

# Social investment in the fight against GBVF: Investing for depth and for breadth

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South Africa is thought to have one of the highest rates of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in the world. It is a systemic challenge that requires interventions at all levels to be addressed. An increasing number of Tshikululu's clients recognise the value of investing in GBVF prevention and response, but because of the magnitude and complexity of the issue, it can be challenging for a social investor to know how to direct resources for maximum impact: should social investors take a narrow focus, concentrating resources to achieve impact in a very specific area, or seek to create broader benefit? As Tshikululu, we see value in each of these approaches, if supported by a clear strategy and theory of change.

## Investing for depth

Investing for depth requires a tightly focused strategic approach that seeks to create deep, transformative change in a very small number of issues, geographic areas, and/or target groups. An example of this is a Tshikululu client whose social investment strategy focuses solely on GBVF and is implemented in a single target community. While the strategy includes a range of activities, from prevention to medical, psychological and legal support for survivors, the narrow focus on a single community has allowed us and the client to develop a deep understanding of the specific priorities in the context in relation to GBVF and respond accordingly. Central to the strategy is a schools programme that aims to prevent GBVF in the long-term by promoting social and emotional learning in early childhood education and training educators in methods that foster understanding and gender equality.

Investing in this way leverages finite resources to achieve measurable outcomes. It is an opportunity to contribute to systemic change, tackling the root causes of GBVF, or to invest in an array of programmes that provide benefit to a clearly defined target group. To be effective, investing for depth requires a significant time commitment, especially when hoping to create change in deeply rooted social norms.

## Investing for breadth

Investing for breadth seeks to create a more widespread impact in addressing GBVF. This could include distributing resources across diverse communities and investing in a range of interventions across multiple focus areas. For example, we have managed programmes on behalf of two multi-stakeholder funds investing in the GBVF sector. Each client supported over 100 community-based organisations (CBOs) across the country, with a particular focus on underserved and rural areas. The investments supported a broad range of interventions, from awareness campaigns and education to direct support services for survivors. This diversity allowed the funds to tackle various aspects of GBVF from multiple angles and across dozens of communities, seeking to contribute to social change nationwide.

This broad approach is effective when an investor wants to reach as many people as possible or contribute to diverse strategic objectives. This can make it challenging to measure impact in relation to systemic issues or root causes of GBVF, but investing for breadth strategically can still make a valuable contribution to the lives of beneficiaries.

In reality, any social investment will fall somewhere on the continuum between these two extremes. The root causes of GBVF are deeply embedded in our society, and there is no single right way to address this complex problem. Our experience designing and managing strategic social investment initiatives from national to grassroots level has shown us the value of investing for breadth or for depth. Eradicating GBVF will require co-ordination of diverse efforts across sectors. With the right strategy, even limited resources can play a role in achieving impact in the fight against GBVF.

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Tshikululu is South Africa's leading social investment fund manager and advisor, working alongside investors and other development partners to achieve sustainable social impact. More information about our services can be found on our [website](https://www.tshikululu.org.za), or you can contact us at [info@tshikululu.org.za](mailto:info@tshikululu.org.za). Our trust and programme management service line includes trust management and governance, financial management, governance advisory, social investment strategy design and implementation, programme and grant management, and monitoring and reporting.