

Trust awards NGO R2-million grant to combat gender-based violence

The 1st for Women Insurance Trust recently awarded NGO, Afrika Tikkun, a grant of R2-million to help break the vicious cycle of violence and abuse and deliver much-needed family support services in Diepsloot through a holistic network of partners.



Herby Rosenberg, executive deputy chairman at Afrika Tikkun; Robyn Farrell, managing director of 1st for Women Insurance; Zelda la Grange, patron of the 1st for Women Insurance Trust and Siphon Phanel Murrize, general manager of Afrika Tikkun Diepsloot.

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"Gender based and domestic violence is an escalating phenomenon in many townships. In Diepsloot, the problem is deeply concerning, with hundreds of women subjected to horrible acts of violence on a daily basis. Unfortunately, it is difficult to gauge the full extent of gender-related crimes in Diepsloot because a lot go unreported and survivors often drop charges against their abusive partners.

"Many survivors are disempowered by partners who alienate them from their families and other people and most are not employed. Due to these circumstances, they are dependent on their partners and have no means of escape," says Robyn Farrell, MD of 1st for Women Insurance and a trustee of the 1st for Women Insurance Trust.

Wings of Life Centre

"Our programme reaches out to survivors by increasing awareness of gender-related and child abuse and highlighting that there are alternatives. From there, we work to empower individuals with information and support so that they can build new and better lives. We do this through our Wings of Life centre in Diepsloot and by hosting workshops, door-to-door awareness campaigns and interventions.

"With the Trust and our partners we are able to extend scarce and necessary support services to empower survivors to

change and improve the quality of their lives," says Herby Rosenberg, the executive deputy chairman at Afrika Tikkun.

According to Farrell, most of the beneficiaries of the programme are women who come to the centre for counselling and various other services relating to abuse. These services are also extended to other members of their families.

Diepsloot programme

There are eight partners, including Afrika Tikkun, which collaborate strategically to deliver various, focused services as part of the Diepsloot programme. These include:

- National Children and Violence Trust, which provides counselling to survivors of gender-based violence and child abuse;
- Sonke Gender Justice, which is training Afrika Tikkun and the National Children and Violence Trust's representatives in the implementation of a human rights framework;
- People Opposed to Women Abuse (POWA), which works with the programme's partners to determine the Diepsloot community's needs and develop appropriate strategies and training. POWA also provides survivors with access to safe houses;
- Childline, which works with Afrika Tikkun to raise awareness of abuse at Diepsloot schools and in the community;
- Teddy Bear Clinic, which deploys a senior Teddy Bear Clinic social worker works at the Afrika Tikkun centre in Diepsloot once a week to deal with cases of child abuse directly. Teddy Bear Clinic will also be training and mentoring local social workers and will establish a forensic social worker service for abused children;
- Webber Wentzel which offers pro-bono legal services and training around legal issues, especially for women seeking justice;
- Afrika Tikkun, which coordinates and manages the programme

Farrell says Afrika Tikkun, through its holistic model, is making sound and steady progress in its objective to give hope and lend support to abuse survivors.

"This is an extremely important cause to which we are proud to be associated. We are heartened by the achievements made through the programme in emancipating women and children who have suffered abuse. Though there is a lot of ground to be covered, reports of just one women or child saved from abuse is a triumph," she concludes.

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