

# Shelters Housing Women Who Have Experienced Abuse:

## Policy, funding and practice

**Launch of Shadow Report**

**24 June 2013**

**Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women & Children**



# Overview

- The WC Report on shelter policy, funding and practice is preceded by a similar study on 5 shelters in Gauteng.
- Together, the two reports aim to analyse trends in:
  - the implementation of Government policy;
  - the extent of funding available to shelters from Department of Social Development (DSD) and an assessment of whether this is adequate in relation to the operational expenditure of shelters; and
  - the needs of shelter residents and whether the services provided by shelters are able to meet these needs.
- The findings are intended to support the lobbying and advocacy of the GBV sector for greater resource allocation for shelters that provide services to abused women and their children

# Shelter study sample

Shelter	N Year	N Sample
St. Anne's Homes	53	16
Sisters Incorporated	24	12
Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women & Children (SBC)	101	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>69</b>

- Criteria: had to receive from funding from DSD & offer sheltering services to victims of intimate partner violence
- 3 shelters identified & volunteered to be part of the study
- Fieldwork took place between July-August 2012
- Field workers went through shelter's register to est nr of women admitted from Jan – Dec 2011. Only women who experienced intimate partner violence were included in sample
- Unlike Gauteng shelters, shelters in this sample opted not to remain anonymous

# Research limitations

- Not all shelters in the province were covered
- Secondly some shelters had mislaid client files reducing the number of records available for scrutiny for participating shelters.
- Staff turnover at shelters meant that there was often not a consistent standard or style of record-keeping. At one shelter files contained almost no notes regarding the counselling of clients or their psycho-social needs

# Policy

- According to the *Minimum Standards on Shelters for Abused Women*, national DSD is required to “facilitate and fast track the provision of shelters for abused women, as well as ensuring the availability and accessibility of counselling services to women and children” (DSD, 2001: 1)

# Policy

- National DSD is primarily responsible for policy making, coordination and monitoring, while provincial departments are responsible for implementation
- Implementation is achieved either by the department providing services itself, or by ensuring that others provide the necessary services.
  - ensuring that the services provided reach all who need them and are of adequate quality.
  - This would mean that the service providers must have adequate resources to deliver quality services

# Policy

- During the 2009 public hearings on the Domestic Violence Act, CSOs called for a review of the DSD's 1995 *Policy on financial awards to service providers*
  - The hearings also heard about other aspects of the VEP and, in particular, its failure to address the needs of survivors of domestic violence.
  - DSD stated that it already had plans to establish more shelters for abused women (PMG, 3 November 2009).
  - DSD committed to the establishment and improvement of two shelters annually per province over a period of five years. However, it said that it could only do this if funding was available.
  - At time of research, no new shelters had been established

# Policy

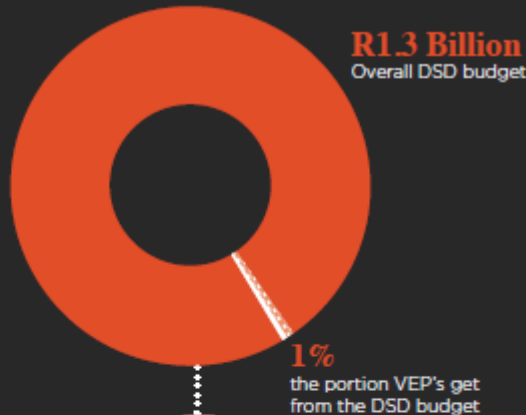
- *The Western Cape Provincial Government Policy on the Funding of Non-Governmental Organisations for the Rendering of Social Welfare Services* was approved in April 2011 in line with the national DSD Policy on Financial Awards
- The national DSD Policy states that the dpt will not be the sole funder of social welfare services – npo's are expected to meet the shortfall between the costs of delivery and what DSD provides through securing other funds (donor organisations, CSI, NLDTF, etc)
- One result of the current DSD approach to funding is that government SW's receive higher salaries than those employed by NPO's as subsidies provided to NPOs by DSD do not cover the full salary. This presents a problem for NPOs in that social workers are then “poached” by government. Government acknowledged this problem in 2011, but have not taken any steps to address it (PMG, 22 August 2011)



# Funding

- In 2011/12 MEC for SD Patricia de Lille prioritised R7m of the VEP to increase the number of gender violence shelters from 12 to 14
- This was not met because “two shelters...did not have suitable properties. The funds were utilised by the programme for other VEP service providers as part of an appeals process” (DSD Annual Report 2011/12, Page 34).

# Funding



R4 million distributed across 12 shelters amounted to just over a 1/3rd of the Victim Empowerment Programme allocation

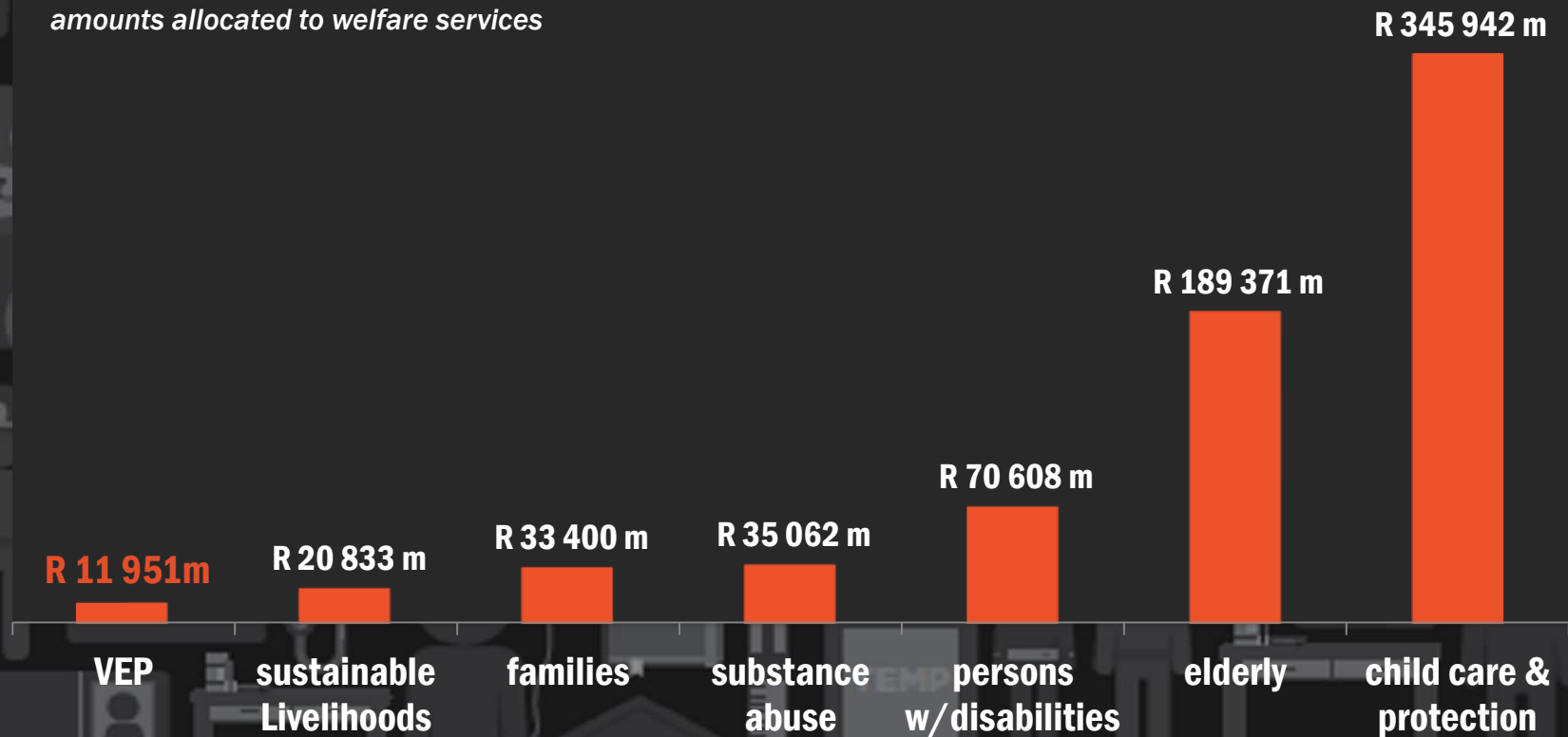


- For 2011/12, WC DSD transferred R727 840m to NPO's
- Of this R11 951m was transferred to NPOs working in VEP = **less than 1% of the overall DSD budget of R1.3 billion**
- Of VEP funding, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> went to shelters
- DSD funded 12 shelters at a total cost of R4m (average of R333 333 p/shelter)

# Funding

- 2011/12 transfer of funds reveals that NPOs working on VEP received the least funding

*amounts allocated to welfare services*



# DSD target rates

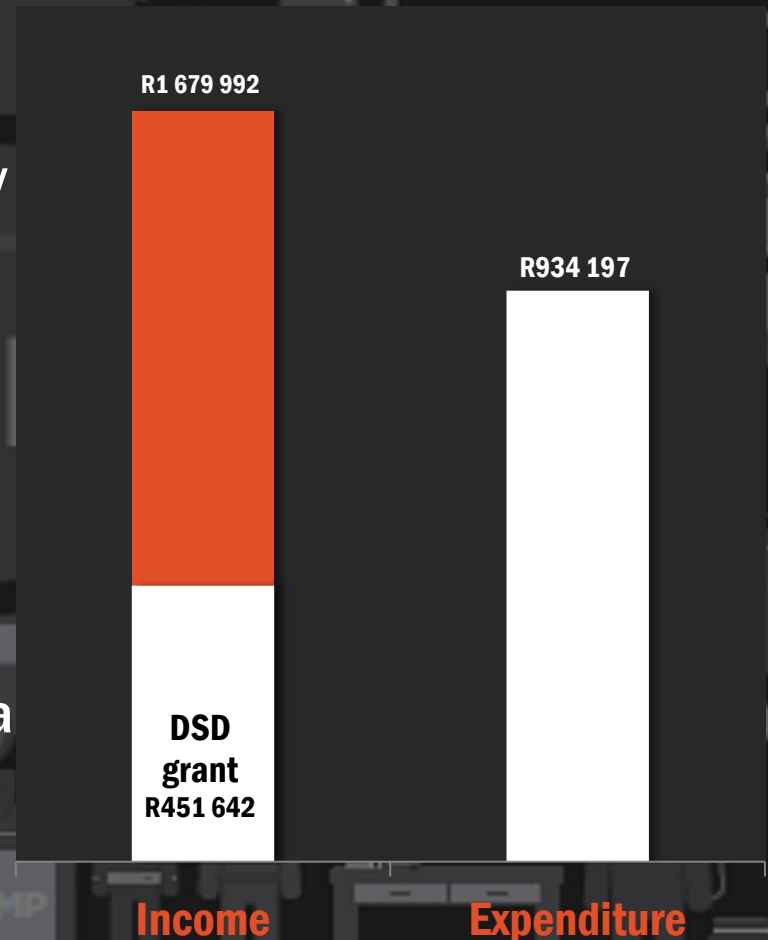
- For 2011/2012 DSD set a target of 3 091 victims of crime and violence in funded VEP shelters
- Actual numbers was nearly double = 5 860
- DSD attributed variance to shelter's turnaround time and max accommodation of 3 - 6 months, which enables accommodation of more people
- **It is possible however** that the set target was set too low initially and didn't take into account the real need for shelter services

# Case Studies: St. Anne's Home

- Est. 1904, first shelter service offered in 1928
- Max 26 women & children
- Admits: female survivors of DV and their children; destitute women; women who have undergone treatment for substance abuse; pregnant women (not in relation to DV in 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester (7 months) & max of two refugee women at any given time
- Av. Length of stay: 3-6 months
- Services: free if no income; w/income service fees (R100) and creche fees (R130) are payable
- 12 staff members

# Income & Funding

- DSD subsidy of R28.33 p/bed p/day
- portion of one social workers salary
- Also funded under DSD's ECD Programme for creche facilities - R12 p/child per day for max of 20 children
- DSD funding amounted to 48% of operating expenses
- NLDTF grant mid 2011 resulted in a surplus of R745 795 for the 2011/2012 financial year



# Sample: 16 women



**Average user:**  
30 yrs old, coloured, married,  
unemployed, no income, less  
than matric qualification, no  
protection order, not first time  
at a shelter



**31 children in total**  
15 at shelter,  
average age 1 – 5  
Majority of children not at  
shelter were with paternal or  
maternal family members



**7 women had health  
problems:**  
substance abuse,  
depression, anxiety, diabetes,  
HIV, injuries from abuse



**11 women had legal needs:**  
applying for PO's,  
ID's & birth certificates,  
court prep, DV case  
follow-ups, applying for  
state grants, withdrawal of  
an adoption

# Shelter services



Short-term shelter and care includes 3 meals p/day, toiletries, bedding, clothing



Counselling, group work, spiritual guidance, skills training, legal support & assistance to access medical care



Crèche/children's project: educare, counselling & therapy



Shelter covers transport & other costs

# Outcomes



4 women accessed health care



14 women attended skills training (2 declined)



Income generated:  
7 out of 10 women found Employment, 1 secured maintenance from husband, 1 received child grant



5 women didn't return to abusive home, 2 did, 4 women assisted to access alternate accommodation  
2 granted extension of stay

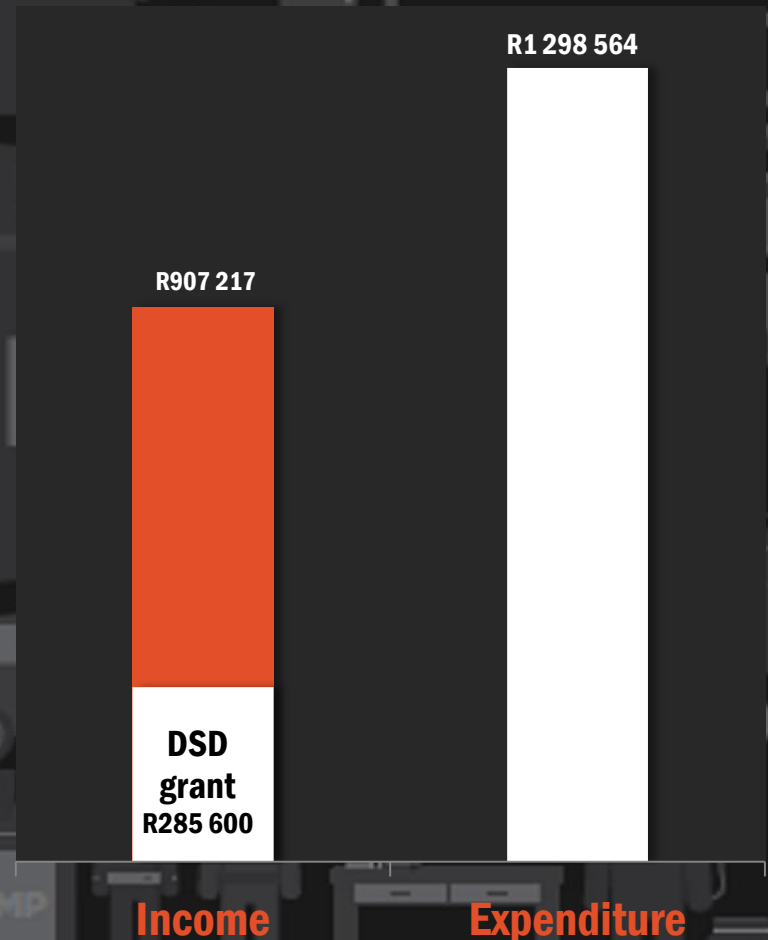


# Case Studies: Sisters Incorporated

- Est. 1905, first shelter service in late 1980's
- Max 28 beds
- Admits: Female survivors of abuse and their children (incl. boys to age 10)
- Av. Length of stay: 3-6 months
- Services: sliding scale (R50 to R460 p/month)
- 7 full-time, 2 part-time staff members, 1 student SW

# Income & Funding

- DSD subsidy of R28.60 p/bed p/day
- No subsidy for SW (although in 2012 this was secured after mtg w/DSD to raise the issue of adequate funding)
- DSD funding amounted to 31% of income
- Largest expenses staff costs, catering, electricity and water, repairs and maintenance
- Shelter ran at a loss of R105 747 in 2011



# Sample: 12 women



**Average user:**  
34 yrs old, coloured,  
unemployed, no income, less  
than matric qualification, no  
protection order, first time in  
shelter



**28 children in total**  
15 at shelter,  
average age 1 – 5  
Children not at shelter were in  
combination of family & foster  
care, 6 children under age of 1  
placed for adoption



**11 women had health problems:**  
substance abuse, pregnancy,  
post-birth care, post-surgical  
care, HIV, chronic disease,  
depression & injuries from  
abuse



**8 women had legal needs:**  
applying for maintenance,  
divorce & custody proceedings,  
ID applications, DV court case  
follow-up, court prep & opening  
of bank account. Other women  
needed help w/ enrolling  
children in school, applying for  
learner's licence, child adoption,  
seeing children in foster care

# Shelter services



3 meals p/day,  
toiletries, bedding, 3 sets of  
clothing, school uniforms



Indiv & group counselling , skills  
training, relaxation classes,  
outings, legal support & medical  
care



Crèche & afterhours care, medical  
care, ref to Childline for intensive  
therapy



Shelter covers transport &  
medical costs

# Outcomes



11 women attended skills training  
at shelter, 2 individ. training



Income generated:  
6 out of 9 women found  
employment



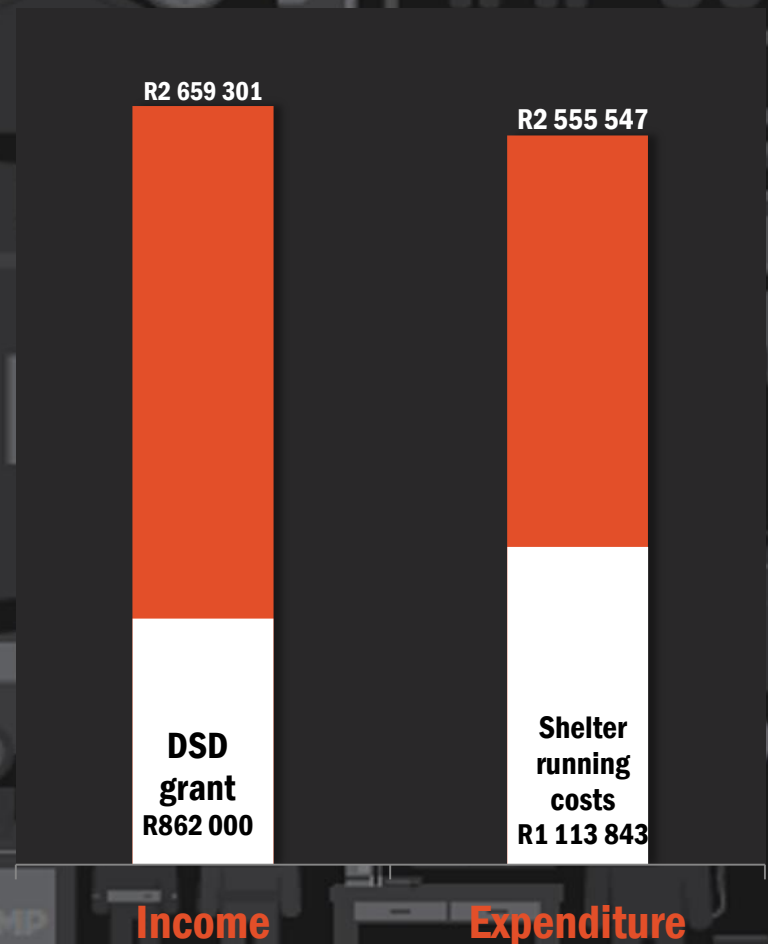
2 women returned to marital  
home (1 to husband, other once  
she secured PO and husband left  
the home), 9 accessed alternate  
accommodation, 1 left w/out  
informing shelter

# Case Studies: Saartjie Baartman Centre

- 24-hr emergency shelter, one stop centre
- Est. 1999
- Max 22 women, 35 children
- Admits: Female survivors of abuse and their children
- Av. length of stay: 3-4 months
- Services: free of charge
- 12 full-time staff members & 2 – 3 volunteers

# Income & Funding

- DSD lump sum grant of R862 000
- Largest expense of shelter was staff costs, security and catering
- Director salary not included in shelter running cost
- Significant funding crisis resulted in retrenchments in 2011 & re-structuring of organization
- For 2011/2012 financial year shelter ran at a loss of R148 089
- In Jan 2012 shelter had 3 months of funding remaining
- In response to crisis an additional but once-off contribution of R250 000 was made by DSD



# Sample: 41 women



**Average user:**  
29 yrs old, married,  
unemployed, no income, no  
protection order, first time in  
shelter



**95 children in total**  
46 at shelter,  
average age 1 – 5  
Children not at shelter were in  
combination of family, friend &  
foster care including residing  
with biological fathers.



**24 women had health problems:**  
HIV, depression/anxiety or were  
suicidal, substance abuse,  
injuries from the abuse (incl.  
miscarriage), hypertension,  
heart attack, diabetes, epilepsy,  
spine arthritis.



**13 women had legal needs:**  
assistance with divorce  
proceedings, maintenance,  
custody matters, applying for  
ID's and court preparation



**8 women required assistance**  
w/ applying for PO's

# Shelter services



3 meals p/day,  
toiletries, bedding, 3 sets of  
clothing, school uniforms



Indiv & group counselling , skills  
training, parenting support, legal  
assistance & medical care



Crèche & play therapy



Free holistic medical care through  
Tibb medical centre based at  
shelter. Shelter covers transport  
costs when needed

# Outcomes



30 women received counselling, 5  
referred to psychologist/  
psychiatrist, others



Income generated:  
7 out of 21 women found  
Employment, 1 state grant, 5 child  
grants

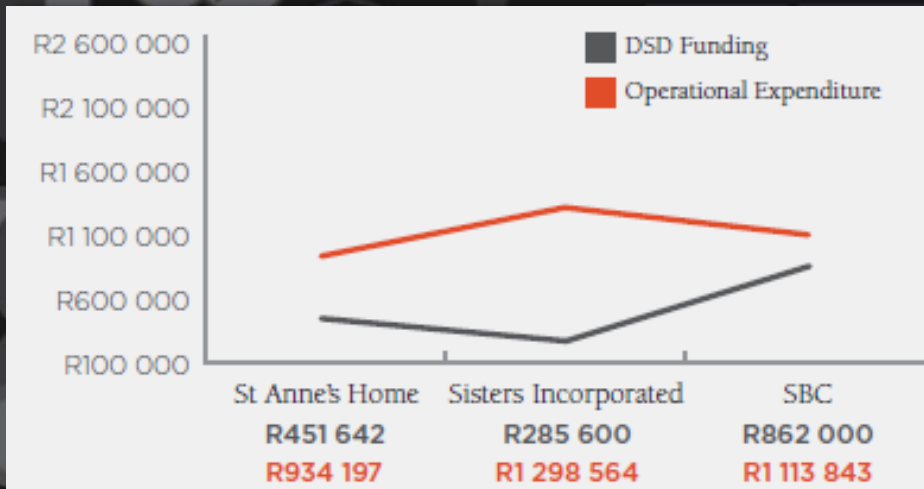


3 women returned to abusive  
Partners, 7 were assisted to find  
alternate accommodation, 31  
cases not recorded, 5 women  
granted extension of stay ranging  
from 2 – 20 weeks



# Summary of Findings

## 1. DSD funding is inadequate



- Largest funding contribution was to SBC
- SBC received lump sum while others received ratio subsidies; 2 of the 3 shelters received subsidy towards SW
- Shelter operating costs exceed DSD funding
- Funding crisis for SBC resulted in retrenchments and re-structuring .
- Shelters unable to employ key staff required (e.g. Child counsellors)
- Shelters have had to diversify funding base & adopt other strategies to remain in operation (e.g. Save Sisters Campaign and SBC's R2m sponsored Media Campaign during its financial crisis)

# Summary of Findings

## 2. Provision of shelter services to women is preventative

- 68% of women accessed the shelter services for the first time
- 32% did not return to abusive partners after leaving the shelter (at Sisters 83% of women didn't return to abusive partners)
- This number may be higher as this info was not always recorded in case files
- Despite limitations in the services offered at SBC (during their financial crisis), all shelters provided women w/ the opportunity to receive support and implement positive and potentially life-changing decisions
- There was also positive impact for children exposed to abuse in the home

# Summary of Findings

## 3. Funding constraints limit the ability of shelters to provide comprehensive services to women

- Shelters currently cannot meet all the needs of their residents, despite their best efforts
- Women arrive at the shelter with a range of serious health concerns and practical and material needs. Most women at the shelters had no income while staying at the shelter and many brought very young children with them
- Irrespective of funding shortfalls - shelters need to cater for the practical needs of women and their children.
- Providing services to children of women living at the shelter is a challenge -SBC and Sisters Incorporated
- SBC was unable to provide a comprehensive and even service over because of the major institutional funding crisis and the restructuring
- Shelters cannot afford the number and variety of staff required to provide comprehensive services to women -social workers at the shelters have a significantly high case load

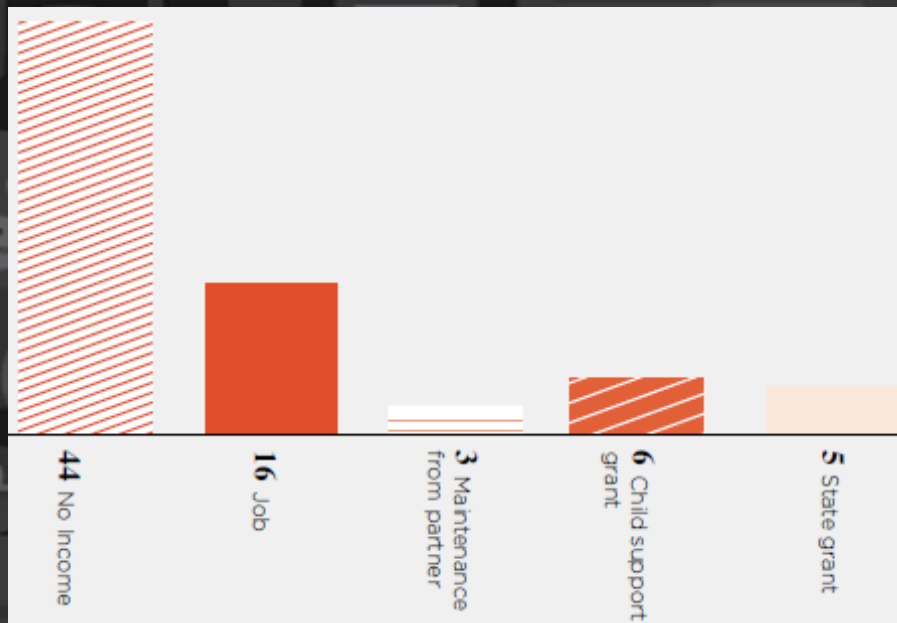
# Summary of Findings

## 4. Children accompanying women to shelters are not receiving adequate services

- Only St Anne's Shelter provided children with psycho-social services such as play therapy and counselling to children.
  - Sisters Inc cannot afford a full time child counsellor
- Only 3 women (4%) received maintenance from partners
- Only 6 women (or 8%) of women arrived at the shelter with an existing child support grant
- Nine children in the sample had health care needs, but only one was recorded to be attended to by a medical doctor

# Summary of Findings

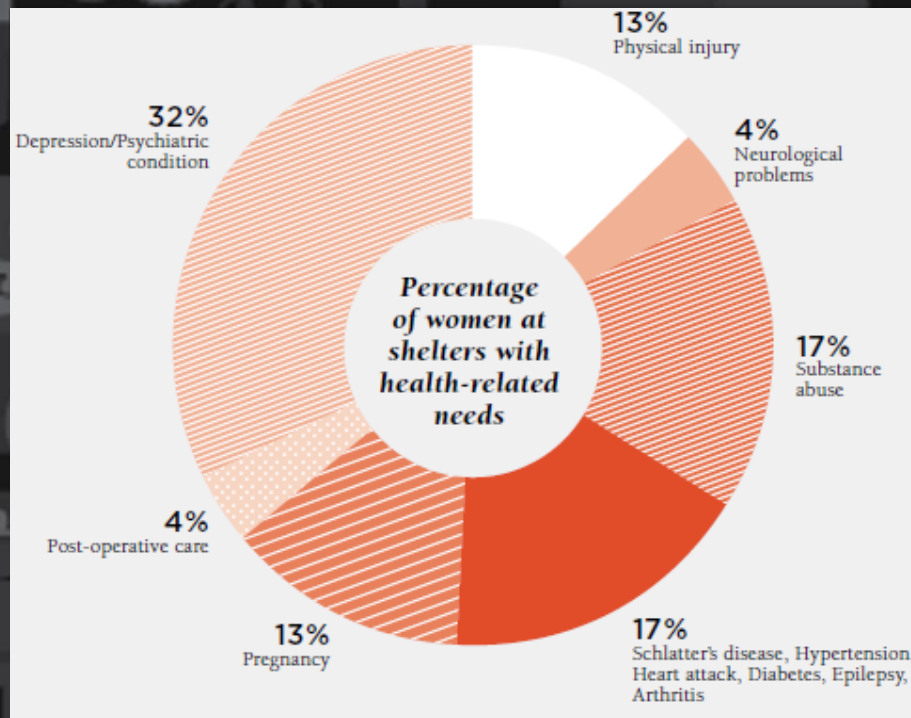
## 5. The majority of women had only high school education, were unemployed and had no source of income



- Most women's highest educational qualification was less than matric, only 22 women (32%) had attained this
- Forty women (58%) were unemployed during shelter stay
- Forty-four (63%) had no source of income while at the shelter
- Inevitably the daily costs of providing basic necessities like toiletries, food, transport, and school fees for women and their children were passed on to shelters

# Summary of Findings

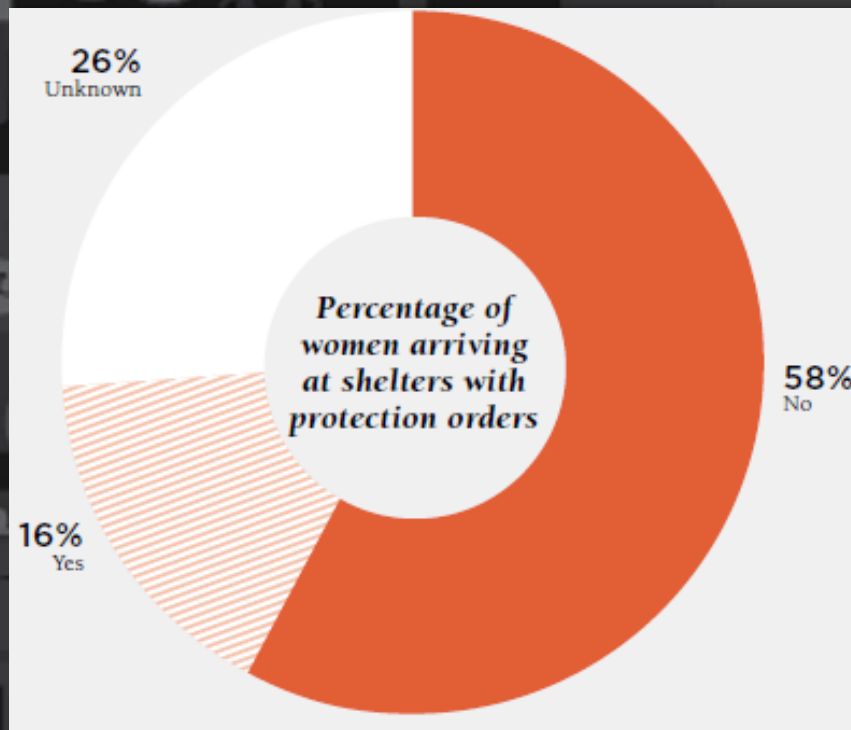
## 6. Women in the shelters had serious health needs



- Most women had more than one health condition at a time
- Most frequent health concerns were depression/psychiatric conditions (15), substance abuse (8) and HIV (8)
- Most of the health concerns were of a serious nature requiring on-going health care
- Only 15 women were recorded to have received treatment at a local health facility, private doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist

# Summary of Findings

## 7. Women's legal needs extend beyond acquiring a protection order



- Only 11 women arrived at the shelter with a protection order, very few requested support to obtain one
- Other legal needs included applying for ID's, follow-up on DV cases, maintenance applications, divorce proceedings, court preparation, adoption matters, applying for state grants, applying for birth certificates, opening bank accounts etc
- In most cases the shelters were able to assist the women, or refer them to the Legal Aid Board. Very few women could afford private legal help.

# Summary of Findings

## 8. Shelter skills development programmes make an impact in assisting women find employment

Employment Status	St. Anne's	Sisters	SBC
Shelter entry: unemployed	10	9	21
Shelter exit: employed	7	6	7

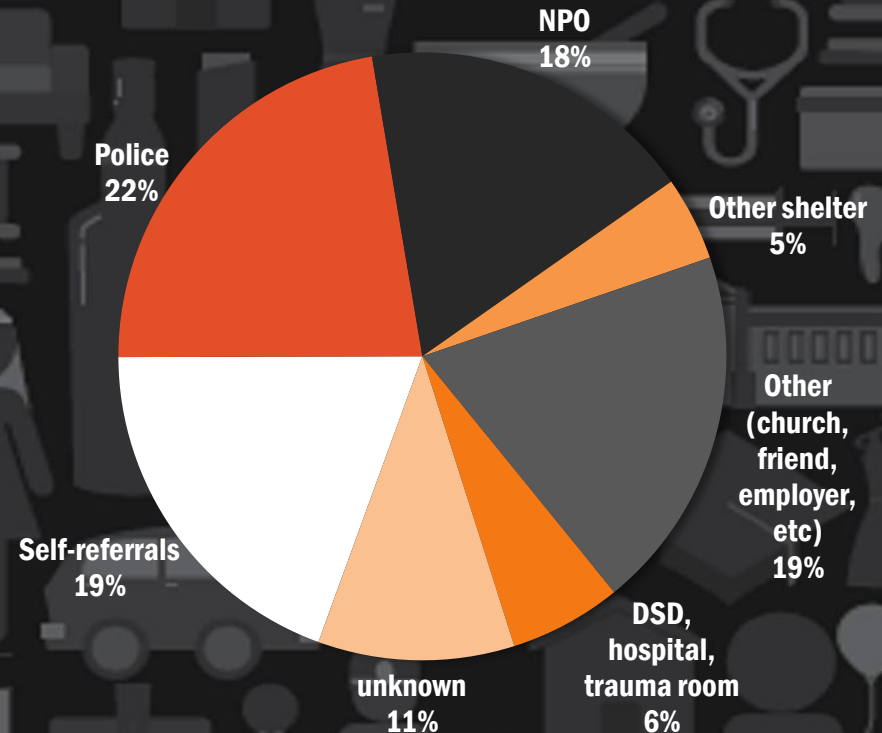
- Shelters offered range of skills development programmes
- Most shelters also assisted women with developing CV's, allowing them access to internet and phone to find work. In some cases shelters also actively assisted with job placements.
- In a few cases shelters provided bespoke training or referred women for specific requested training
- Of the 40 women unemployed at time of entering shelter, 20 (50%) had found employment by the time they left
- This is a remarkable achievement given the strained resources that shelters have at and women's poor educational qualifications



# Summary of Findings

## 9. General public & police are major source of referrals to shelters

- Referrals to shelters included self-referrals, general public (churches, employers, friends), NGO's, SW's, hospitals, other shelters, DSD.
- Police accounted for 22% (15) of referrals
- To determine police referral systems to shelters, researchers cold-called 147 WC police stations pretending to be victim of DV. Police were asked to refer the caller to a shelter or organization to assist her in seeking reprieve from DV in the home



# Summary of Findings

## Police Referrals

- **29% knew name and/or contact nr of shelter** *(although not all were shelters for abused women)*
- **7% knew of a location but not name or contact nr**
- **41% didn't know where to refer caller. Of these:**
  - 31 asked caller to leave contact details/ call the station again/provided contact nr of a other police officer, trauma counsellor or dpt (incl a HR dpt) within the station;
  - 14 referred to other facility (police station, court, hospital, ngo, social worker and on one occasion a refugee centre)
  - 12 offered to take the caller to a family member, friend/offered the use of their trauma room/someone's home as there were no shelter in the area.
  - 2 did not know of any shelters and were not able to provide further advice
- **In 35 stations, the designated DV officer or trauma counsellor was not available to assist or was on leave**
- **12% refused to refer the caller to a shelter service. Of these:**
  - 3 said they couldn't reveal the location or name of shelter (1 said that they would 1<sup>st</sup> visit her home to determine whether she was in danger before referring her to shelter)
  - Others requested that victim present herself at station. Reasons incl: standard practice; shelter required referral letter or victim needed to 1<sup>st</sup> lay a change/apply for PO before she could be referred to a shelter. This is not a requirement of the DVA
- **In 15 stations, telephones were not answered, had faulty lines or the call was disconnected**
- **Researchers were also hung-up on (2 occasions), informed that police don't help anonymous people, informed that SW's are better placed to help than the police are**

# Summary of Findings

## 10. Allocations for shelters by DSD are only useful if the money is spent for this purpose

- In Nov. 2009, National DSD committed to est & improve 2 shelters p/province over 5 yrs (budget dependant)
- The case example of the WC Province illustrates that having a budget is not enough
- In the MEC's 2011/12 Budget Vote, R7 million was set aside for increasing/improving shelters in the Western Cape. This was not implemented because the shelters did not have suitable properties

# In summation

Given that legislation requires that the police be able to refer abused women to shelters, this report concludes that funding that shelters received from DSD was inadequate. Funding constraints limited services that shelters were able to offer; and all shelters had to significantly diversify their funding base & strategies to remain in operation. Shelters do an admirable job but despite their commitment and sterling work, shelter's resource limitations simply don't allow shelters to meet all the legitimate needs of those they serve

# The end



**Heinrich Böll Foundation**  
**8th Floor Vunani Chambers**  
**33 Church Street**  
**Cape Town (CBD) 8000**  
**South Africa**  
**Tel: +27 (0) 21 461 6266**  
**Fax: +27 (0) 21 462 7187**  
**[www.za.boell.org](http://www.za.boell.org)**



**Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre**  
**8th floor, Braamfontein Centre**  
**23 Jorissen Street**  
**PO Box 31006**  
**Braamfontein 2017**  
**Johannesburg, South Africa**  
**Tel: +27 (0) 11 403 4267**  
**Fax: +27 (0) 11 403 4275**  
**[www.tlac.org.za](http://www.tlac.org.za)**

