

NEWS BULLETIN

Community Keepers partnership with National Development Agency provides Gender Based Violence programme to children, educators and caregivers in marginalised Cape Town communities

Trauma, and its debilitating consequences on mental well-being, is still a major construct in addressing the short-term needs of children, especially in marginalised communities. Children in these communities live on high alert, in a permanent state of fight, flight or freeze. They do not “come from trauma” – they live in trauma. Daily, they witness or experience violence, including gender-based violence.

Lack of access to resources and appropriate therapy presents a double negative on these children. During the Covid-19 lock-down period, incidences of violence and gender-based violence increased rapidly. It is concerning that those who often experience the highest levels of trauma have the lowest levels of support.

Community Keepers, a non-profit organisation with headquarters in Stellenbosch, partners with 28 schools in marginalised communities across Cape Town and the Cape Winelands. They have adopted a two-pronged approach that enables them to host life-skills workshops for learners, educators and caregivers. Challenging topics are tabled including gender-based violence, self-harm, suicide ideation, self-esteem, conflict resolution, boundaries, self-discipline and self-care. Alongside this, Community Keepers establishes child-friendly consulting rooms on-site at the partner schools where learners, educators and caregivers have free access to professional therapy from trained staff, social workers, registered counsellors and psychologists. The average intervention is made up of 40-minute weekly consultations for a period of 6 weeks (or longer where necessary).



As part of the measures to mitigate Gender Based Violence and Femicide, the Department of Social Development has allocated R 100 million from the Criminal Assets Recovery (CARA) Funds Account to provide financial support to organisations rendering services to victims of crime, gender based violence and femicide. The funding is made available through the National Development Agency (NDA) over a period of 24 months. R95 million is set aside for direct financial support to organisations while R5 million will be used for mentoring and coaching of emerging Civil Society Organisations in the Social Development Sector.

The first tranche of R45 million has already been transferred for the implementation of services to victims and survivors of gender based violence and femicide, focusing on family strengthening, social crime prevention, social behaviour change and welfare services.

To date a total of 170 contracts have been signed and the first payments have been transferred to 131 organisations to the value of R17, 4 million. An additional R17, 4 million has been committed as second phase of payment for the contracted organisations. The process of contracting the remaining 142 CSOs is currently underway.

“Community Keepers is one of the organisations we are proud to have partnered with as the NDA to implement programmatic services and systems that do away with the scourge of gender based violence and femicide. This programme, in particular, focuses on a holistic approach that lends support to vulnerable children who are often the forgotten victims in cases of home and community based violence. Our funding approach speaks to a wide range of services that ultimately change behaviour to strengthen families and ensuring crime is not perpetrated in communities,” says Mrs Thamo Mzobe, Chief Executive Officer of National Development Agency.



Western Cape Children's Commissioner
Ms Christina Ndomo



Community Keepers CEO
Mr Gerrit Laning

Say “No” to Gender Based Violence

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Speaking at the launch of the new GBV and Bullying awareness campaign, Community Keepers Chief Executive Officer Gerrit Laning said, “The funding from the National Development Agency enables Community Keepers to reach beyond brick and mortar; to reach to learners, educators and parents nationally through the use of technology. The entire series of animations, videos, posters, worksheets and the how-to manual will be shared freely online for any organisation to use. Mindful of the connectivity challenges in rural areas, we are partnering with mobile health clinics to take this campaign to rural areas where we will again share the material as a sort of “campaign-in-a-box”. We have a firm belief that once a funder invests in material, we have an obligation to share our knowledge, expertise and resources as widely as possible. Our dream is to partner with more funders and as many communities as possible, to extend this series as we build resilience and a culture of well-being. As an organisation we strive to live out the National Development Plan and the 2030 Agenda as we work hard to “leave no one behind” and to “endeavor to reach the furthest first.” Nobody should be denied access to mental health care because she or he is poor or lives in a remote place.”

“Children human beings exist among us, my role as the Children’s Commissioner is to remove society hierarchy ideas that bring children down. We have to work together to challenge these powers and make children’s lives better in every way. In this role I am merely a platform to raise the voice of children and hold those who silence these voices to account for and take responsibility,” Ms Christina Ndomo, Western Cape Children’s Commissioner.

Community Keepers launched the campaign on 2 October 2020 at the Ysterplaat Primary School in Cape Town.



Ysterplaat Primary School



Ms Yolanda Madyira, NDA Development Officer

Say “No” to Gender Based Violence