe that, consistent with the nature of reported incidents reported by sex workers, accompanying behaviours tend to be more coercive and exploitative than directly stigmatising or discriminatory. Most reported incidents of violence amongst sex workers are accompanied by manipulation (30%) and threats of violence (26.9%) deployed as tactics to control and intimidate sex workers, and to extract services without remuneration.



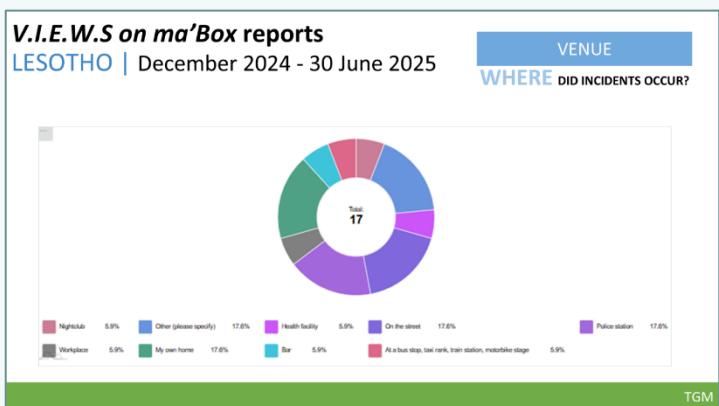
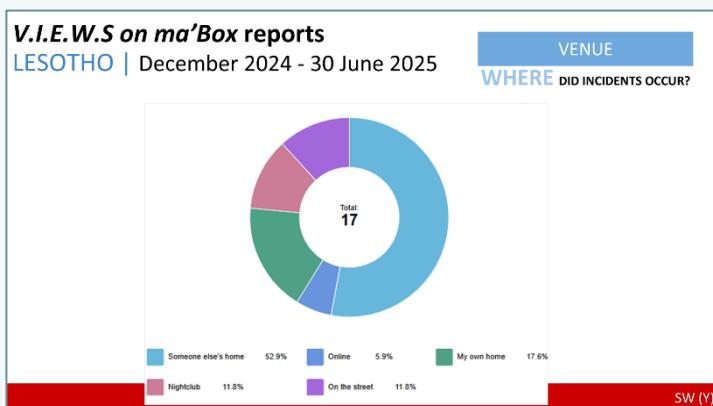
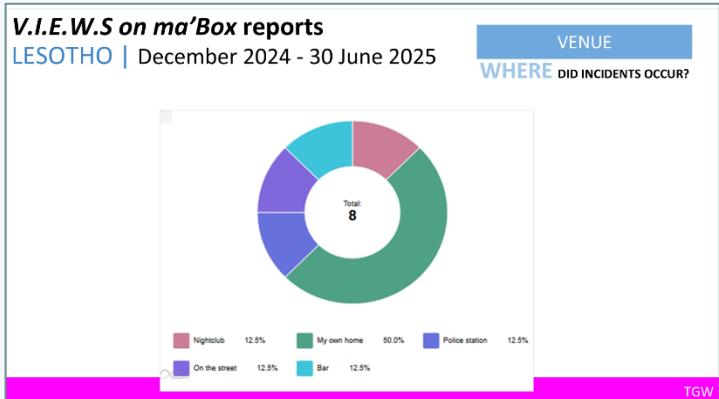
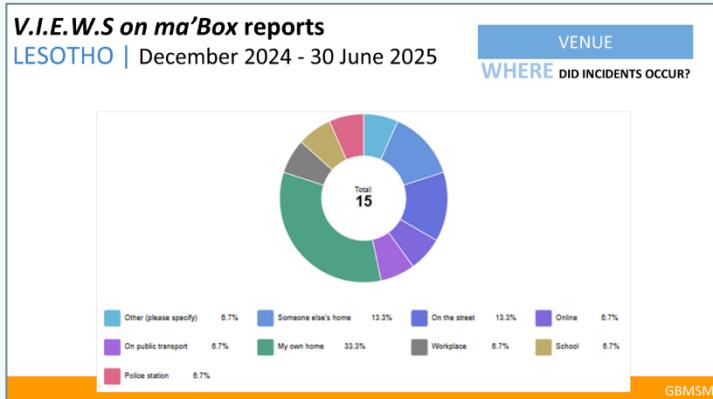
VENUE | where do the incidents occur?



Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Note that when viewed collectively across all 77 reports filed on V.I.E.W.S during the period under review, the majority of reported incidents occur in domestic environments, suggesting an adverse interaction with a friend, a family member in the home, a domestic partner, or an intimate partner. Amongst reported incidents on V.I.E.W.S,
 - 32.5% occurred in the home of the respondent.
 - 16.9% occurred in someone else's home.
2. Are concerned that public institutions, although appearing in relatively small proportions compared to domestic venues, are sites of violence for different population groups. Communities have an expectation that these facilities are reliable places of safety where they experience dignity, respect and equity, not violation. Institutions include:
 - police stations, that comprise 5.2% of aggregated incident venues. Police stations feature as sites of violence in 6.7%, 12.5%, 17.6% of cases reported by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, by transgender women, and by transgender men, respectively. Amongst respondents, transgender men were as likely to experience violence or violation at a police station as they were to experience it on the street.
 - schools, that comprise 3.9% of aggregated incident venues. Schools feature as sites of violence in 6.7% of incidents reported by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

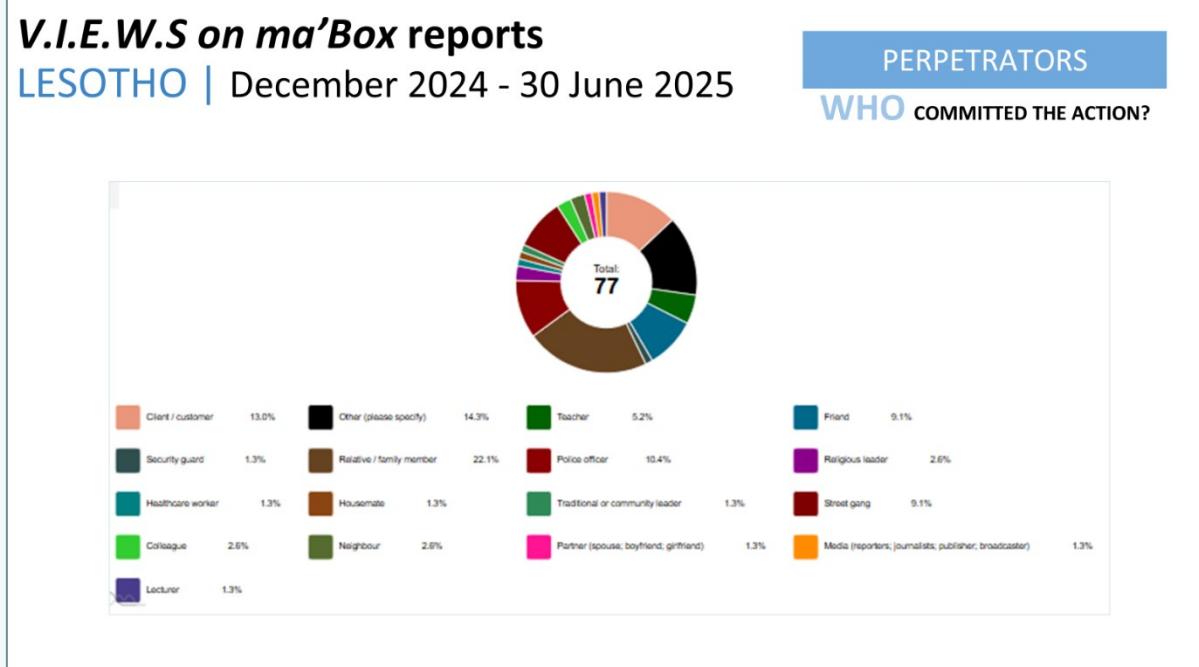
- health facilities, that comprise 1.3% of aggregated incident venues. Health facilities comprise 5.9% of incidents reported by transgender men.



3. Describe the vulnerability of sex workers to violence:

- when they bring clients to their home or, in turn, meet at clients' homes.
- through online exploitation and manipulation. Clients engage sex workers online using fake profiles and making false promises of large sums of money in exchange for services. Personal acquaintances who come to know a friend does sex work by encountering them online can exploit that knowledge to coerce, manipulate or extort sex workers who wish to protect their identities and not have the nature of their work publicly disclosed.

PERPETRATORS | who is committing the primary incident?



Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Observe that the perpetrators of acts of violence and violation are as numerous and varied as both the population groups and the types of violating incidents committed against them.
2. Highlight, however, the significance of violence perpetrated by:
 - family members and relatives who comprise 20%, 17%, 25% and 11% of incident reports from gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, from transgender men, from transgender women and from sex workers, respectively. Home should be a place of sanctuary, of intimacy, of trust, of safety but many community members experience it as a site of violence.

"The reason why the home is bigger than the street – why it is more frequently the venue for violence – is simply because we normalised it."

"We have so many people who are openly gay but are not living with their parents or families because they are discriminated against at home by their families."

"Before my father accepted me, he used to come with negative comments from the bar and his friends."

- neighbours in the expanded circle of social relationship that extends beyond the household into the surrounding neighbourhood. Community members experience acts of violence not

from strangers, but from people in their lived environment, many of whom may be known to them or their families. Neighbours comprise 6.7% and 12.5% of perpetrators identified by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and transgender women, respectively.

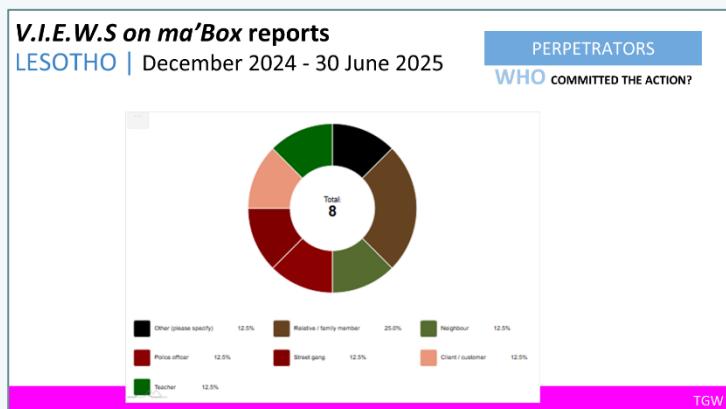
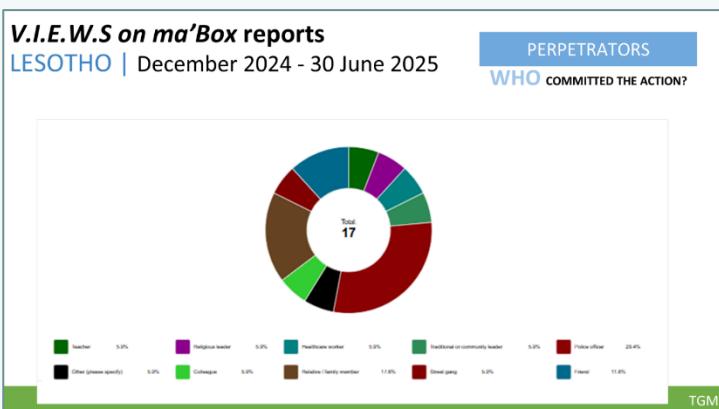
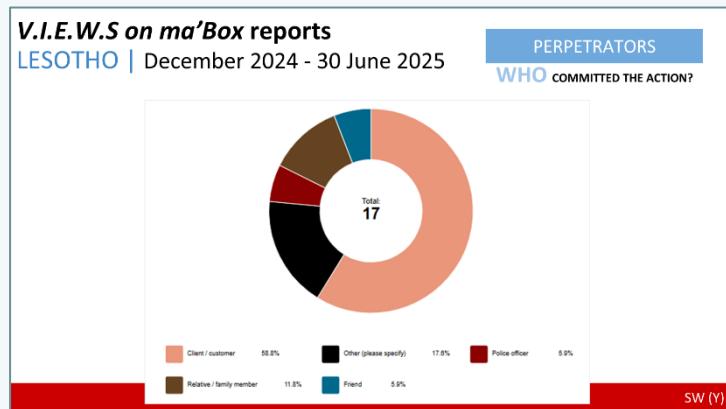
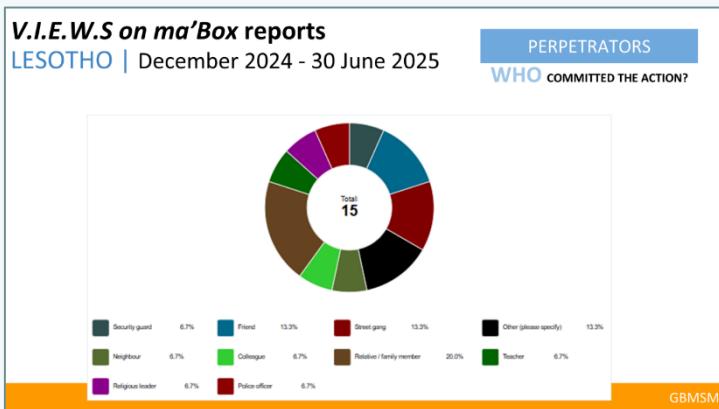
Reviewers note that neighbours are not always direct perpetrators of violence. Instead, their influence is an indirect peer pressure – a judgement, a belief system, a social expectation – on families and households who direct that homophobia and transphobia towards LGBTIQ people in the home.

"The pressure from the neighbours, the way they influence, it's too much on our families."

- personal friends and acquaintances who may not perpetrate physical or consciously verbal violence towards community members, but whose casual homophobia or transphobia – including insensitive gendered stereotypes – deepen the psychological harm sustained and quietly endured by the community. Such attitudes increase the withdrawal and isolationism of individuals who normalise such social stigma and may, as a result, not report more serious incidents committed against them.

"Friend, if you start crossdressing, I am cutting you off my life. If you wear makeup, I'm going to unfriend you."

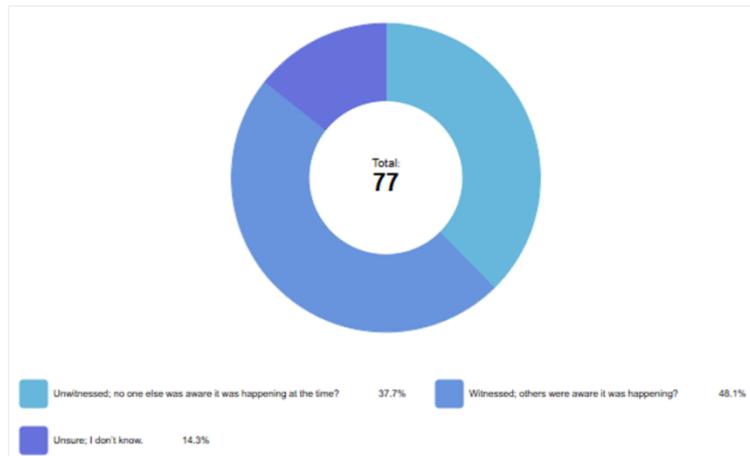
- police officers who comprise 6.7%, 12.5%, 5.9% and 29.4% of perpetrators reported by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, by transgender women, by sex workers, and by transgender men, respectively. Police officers are known to use threats against sex workers knowing that aspects of sex work are not legal in Lesotho and using that leverage to violate their rights with impunity since they have limited legal protections and are unlikely to report incidents.
- clients of sex workers, comprising 58.5% of perpetrators, who refuse to pay for services as initially negotiated and agreed and use threats of violence or of criminal exposure, and actual violence, to intimidate sex workers who have lesser access to justice.



VISIBILITY | are incidents public or private? is anyone witnessing the primary incident?

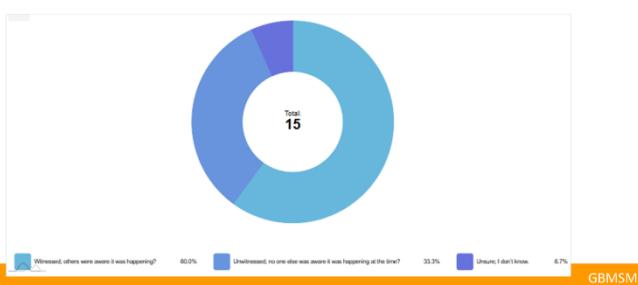
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VISIBILITY
WHO WITNESSED THE INCIDENT?



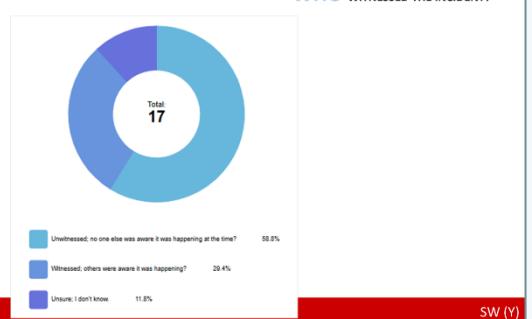
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VISIBILITY
WHO WITNESSED THE INCIDENT?



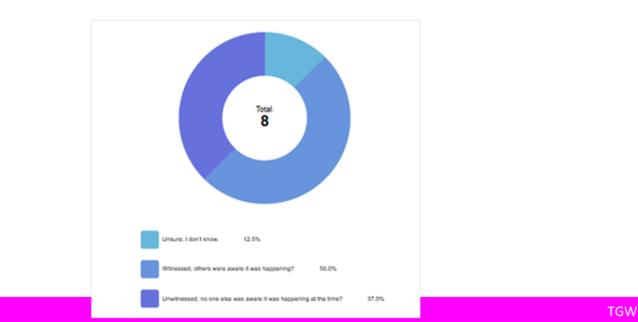
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VISIBILITY
WHO WITNESSED THE INCIDENT?



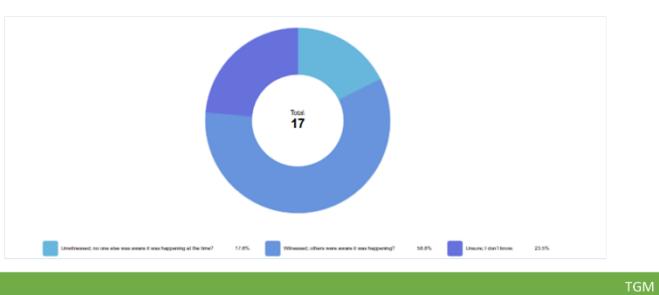
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VISIBILITY
WHO WITNESSED THE INCIDENT?



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WHO WITNESSED THE INCIDENT?

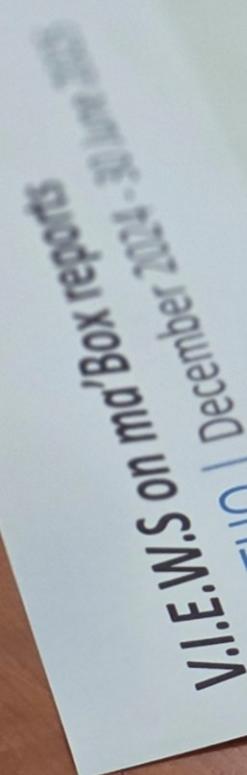


TGW

TGM

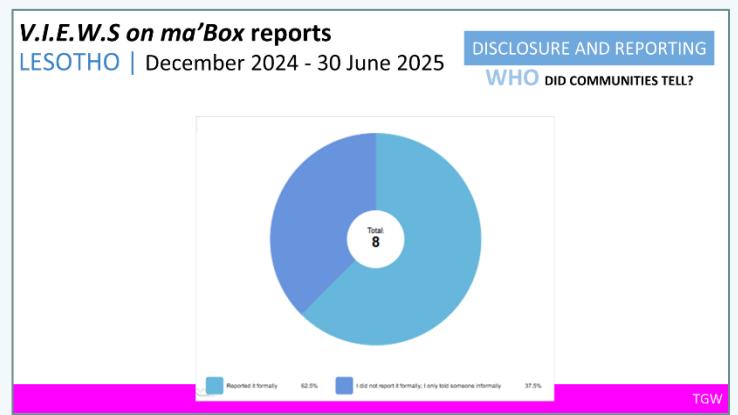
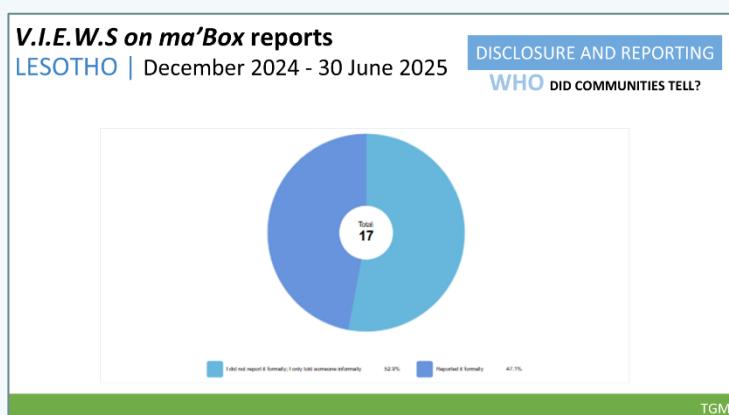
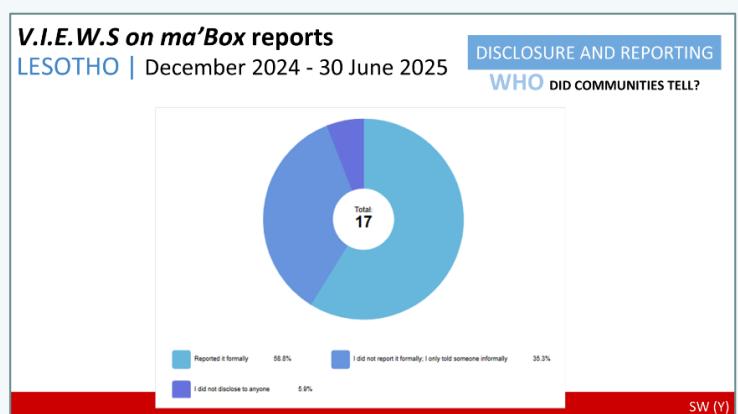
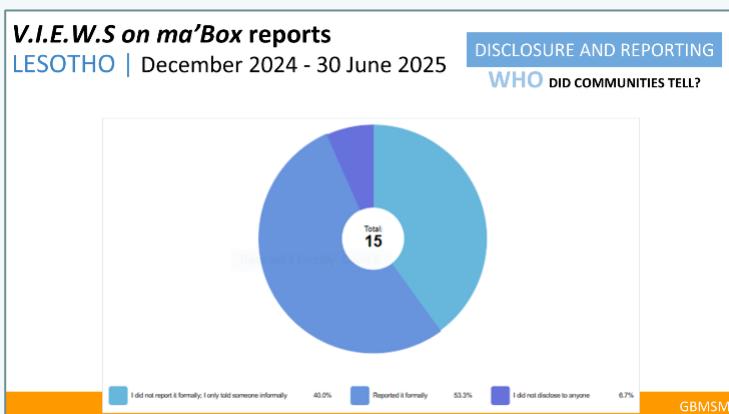
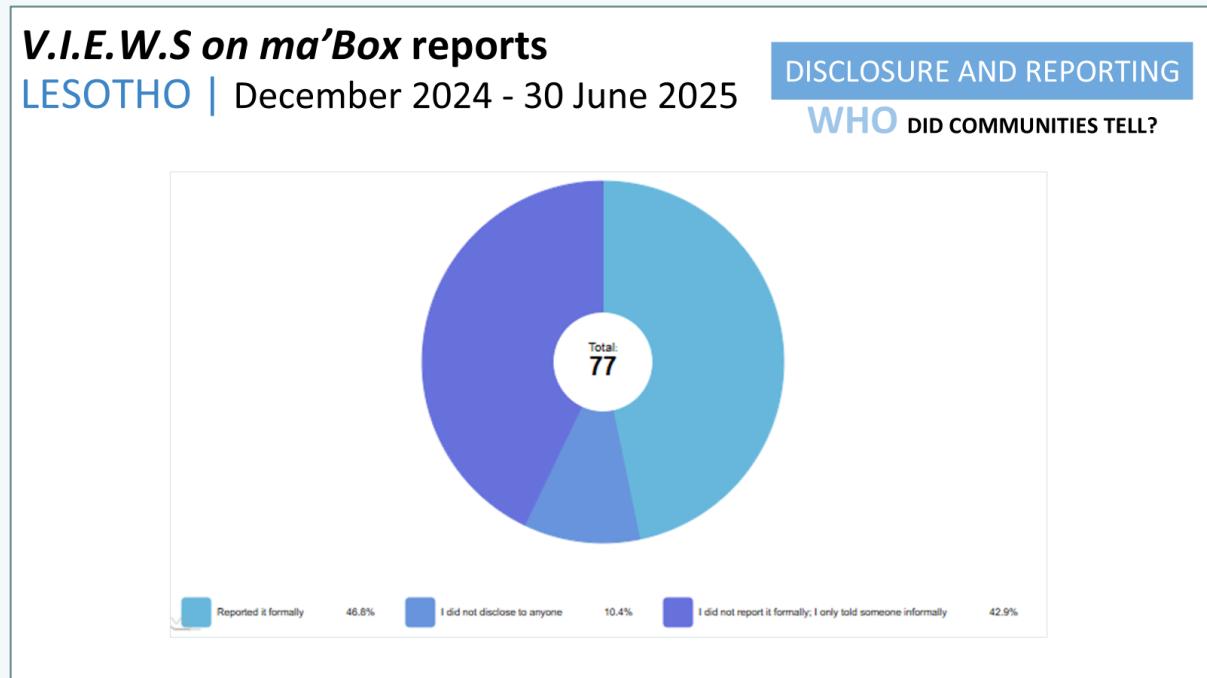
Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Observe the pattern that, across population groups, incidents of violence are a combination of witnessed events and unwitnessed events.
2. Recognise that a large number of incidents are unwitnessed as they occur in private spaces. Incidents reported by sex workers, for example – often occurring with clients – are 58,8% unwitnessed.
3. Remark that an almost equally large number of reported incidents are witnessed. Across the aggregated 77 incident reports, 48,1% were witnessed. Amongst gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, 60% of reported incidents were witnessed. Violence towards transgender men and transgender women was witnessed in at least 50% of reported instances. Communities note with concern the phenomenon of bystander apathy and indifference; even when witnesses are present, they are reluctant to intervene and to offer assistance or resistance. Violence and violation are enacted boldly and brazenly, in view of witnesses, with little fear amongst perpetrators of consequence.



DISCLOSURE AND REPORTING |

do communities report the primary incident?



Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Observe a pattern consistent with that pertaining to the visibility of incidents, the extent to which incidents of violence were witnessed. Similar to that data-set, reporting of incidents is a combination of behaviours by individuals who experience violence.
2. Are encouraged that, on average across populations, 50% - 60% of incidents are formally reported to authorities that may include police, health facility managers, education officials.
3. Recognise with little surprise that, on average, 50% of incidents perpetrated against community members are unreported through formal channels. Community members may narrate their experience to a friend, or family member, or neighbour. Some do not disclose to anyone.

"We would rather share it informally, removing ourselves as the primary victims and targets."

"We share just to vent, not to formally report."

4. Reviewers suggest that many barriers to reporting exist, including:

- the normalisation of abuse; that it is regular and routine and not important or significant enough to be worth reporting.

"Those who report formally might be those who are physically assaulted."

"We have normalized intimate partner violence because we believe it's about discipline."

- fear of exposure and retaliation, that reporting an incident will lead to further harm, negative repercussions, punitive consequences and social exclusion.

"Sometimes we feel like we are going to be exposed, it's outing us, and we do not want to be exposed."

- disillusionment, distrust and a loss of hope that mechanisms for justice are equally available to community members, that they are accessible and effective, and that perpetrators – who often have greater social capital and status, and material resources and power – will be held accountable for their actions.
- vulnerable communities and populations are afraid to approach the police for assistance when the majority of perpetrators of violence against them are the police themselves. Reporting is an act as traumatic as the original incident itself.
- a sense of shame about the incident.

"We do not report incidents of violence because we feel embarrassed."

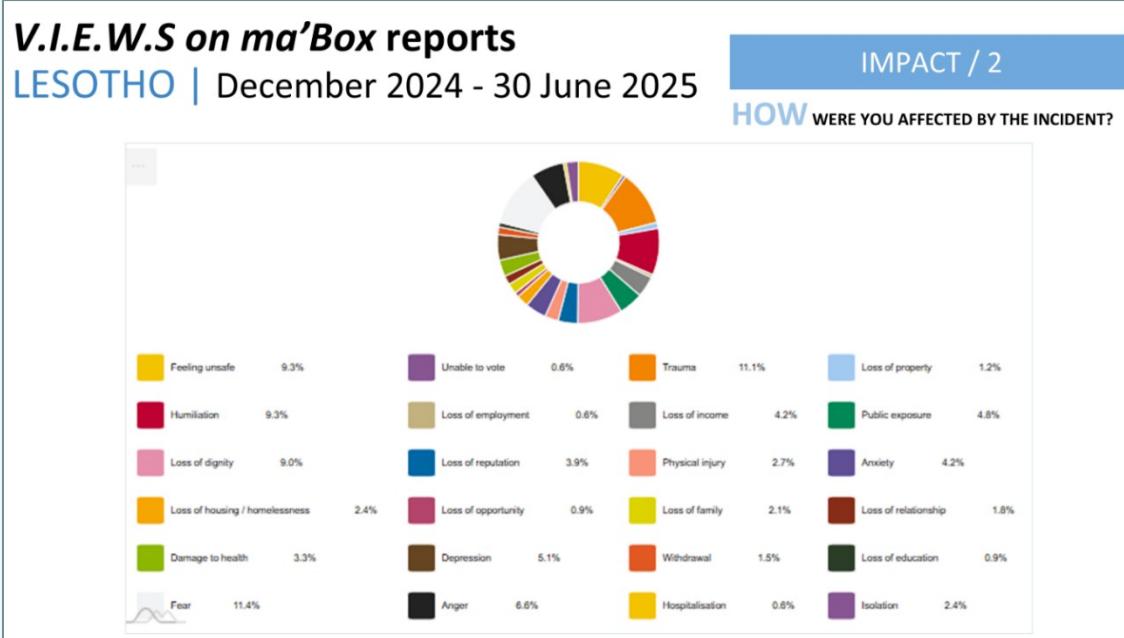
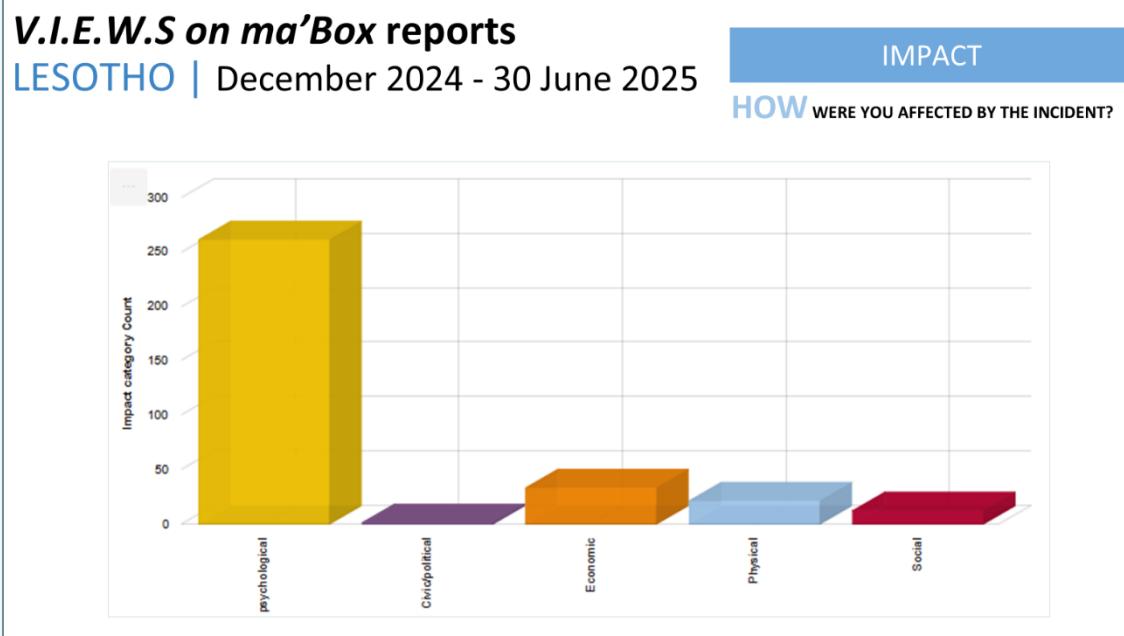
- protection of the perpetrators who are family members or domestic partners on whom, commonly, victims of violence are materially and or/emotionally dependent.

"I cannot report to the clinic because they are going to enquire about the perpetrator who is my partner. I do not want them to get arrested."

"People are still dependent on their families. So there is greater psychological impact because they protect them. If we didn't have Matrix, we wouldn't have reported anything."

IMPACT | how are individuals affected by the primary incident?

Sexual and gender minorities and sex workers experience social, institutional and structural violence and violation that are often perpetrated against them with impunity. Public officials and duty bearers who are stewards of human rights and public safety, and responsible for legislation, policy and practice, can be dismissive of these incidents – reducing them in significance and severity – and reluctant to act to mitigate their impact because they are perceived to be mostly innocuous and benign; not causing sufficient harm to merit attention and action.



Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Note that when viewed collectively across all 77 reports filed on V.I.E.W.S during the period under review, the impacts of various types of violence are:
 - varied, extending across social, economic, psychological, civic and political, and physical effects.
 - compound. Respondents reporting experiences of violence contend with multiple effects simultaneously, although they are generated by a single incident. These impacts accumulate, increasing stress and psychological burden.
 - overwhelmingly psychological. Community members are resilient and have developed mechanisms – questionably healthy but practically effective – to cope with violence and to normalise its material effects. They turn inward, internalising their fear and anger, becoming depressed and isolated, anxious and withdrawn. These psychological impacts contribute, in turn, to a reluctance to report or discuss violating incidents in a self-perpetuating cycle.

"It makes sense that the psychological impacts are bigger than the rest because we are affected emotionally."

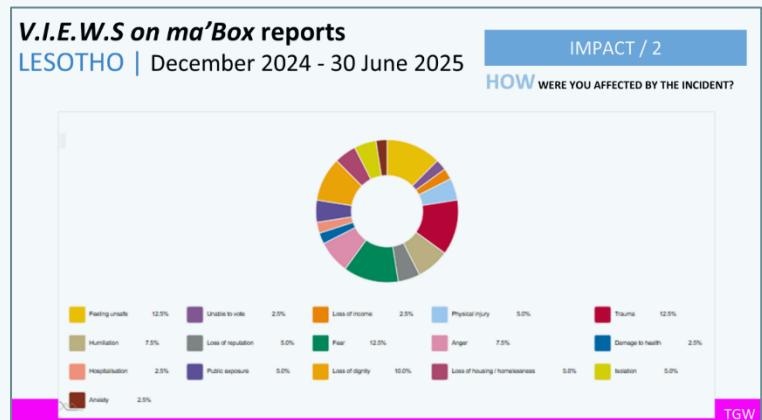
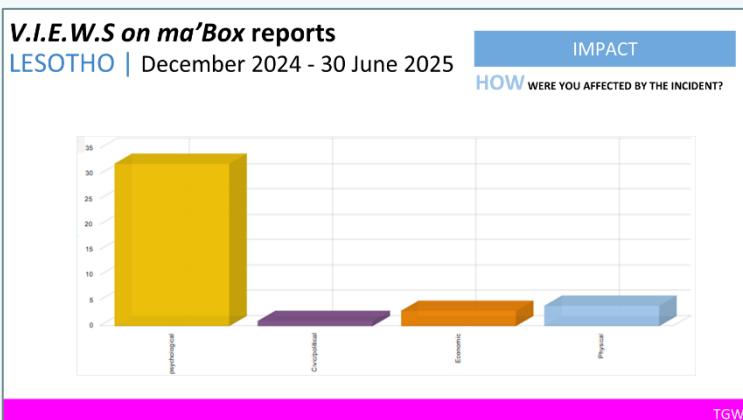
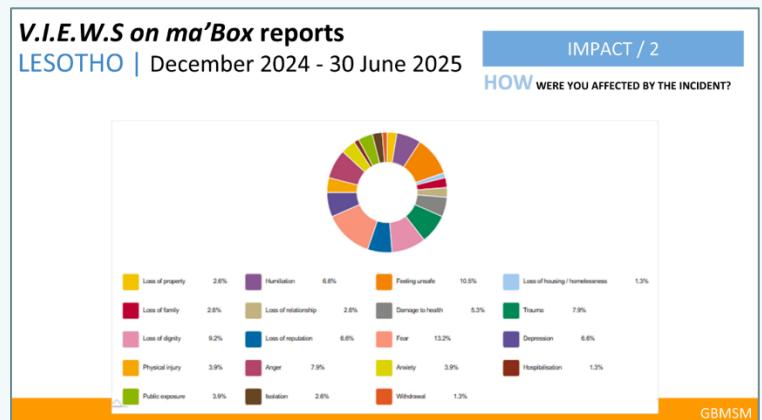
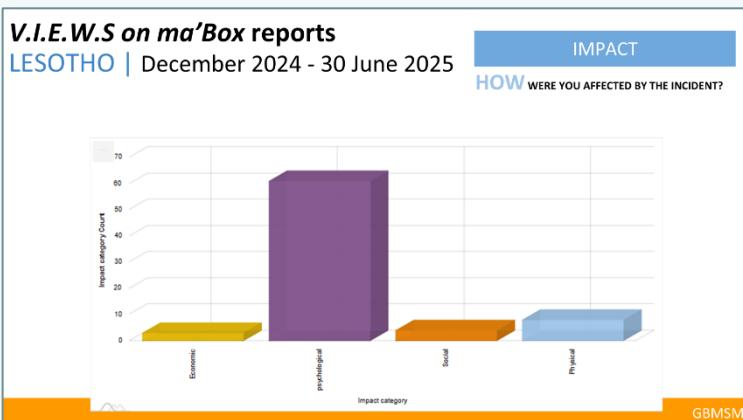
"Trauma and fear are the main results, the main impacts, of this violence."

"Isolation works perfectly for me to heal from violence."

"Now that I am being physically abused, it does not matter anymore, but psychologically it affects me a lot. External bruising fades away. Deep down I love this person, and I do not want to lose him. I would rather not report it."

"I just live with the fear of being disowned by my family..."

2. Recognise that, unlike other data points that vary when disaggregated by population group, the effects and impacts of incidents of violence – the way those experiences affect individuals – are common and consistent: they are overwhelmingly harmful to the mental health, psychological equilibrium and emotional wellbeing of individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or livelihood.

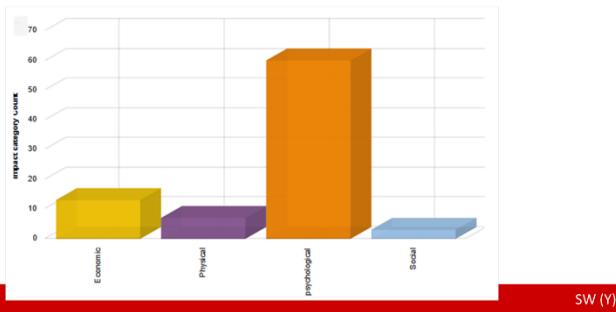


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IMPACT

HOW WERE YOU AFFECTED BY THE INCIDENT?

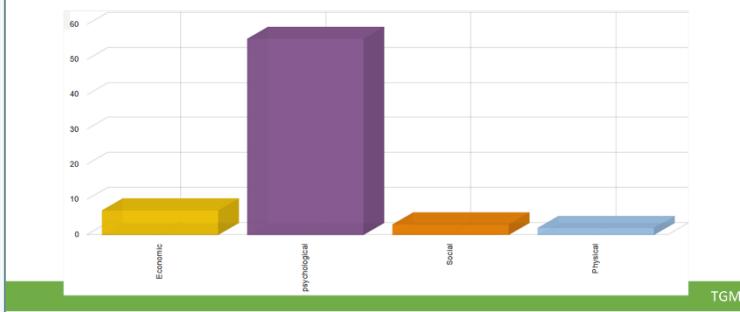


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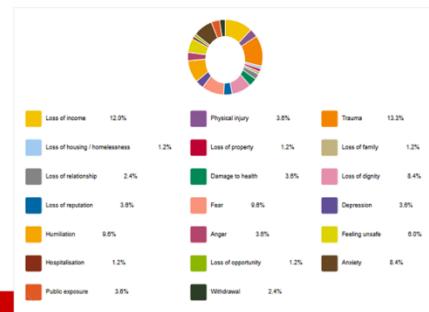


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IMPACT / 2

HOW WERE YOU AFFECTED BY THE INCIDENT?

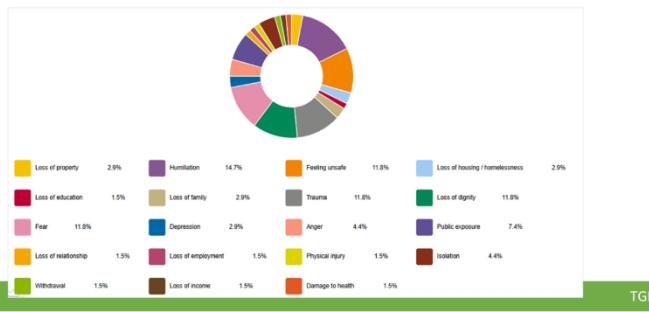


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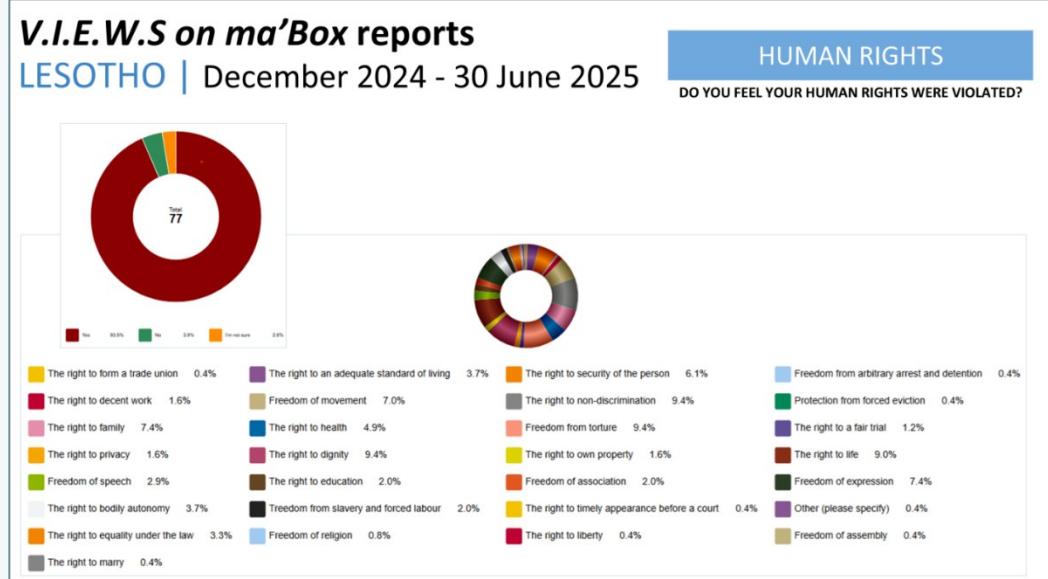
HUMAN RIGHTS | do individuals believe their human rights have been violated?

A human rights violation occurs when a government or its officials – the State or people acting on behalf of the State – fail to meet their obligations under international treaties and domestic laws (as outlined, for example, in The Constitution of a country) to respect, defend, protect and fulfil the basic human rights and freedoms of their citizens. A State can directly harm its citizens by performing actions that do not respect the rights and freedoms of people or indirectly harm its citizens by failing to stop others from doing harm (often through enacting protective legislation).

Not every form of violence or violation is, technically and legally, a human rights violation, although their impacts on affected people may be similar. Community members, neighbours, private employers, corporations and institutions can be guilty of offences or crimes (where the State has passed a law making that action unlawful or illegal) or can commit actions that abuse the rights of others. But they are not acting on behalf of the government that has the legal duty to protect and promote rights and freedoms.

Reflecting on the reported incident data, participants in the analysis exercise:

1. Note that when viewed collectively across all 77 reports filed on V.I.E.W.S during the period under review, the majority of respondents – 93.5% – believe that some aspect of the incident they reported constitutes a violation of their human rights, most notably the right to dignity, the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to freedom of expression, and the right to freedom from torture or inhumane treatment.
2. Consider that while most incidents of violence reported on V.I.E.W.S do not rise to the legal standard of a human rights violation, it is significant that:
 - so large a number of citizens in Lesotho carry the perception that they live in a country where their rights are not sufficiently protected or defended.
 - a number of reported incidents of violence do, in fact, describe actions perpetrated by public servants acting on behalf of the state to provide, amongst other services, healthcare, education, public safety and law enforcement. By actively perpetrating acts of violence or by neglecting their duties by denying access to health, education, safety or justice, these individuals expose the State to possible action by its citizens to seek remedy.



"Now that I am being physically abused, it does not matter anymore, but psychologically it affects me a lot. External bruising fades away...."



Hope - Respect - Voice

SUPPORTED BY POSITIVE VIBES (2025)