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Local organisation takes a stand against gender-based violence

A Stellenbosch-based non-profit organisation (NPO) has partnered with the government's National Development Agency ([NDA](#)) to implement an awareness campaign against gender-based violence (GBV) and bullying.

The local NPO [Community Keepers](#) and the NDA's multifaceted campaign, which will be rolled out in October, will target [28](#) primary schools and high schools in the Stellenbosch area, said Community Keepers in an [announcement](#) on 28 August.

According to Gerrit Laning, CEO of the NPO, the campaign will educate the youth on the intersection between GBV and bullying, and the role that men play in GBV.

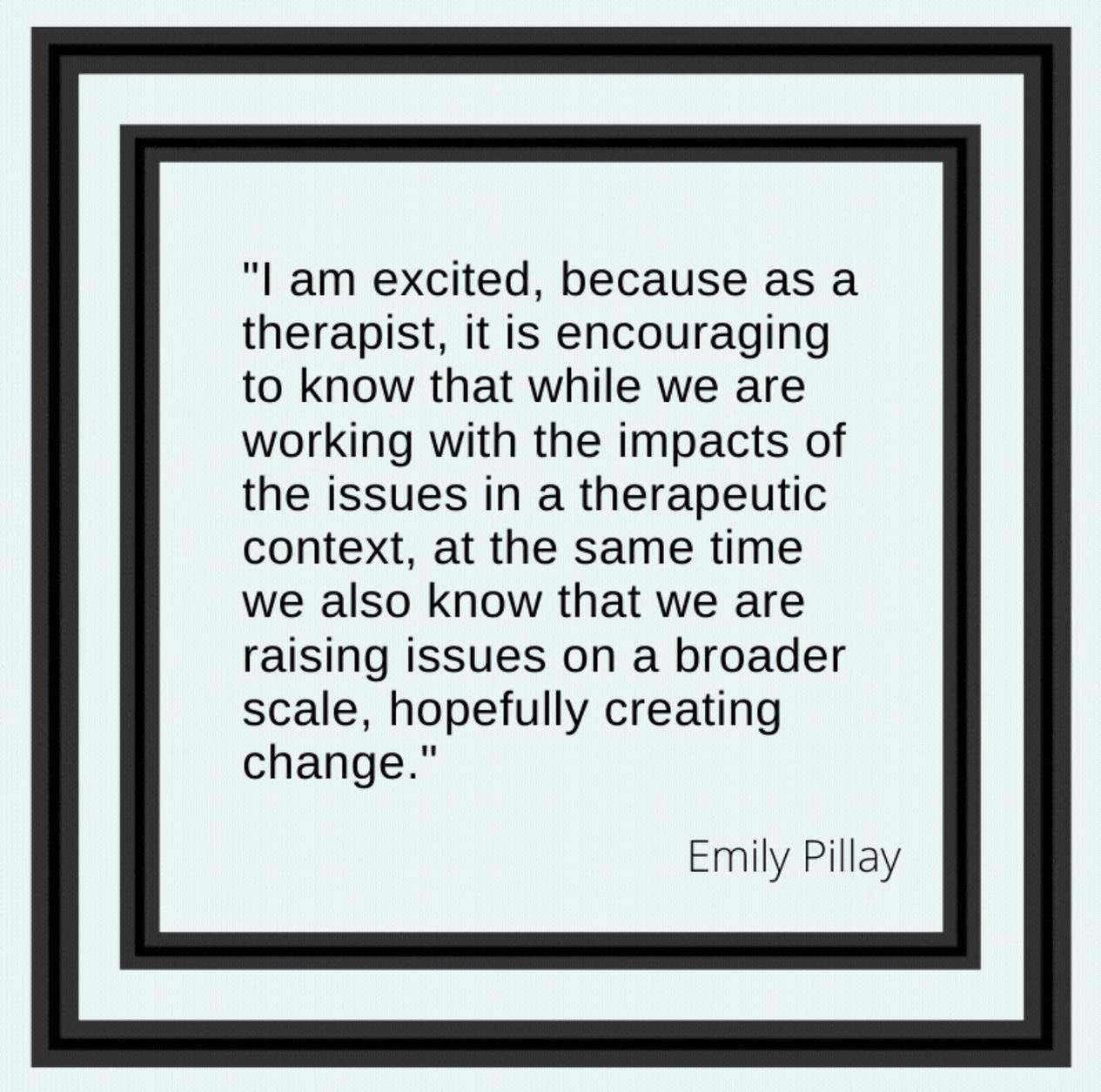
"We decided that we consciously want to make the link between bullying behaviour as a societal problem, and how that's actually a manifestation of GBV," he said.

Community Keepers will be working with Studio Boland to create animations that will address serious issues such as gender-based violence. Video: Facebook, Community Keepers.

According to Laning, the funding for the campaign was received in August and will cover resources for the programme, such as poster campaigning and distribution thereof. In addition, educational animations will be presented to the students.

"The animation images and character creations will form a themed library of images to be used in the worksheets and poster campaigns," said Meriel Bartlett, the media, marketing and funding executive for Community Keepers.

According to Bartlett, the programme is currently in the development phase and will launch as soon as the material is ready. "Implementation then starts around October and peaks around the 16 days of activism [the international anti-GBV campaign]," she says. This would be around mid-November and mid-December, said Bartlett.



"I am excited, because as a therapist, it is encouraging to know that while we are working with the impacts of the issues in a therapeutic context, at the same time we also know that we are raising issues on a broader scale, hopefully creating change."

Emily Pillay

Emily Pillay is a social worker as well as the Communication and Administrative Officer for Community Keepers. GIF: Savannah Bacon.

According to Emily Pillay, a social worker and the communication and administrative officer for Community Keepers, it is extremely important for the youth to be informed about GBV. It is also important to have spaces that encourage conversations about these issues, said Pillay.

"These issues are systemic and are entrenched in our systems, in our communities, and our youth are significantly impacted by them," Pillay said.

Because GBV issues are systemic, the youth do not always feel that they can challenge these issues, according to Pillay.

The youth will need to find a middle ground and remove the divide between girls and boys before they can roll out as a mass movement against GBV, said Laning.

"Once [boys and girls] are on the same page then they can start challenging societal norms, the patriarchy, the authoritarianism of men – then we're working with GBV not as 'man does

something to woman', but we're working with GBV as a system that does this to women," said Laning. "The system needs to change."

According to Laning, if one can get boys to think differently from a young age, then there is a chance of dismantling this cycle.

"It also includes men because men are the perpetrators [of GBV] most of the time," he said.



Community Keepers has partnered with the National Development Agency in the launch of this campaign, which falls under the National Development Agency's response to gender-based violence. Graphic: Savannah Bacon