

RISE

YOUNG WOMEN'S CLUBS



Your 24th Edition



SAY HER NAME 7

LIVING DEMOCRACY 16

THE LAST WORD 33



THIS CLINIC IS A

Youth Zone

Ingosi Yentsha

Thakaneng

Tshivenda

Sikhatsi Selusha

Nkarhi wa Lavantshwa

Ixesha Lolutsha

Sikhathi SabaTjha

Nako ya Basha

Sepedi

Jeugsessie



A time at the clinic just for young people

A DEDICATED TIME SLOT FOR YOUTH

YOUTH ZONE TIMES:



she conquers
Empower. Protect. Prevent.

CONTENTS

2	Word On The Street
4	Club News – Sisters With Soul
6	Word On The Street
7	The Blessing That Is A Curse
10	How Elections Work
12	Understanding Political Manifestos
14	Raising Voices Coalition Free State
16	Quiz
18	Personal Leadership
20	Creating Life Goals
21	Black Girl Magic
22	My Daughter was Trafficked
24	The Pain of Addiction
26	#Nakedtruth
27	What is Malaria?
28	The Sassa Grant
29	Care for Your Natural Hair
30	Ask The Experts
33	The Last Word



What can you and your club do to add value to your community?

Sisterhood

 @RiseTalkShow  RiseYoungWomensClubs

Commissioning Editor: Refilwe Madumo
Technical Editor: Helen Webster
Designer: Londeka Dlamini

Publisher: Soul City Institute
© Soul City Institute 2019



WORD FROM THE EDITOR



2019 The Year of Womxn

I have a vague memory of the 1994 elections. I remember standing with my late mother in Mamelodi at sunset. Our neighbours were singing, rejoicing and declaring victory! We were finally free!

Looking back, I did not think that we would still be seeing the chains of inequality, especially those that oppress womxn. Most of the time it feels like freedom is only reserved for men. For example, homemakers are not considered meaningful contributors to the economy. We forget that without them and their selfless service, this country would stop dead in its tracks!

I am a black woman who disrupts what society wants us to believe is normal. I always question the barriers that are put on the path to my freedom. A lot of people gave up their lives for us to be able to carry on fighting for our rights. Pay a bit more attention to your life and question why things have to stay the way they are. Politicking has taken advantage of our freedom and used it against us.

I have spent time with womxn and girls, and each one of them has a

story about freedom. It is always a story of struggle and sacrifice. But that has to end. We need to pave the way for our daughters to have a better run at this life thing. It may sound unfair but it is up to us as womxn to claim our little corners of the world. The smallest ways of resisting can get us closer to where we need to be. We need to speak up when we see injustice and demand equality within our own families and households. Let us mobilise in our different spaces, challenge those who feel they have power over us. Fight for those who are vulnerable and masked in silence. And in every way that you take your power back, know that I salute you. Womandla!

This editorial is dedicated to my late mother, who fought for her freedom a little too late. RIP Daisy Zandile Khalo. I carry you now & forever. and safer South Africa for womxn.

DeexoXO

Soul City's **#YVote4U** campaign encourages young womxn to question political parties on issues affecting them as young womxn.

Definitions

*A new spelling of the word **WOMXN**. 'Womxn' includes anyone who identifies as female and emphasises the idea that womxn are their own separate people, able to act on their own and without a man to help them.

***PATRIARCHY** is the belief that boys and men have more rights than womxn. The patriarchal system believes that boys and men should have more privileges because they are stronger, better and more intelligent than girls and women. Society has taught us to believe this, even though it is not true.

MAMELODI, GAUTENG



“BEING A YOUNG
Womxn LIVING IN
SOUTH AFRICAN
TODAY IS GREAT
BECAUSE...”

PABALLO RALEBIPI, (23)

When I compare us to other African countries we are better off. I'm grateful for never having gone to sleep hungry. We get a grant. I have a dream of being a beauty therapist and opening a salon of my own. With that, I'll be able to help the orphaned children in my community. I know it's very possible in our country.

NTHABISENG MOTAU, (23)

There are a lot of opportunities for young womxn in our country. I was a teenage mother but that didn't mean I had to stop dreaming. I would like to further my studies and become a manager's assistant. I applied for the course and it's free.

ZELDA MAPHUTHA, (22)

I love that we have more freedom than our mothers did. They never got to decide what to do with their bodies, what to wear, where to go or where to work. I love having the freedom to make those choices. I also volunteer at schools to teach other young people about their freedom of choice.

LIDAH MASEEME, (24)

I live with my brother and I don't really have to answer to anyone. That doesn't mean I'm irresponsible. I spend most of my time at church. I sing in the choir. I also love going to camps with other young womxn where we can relax and talk about our issues.

SINETHEMBA KHUMALO, (20)

I don't come from a privileged background so I use every opportunity offered to me. I really believe in myself. I'm currently doing an Early Childhood Development course. I love children and love spending time with them. I'm a great baker too! One day I'll have a bakery where I can feed all the children. I can't imagine living anywhere else.

REFILWE MAKUWA, (23)

I love that we have the freedom to keep our traditions alive. I love being Pedi. It is an important part of my identity. I also love cars. I want to own a car shop one day. I know that's not a normal thing for girls to like but I live in a country where every dream can come true.

LERATO NKOANE, (21)

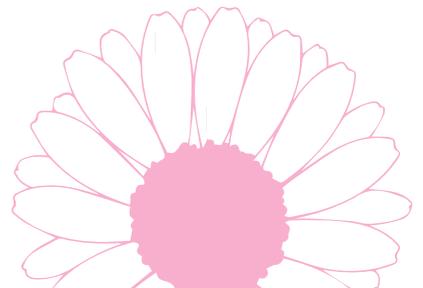
We need to move from our uncomfortable spaces. I am living with a disability. Raising Voices has taught me to do things at my own pace. I was shy but I have now accepted myself. I've always wanted to be an actress. Now I feel strong enough to try.

ZANELE MASEMOLA, (21)

I don't feel bad about expressing my feelings. I know I wouldn't have had this freedom back in the day. We can talk about things openly now. There is much less fear.

NEO MASHAO, (21)

We can all make a difference. I want to make a positive impact in people's lives. I'm going to be a teacher and I want to influence young people to make the right choices.





PABALLO RALEBI, (23)



NTHABISENG MOTAU, (23)



ZELDA MAPHUTHA, (22)



SINETHEMBA KHUMALO, (20)



LIDAH MASEEME, (24)



REFILWE MAKUWA, (23)



LERATO NKOANE, (21)



ZANELE MASEBOLA, (21)



NEO MASHAO, (21)



SISTERS WITH SOUL

BY REFILWE MADUMO

Sisters with Soul is a RISE club in Ga-Rankuwa tackling unemployment, drug abuse and HIV in their community.

The club started in 2015 because there was talk in the community about how RISE uplifts young womxn. The young womxn thought they would have better opportunities if they joined RISE.

Kgomotso says, "We have a lot of challenges in our community. We thought we should face them together."

Noluthando says, "These things make me feel stuck. I feel like I am in a shell and can't break free. The young people here are all so scared to fail. We all have the mentality that we won't go anywhere in life. We don't believe in ourselves. We don't encourage each other and we're afraid we will be judged."

Bonolo believes that young womxn are the most affected by unemployment.

“It has led to us having ‘blessers’ and high rates of HIV infection. Instead of gaining independence at this age, we become bigger burdens to our families.”

The young people here are all so scared to fail. We all have the mentality that we won't go anywhere in life. We don't believe in ourselves. We don't encourage each other and we're afraid we will be judged.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The club meets on Wednesdays to talk and to try to create solutions. They often speak about how people in their community seem to be depressed. Thando says, "People drink too much and drug use is on the increase." She believes that drug and alcohol abuse are symptoms of depression.

"We don't take depression seriously as black people. We judge people's circumstances without taking time to understand them. But we forget that we never really know what's happening in other people's lives. We all handle pain differently. We don't know people's limits. Depression is very serious and we see it everyday on our streets."

The community of Zone 7 doesn't have counselling services. Bonolo thinks that not having the space to talk can be really toxic. She lost a friend to depression. "My friend was pregnant and her boyfriend said it wasn't his baby. She tried to abort the baby herself, at home. She took pills but she took too many and she and the unborn baby died. She didn't think of how her choice would affect people. Her mother is living with a disability. She didn't think of her family and friends who have to live with the guilt of feeling that they didn't do enough to save her. We only think depression is serious when someone kills themselves."

FINDING SOLUTIONS

The club went to a Restless Development camp organised by She Conquers. The camp focused on innovation, unemployment and sexuality. After the camp, the club began working in their community and at schools to raise awareness about HIV prevention, teenage pregnancy and mental health. The club members started six months of training which began in November 2018. The training will give them the tools to have the tough conversations that could save the lives of young people.

Noluthando adds, "We also use sports to get young people together so that we can talk to them. We believe keeping the youth busy decreases bad peer pressure." The members believe that young people are easily influenced. "If they are exposed to more positive things, they can influence each other more positively."

Hilda says it's important for parents to seek help when they see their children's behaviour changing for the worse. She thinks social workers need to be called, or the

family should get brochures and information from clinics. "Don't just think your child will be okay. Take steps to help them heal."

BUILDING SUPPORT

Thato says they need the community's support to make changes. "I wish they would take time to understand that we are trying to bring change for the betterment of everyone. Nothing will come of all this work if the community doesn't get involved. Give us the space to raise these issues. We will do it respectfully. We truly believe that we can resolve these issues together."

In the future, the club is hoping to attract an independent sponsor who is passionate about making a difference in the community to help them carry on doing this work.

We judge people's circumstances without taking time to understand them. ... We all handle pain differently. We don't know people's limits. Depression is very serious and we see it everyday on our streets.



she conquers
Empower. Protect. Advance.

For more information on She Conquers visit:
<http://sheconquerssa.co.za>

BLACK GIRL

Magie

“Black girl magic means we can do anything we want to do. We are natural born leaders and we persevere through everything. And when someone says ‘no,’ we smile and keep it moving.” – **TIKA SUMPTER**

“Dear black girls and black women, we matter. Our presence matters, our voices matter and our votes matter. Make no mistake about it, we are powerful. We disrupt the norm and change the system for the betterment of all people.” – **STEPHANIE LAHART**

“There is no greater force for change, for peace, for justice and democracy, for inclusive economic growth than a world of empowered women. Achieving gender equality is about disrupting the status quo - not negotiating it.”

– **PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA**

“Being strong doesn’t mean you have to fight every battle. True strength is choosing your battles wisely and which ones you have to walk away from with your head held high.” – **MISS FIYAH**

“Women of South Africa are some of the most powerful people on earth. Change what you believe is possible for yourself.” – **OPRAH WINFREY**

“Your personal thoughts carry so much power. It’s important to be mindful of what you spend your time thinking about. Make sure that your thoughts aren’t defeating you or your purpose in life. Fear, doubt, and a negative attitude will continually hold you back. Your journey may be a bumpy one, but I encourage you to never give up! Giving up only does one thing: It keeps you from ever knowing what could have been.”

– **STEPHANIE LAHART**

“Anytime you get more than a couple of black women together, you are creating this powerful mechanism for change.” – **KIMBERLEY BRYANT**

“**Black women aren’t bitter. They are just tired of being expected to settle for less.** – **Issa Rae**”

Unsung Heroes of the South African Womxn's Struggle



Mmatshilo Motsei: Healer; Author; Activist

Mmatshilo Motsei is a celebrated writer, sought-after healer and well-respected activist.

MAKING A CHANGE

As a young mother, working as a nurse and research assistant for Wits University, Mmatshilo found herself standing at a bus stop in the morning in Alexandra Township. She had been through a brutal night of beatings from her husband. She was carrying her children and looking at her surroundings. She realized she was actually quite privileged because she had options. She was educated, she had a job and family she could turn to for support. She knew there were ways in which she could rebuild her life. Looking around her at the ordinary womxn of Alex, she thought of how it must feel for someone who wanted to leave but didn't have anywhere to go. "I had seen many cases of abuse as a nurse. When I was working at Ga-Rankuwa hospital, a woman came in with an axe stuck to her knee. That image never left me. I said to myself, 'one day when I can do something about this, I will.'" The day for her to do something had come. She founded A.D.A.P.T.

SAVING LIVES

Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention

and Training (A.D.A.P.T.) was founded in 1991. It was a small organization that Mmatshilo directed by herself for three years until she received funding in 1994. A.D.A.P.T. focused on providing counseling for abused women in Alexandra. But the organization grew beyond that. It became a hub of information, education, advocacy and lobbying for abused womxn, children, youth and the elderly. "If I knew how impactful my calling would be, I would never have begun because it would have felt too big for me. I was only trying to make a change in the lives of the womxn I was coming in contact with. But the work impacted the entire country." Through A.D.A.P.T.'s lobbying, the Domestic Violence Act of South Africa was adopted into the South African Constitution.

FALLING APART

In 2005, Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo (whom we all got to know as Khwezi) accused Jacob Zuma, the deputy president of the country at the time, of rape. The outcomes of the trial determined that Khwezi, having worn a kanga on the night in question, had

asked for it. The trial changed the conversation around sexual abuse and power, setting the movement back decades. Mmatshilo was very angry. "I felt that everything we had worked for all those years was being wiped out by one man." She decided to divert her anger into a book. She wrote *The Kanga and the Kangaroo Court - Reflections on the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma*. Using the rape trial as a backdrop, the book tackled the systematic forms of violence leveled against womxn in our country. The book isolated her from her community of activists and womxn. People rejected her. Her circle made sure she would never work again.



Her house was repossessed and her children had to leave the schools they were in because she couldn't afford the fees anymore. She moved to Bushbuckridge into a home with no electricity or water. "It was the most painful experience of my life. My self-esteem took a serious knock. I didn't know how to ask for help. I just wanted to disappear." The people who insulted her the most were womxn. "I don't blame the womxn. It is something that is common in all oppressed groups. The easiest person to attack is the one that looks like you but challenges the status quo."

RISING AGAIN

Mmatshilo has no idea what gave her the courage to pick up all the broken pieces of her life and start again. But the fact that she had started from scratch before made it seem possible. Looking back, Mmatshilo says it was the most beautiful experience because her pain was worthwhile. It made her who she is now. "I cannot do womxn's liberation work in the same way because I am not angry anymore. When you have been broken down into pieces and re-woven together, you are not the same. I operate from love. Love is powerful. My work is to heal now. I have to carry womxn with a different energy and that energy is love."



Mm. Bevenley Nitsie

: Queer Activist; Film/Tv Director And Writer, Musician

Bev grew up in Orlando West in a matriarchal home. She was a young girl during the '76 uprisings, living on the street where the shootings took place. "I remember that day very clearly, when the fire started burning. You can see the Hector Peterson Memorial from our house so we saw the shootings up close. I was politically conscious at a very young age." By the time she was old enough, she started getting involved with the SRC at her school. That's when she realized that women and girls were being excluded in the fight for liberation. "I already knew I was queer. The men would say, when we get our freedom, we are going back to tradition and this nonsense of yours will stop." She felt that once freedom came it would only be for men. She knew she had to also fight for the emancipation of womxn and queer folks.

SELF DISCOVERY

Bev discovered the word 'gay' when she was twelve. "When you don't have the words for who you are, you feel

isolated. So when someone called me "iNtombiaeshelwa" it was so empowering. Even though it was meant to be an insult, I found it liberating because I knew that it meant I am the kind of girl that doesn't like boys. Once I found the word, I knew that there would be others. And that's how I found my community."

BEING SEEN

In 1990, Bev met Simon Nkoli, a political prisoner who was also a gay man. She attended a rally where he was speaking. For the first time, she felt that her politics and friends were coming together beautifully. She became one of the founding members of GLOW (the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand.) At their first PRIDE parade; the panel consisted of white gay men, Simon who was black and a white woman. She did not feel represented as a black womxn so she decided to get up on stage

and speak for all the black lesbians who had remained faceless. She became a cultural icon but also the target of people's hate. Her family was threatened and it became very hard for them to find work.

PRIDE

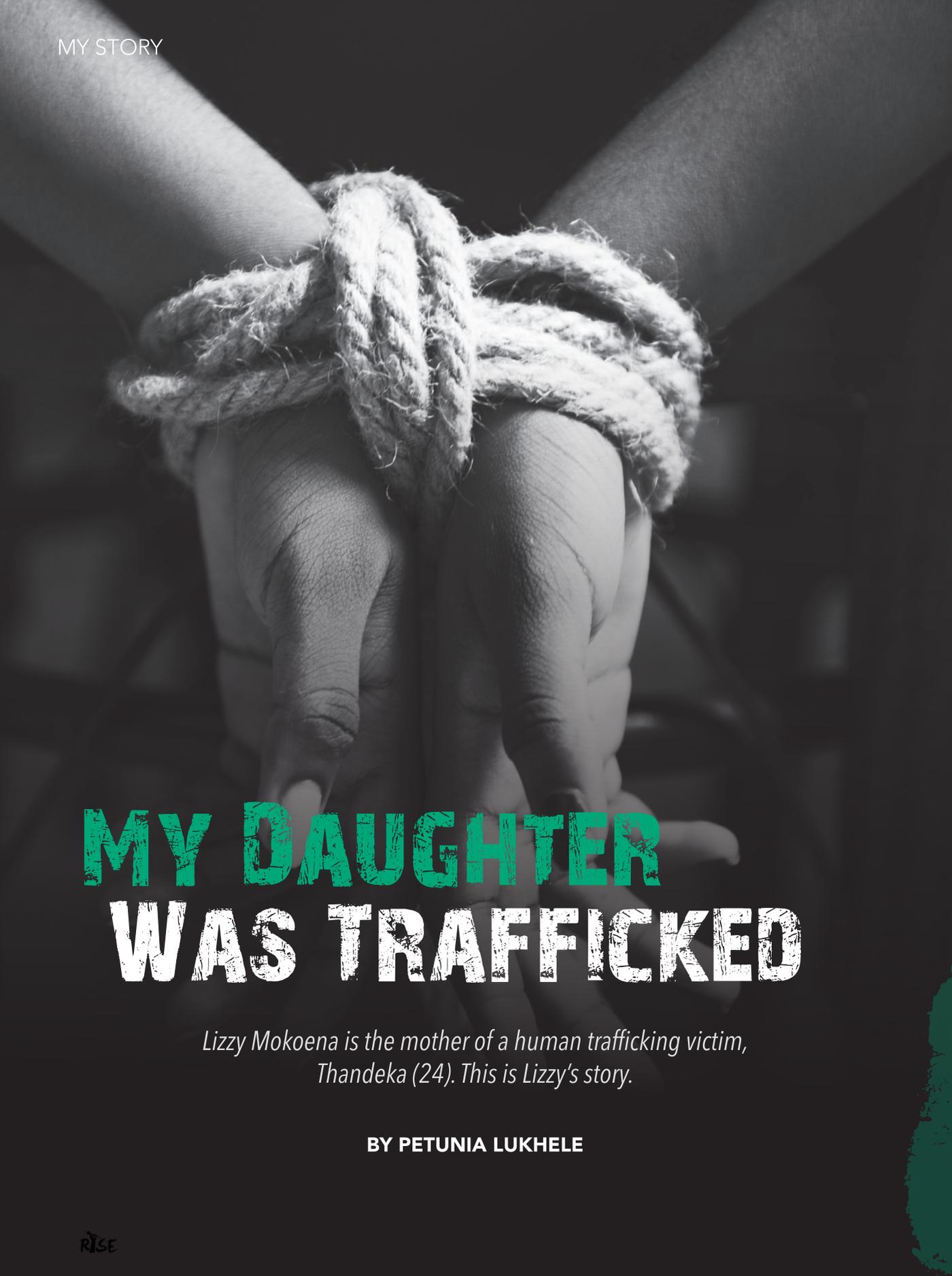
In 1995, Bev was the first black African to address the United Nations Conference about gay and lesbian rights. This paved the way for the right to sexual diversity to be adopted into the South African constitution in 1996.

Bev has worked as an actor since she was 10 years old. She is one of the most revered film and television directors of our country. She is also the brain behind reality shows like All You Need is Love and Forgive and Forget. Because of her contributions to the queer movement, Bev was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Claremont Graduate University in California in 2019.

“Love is the medium. As much as the rage is there, we can't heal through anger. We need love to show us the way.”



MY STORY



MY DAUGHTER WAS TRAFFICKED

Lizzy Mokoena is the mother of a human trafficking victim, Thandeka (24). This is Lizzy's story.

BY PETUNIA LUKHELE

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is when criminals take people without their permission, often by force, away from their homes to another environment, possibly even another country. The kidnapped people are forced to work for no pay, or used for sex against their will, or forced to fight as child soldiers, or killed for body parts.

Human trafficking is a modern day form of slavery. The number of people in South Africa who have been trafficked is increasing.

“We live in Ekangala, Mpumalanga. My daughter, Thandeka, used to go out with her friends every month-end.

The last month they went out, Thandeka told us she met a lady who promised her a job. Thandeka emailed her a CV. I was really happy that she would now have a better job and would be able to help me in the house because we are the only two people working. Thandeka sent her CV on Monday morning.

She got a response to come for an interview on Tuesday at eight in the morning in Johannesburg. We were so sure that she would get the job!

The lady called Thandeka and said she must wait at a mall for a company car to pick her up and take her to the offices where the interviews would take place.

THE NIGHTMARE

Thandeka was picked up and driven to a place far away from Johannesburg. She had no idea where she was. She was taken to a very dark room and was locked up for three days. On the fourth day, she was locked inside a mini truck with no windows, and was transported to Durban. She was forced to have sex with many men, sometimes five men a day.

I hadn't heard from her in three to four months. I was so worried. Then I got an SMS. It said, "It's Thandeka, Mama. Please take this number to the police station so that they can track it down and find me ASAP."

I did not waste any time. I went to the police. They took the number and told me that they would call me if they needed anything. I was really hopeful when I saw the police vans and private security cars the following day, bringing my daughter home.

But her body was badly bruised. She was drugged and tired. We all tried to help her recover from the tragedy. She couldn't handle the pressure and judgement from people in the community. She suffered so much that she committed suicide.

The perpetrators were arrested but that will never bring my daughter back.

LIFE WITHOUT THANDEKA

As a family, we were deeply hurt by this situation, especially after she took her own life. My child was so strong, we never expected anything like that from her. She was the only one helping me with the groceries at home since her father died. Our family is going for counselling at Son of Joy Foundation, which is an NGO in our community. It is really helping us recover from the nightmare. We are slowly getting used to life without her in our home."

CREATING AWARENESS

A group of Ekangala RISE Clubs, the Multi-Talented Girls, Intombizodwa, Positive Impacts, Hope and the Uniques, all teamed up for a campaign to support Thandeka's family and educate people about human trafficking.

The campaign is called #TrafficJam. There was good participation from community stakeholders and NGOs such as MansForum, Insika Zesizwe, Black Women Ink, Son of Joy Foundation as well the police, the Blueberry Institute and the community counsellor.



What can you do to prevent human trafficking?



- Do not talk to, trust or meet with strangers alone. If someone is promising you something that sounds too good to be true, it probably is not true or safe.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Try not to walk in unsafe spaces alone.
- Use RISE Clubs to educate young women and their communities.
- Fight for laws that can prevent human trafficking.
- Create community security and policing forums.
- Run campaigns to make people aware of human trafficking in their community.
- Create support groups for families and people affected by human trafficking.

**If you think that your loved one has been trafficked, please contact:
The police on 10111 and
The Emergency National Human Trafficking
Hotline on 0800 222 777.**

THE PAIN OF ADDICTION

People take drugs because of painful life experiences, poverty, low self-esteem, and curiosity or peer pressure. Regardless of the motivation, engaging in drug use may lead to devastating consequences and have destructive results. The end results may be broken families, mental instability, destroyed futures and communities where the quality of life is negatively affected.

A drug is 'a chemical which affects how your body works, or how you behave or feel'. 'Good' drugs are the medicines you can get from your clinic, pharmacy or hospitals. Examples of 'good' drugs are antibiotics, HIV medications, birth control pills or anti-depressants. However, we have 'bad' drugs that can change the way you think over time and may cause you to become a completely different person, 'Bad' drugs may cause you to become a danger to yourself and people around you. Examples of 'bad' drugs are *nyaope*, *tik*, cocaine and heroin.

When addiction to drugs sets in, some people may find it hard to live a normal life and may struggle to recover from the challenges brought on by their addiction. Like Sibongile, who is battling with an addiction to *nyaope*.



If you need help, you can contact SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group) on >>



SIBONGILE'S STORY

"I am Sibongile. I live in Naledi, Soweto. I have four children. I used to have a normal life. I would look after my children, go window-shopping and do people's hair to earn some money. But my life started to change a few years ago. My boyfriend and I were at a party. He got into an argument with a guy and killed him in self-defense. We ran away to the Vaal but after some time, I couldn't handle it. I advised my boyfriend to hand himself over to the police. He agreed and we went back to Soweto. He handed himself in but the case was dropped. After that he was never mentally the same. He would have bad mood swings. One day he just lost it for no reason and strangled me. He was looking at me straight in the eyes with his hands around my neck. Even though I was screaming at him to stop, he didn't. He kept strangling me like he was trying to kill me. My mother called the police.

Afterwards I was scared of him. We moved into my family home because I was really not okay being alone with him.

One morning, I found him hanging from a rope. He had killed himself. His family accused me of murdering him. The police arrested me but the charges were dropped when the post-mortem proved that he had committed suicide. Even though the charges were dropped, I was still called a murderer by the community and my family. I didn't have anyone to turn to because my family blamed me for his death and didn't believe me when I said I was depressed. I started using *nyaope* to cope.

LOSING CONTROL

I really want to change and be a good mother for my children but I can't control myself because when I think about smoking *nyaope*, I can't think of anything else. Sometimes I sell the children's clothes or food to get money to smoke. When I sell their things or cause trouble in the home, my mother and I fight in front of the children. She would say she doesn't love me, which really hurts. I've gotten to the point where I don't know if she is saying this because she is angry or if she really means it.

I never thought that I would be doing drugs because my brother started using *nyaope* before me and I hated it. When my best friend started using, I disowned her and refused to go to her funeral because she died from it."

FIGHTING DRUGS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

As a society we should all be responsible for each other. We know who the drug dealers are in our communities, but when the police come to our communities to raid, we keep quiet. As a community we play a part when we buy stolen goods from drug addicts at a discounted price, instead of coming together to offer help and support to the people affected. The best that we can do as family and society is to educate ourselves about the effects of drug use, and to set up support for people who are addicted and affected by drugs.

Drug addiction is a complex disease. Family or friends of drug users need to look for external help when dealing with drug users. Ask your local clinics, social workers or churches for help and advice. Try to understand, from the user's perspective, why they fell into substance abuse. Family and friends should not allow addicts to take advantage of them. Family and friends need to set rules so that the drug user knows that there are negative consequences for them because of their harmful behaviour.

If you or a loved one is struggling with drug abuse or addiction, contact:

SANCA – Free for unemployed people

Whatsapp: 076 5351 701
Landline: 011 892 3892

Substance abuse line -Toll Free

0800 121 314

iThemba 24 Hour Crisis Line -Toll Free

080 022 3217

DISCUSS IN YOUR CLUB

Does your community have a drug abuse problem? Talk about the effects and how what your club could do to help those affected by drug abuse.

0800121314

25 YEARS

YEARS OF DEMOCRACY



It has been twenty-five years since the end of Apartheid. Democracy is explained as a form of government in which supreme power rests with the people and is exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.

South Africa has one of the most celebrated and liberal constitutions in the world. We are the rainbow nation with Madiba magic! But can we say that we are truly free? Is this democracy working if there are still schools without toilets and homes without water?

SERVICE DELIVERY

Service delivery protests are reportedly on the rise in 2019. Although we had national elections earlier this year, a lot of people chose to use protests to communicate their dissatisfaction with the status quo rather than go to the ballot boxes to make their voices heard.

There have been gains where service delivery is concerned but corruption has been the biggest drawback to progress. If we look back, the apartheid government serviced 10% of the population while 90% suffered. Now the current government is servicing 100% of the population with infrastructure that was designed to serve 10%. Budgets allocated for specific purposes have reportedly been squandered to line the pockets of individuals in power. Many communities do not have streetlights or grass cutting services for over-grown fields.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment in South Africa is at 29%, which is an all time high. Young people lose hope everyday because they are the largest group affected. Unemployment breeds poverty. Poverty and inequality go hand in hand. If we look at the history of apartheid, black people could not live in urban areas and were denied the opportunity to acquire skills. This caused an over-supply of cheap black labour. But the world is relying more on machines than on human labour. The country has not been able to keep up with the people's demand for work. If people are too poor to even look for work, communities suffer. There is an increase in drug abuse, violence and crime. There is also not enough entrepreneurship support and training.

ECONOMY

South Africa's economy is not growing at a rate that can help better the lives of her people. The country is also sitting with a public debt crisis. A large part of the population is being supported by grants, which does not elevate them out of poverty. Most of the population runs out of their income within five days.

The country is the biggest employer, which means a large part of the budget goes to paying salaries to public servants. Investor confidence is low as it is too risky to invest in a country with so much corruption, unemployment, protests and political instability.

EDUCATION

More schools have been built throughout the country. There are no-fee paying schools with subsidized meals. Curriculum requirements are always changing and being improved. But the level and quality of education continues to decline. Reports state that most children in grade 4 cannot read, and their ability to do simple maths is low. The pass mark for matric was reduced to 33%, which makes it impossible for students to obtain university entrance.

South Africa offers Further Education and Training (FET/TVET) at colleges for pupils from grade ten to twelve. These institutions provide further career-oriented education. We have also seen #FeesMustFall protests, where young people demanded the right to free, quality tertiary education.

HEALTH SERVICES

THE National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill is being debated. The National Department of Health is trying to create a health system that can service the entire population. This, however, means that people with private health insurance will have to give up their privilege and plug into the public system.

There is a shortage of doctors and nurses. Health providers are overworked, under-trained and under-paid. This creates an environment where the services available to the public do not meet their needs. People find it

hard to seek help because they do not feel safe in public hospitals and clinics.

We have a growing depression and mental health crisis that is not being addressed adequately. The Life Esidimeni tragedy, where 143 people died at psychiatric facilities in Gauteng, sent shock waves throughout the country.

SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

South Africa has made great strides in getting people to test for HIV. The statistics say 87% of people are aware of their status. The country has the largest anti-retroviral (ART) program in the world. PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) a medicine that fights HIV infection if taken within 72 hours of possible exposure to the virus, is becoming more readily available. There are also programs to provide PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to people who are at risk of contracting the HI virus. Free condoms and contraception are available at most clinics. However, there are still two thousand new HIV infections in young womxn per week in South Africa.

The government recently released a list of clinics and hospitals where young womxn can have safe terminations. They are also trying to create youth friendly clinics. A lot more work needs to be done to tackle stigma to fight the scourge of back-door terminations. Health providers need better training to deal with the sexual reproductive health needs of young people.



FREE STATE RAISING VOICES SUBMISSION

We are Raising Voices Coalition, a group of young women from Mangaung, Free State. The Coalition is committed to building a community which values young women and girls. A key part of such a community is the safety of all its members. We believe that safety and security are basic needs of every person but especially of women and girls.

Our experience shows that, without safety, we don't have freedom of movement. Without freedom of movement, we are limited in our access to school, work and health facilities. We need to be able to use the services provided by government institutions as well as those provided by the broader society.

Not being safe causes us anxiety, stress, and depression. Feeling these negative emotions reduces the quality of our lives.

We understand that, according to the Constitution, all

people, including women and girls, should be able to walk freely without fear of being violated in any way.

We are very worried about poor street lighting in many of our streets and walkways in Mangaung. We are also concerned about garbage that is dumped in many of the open spaces through which many public paths pass. There are also many unused buildings in these open spaces. The buildings have become places where drug users go to use drugs.

These neglected open spaces expose young women

and girls to the risk of harassment or attack. During the course of our community-based monitoring project, we learnt that many women and girls avoid walking in these places because of fear of being attacked. This limits their freedom of movement and access to school, work, health and other facilities. In this way, our basic rights, as promised in the Bill of Rights, are violated.

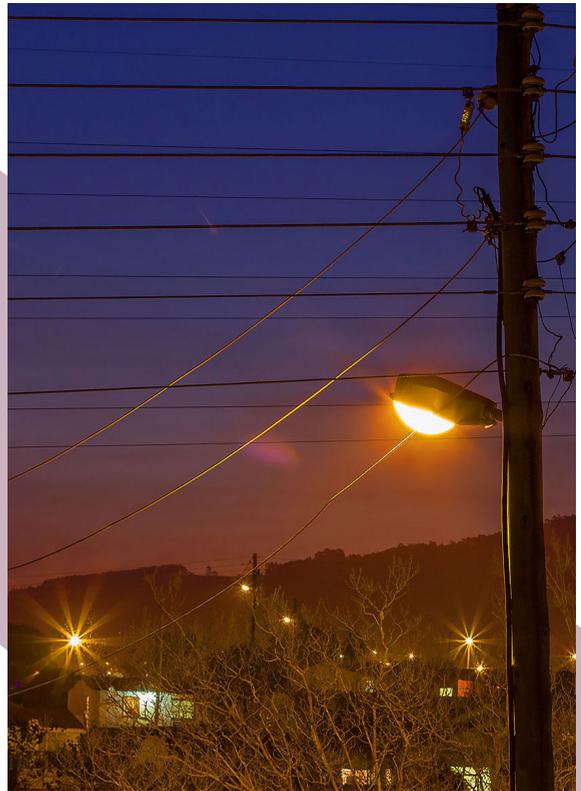
Our experience shows that the following groups are badly affected by harassment and are vulnerable to attacks:

- Young women and girls
- The LGBTIQ+P Community
- Women and young girls with disabilities
- Learners and students
- Young women in employment
- Clinic staff and young girls making their way to clinics for health care services.

We believe that the Mangaung Municipality has failed to make sure that open spaces do not become garbage dumps. It has also failed to provide enough lighting in public streets and walkways. This neglect adds to the feelings of insecurity that many of the girls and young women experience.

Raising Voices Coalition and the affected communities asked Mangaung Municipality to:

- Identify places that require urgent lighting. Put up lighting that will ensure greater safety for young women and girls.
- Clean the dump sites immediately to reduce the unnecessary spread of illness.
- Maintain regular garbage collection. Provide dirt bins or skips to ensure that community members can do their part to keep the area clean.
- Ensure that the local councillor consults with community members and representatives in all municipalities of the various districts to ensure that the waste removal service remains adequate.
- Encourage recycling enterprises in communities.
- Decide quickly what is to happen with abandoned buildings, particularly those in open spaces. These buildings must either be demolished or renovated to stop them being used by drug abusers and other people who make the pathways through these open spaces unsafe.
- Clear the bushes and grass which grow along the pathways.



The Coalition proposed the following solutions:

- Primary and secondary schools should be built closer to informal settlements where they are needed.
- Girls' safety committees should be established in each community to address safety issues, and to monitor and implement strategies.
- Security should be provided in the areas where the children walk. The SAPS should do patrols in the area.
- Transport should be provided to take young girls to school, and to access clinics and hospitals.
- Transport should also be provided for young girls who travel from Dewetsdorp to Bloemfontein on a daily basis.
- Streetlights should be installed and properly maintained.
- Government should build a hospital in Dewetsdorp.



The Blessing THAT IS A CURSE

In most South African townships, people know about **mavuso**. It comes from our culture of *stokvels*, where people come together with a common goal and help each other get ahead with either money or goods. **Mavuso** is a *stokvel* with a difference and one that can seriously disadvantage young women.



BY MOSIBUDI RATLEBJANE

Mavuso is where women exchange sexual favours for 'fun' and cash. Some women do it because they are unemployed and need help with basic necessities, others exchange sexual favours because they want a better lifestyle. Other women do it because they think it is the man's job to provide.

Transactional Relationships and HIV

A Mavuso relationship is a transactional relationship. Mavuso is different from sex work because it is not a job, like sex work is. A transactional relationship is an agreement between a man and a woman who are not married but who form a relationship with benefits that are material (money or things). Transactional relationships are said to be one of the main causes of a new generation of HIV infections.

There are many kind of transactional relationships. They are found across different social classes. Transactional relationships can be found in schools, churches, places of work and in communities with high unemployment.

What we need to be aware of, is that in a transactional relationship, the one who provides the money has

more power. In most cases, that person is the man. If the man has more power in the relationship, it is harder for the woman to negotiate safe sex practices in that relationship.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says that every three minutes, a teenage girl is infected with HIV. Around the world, about 480 adolescent girls are infected with HIV every day. In South Africa, there are 2000 young women being infected with HIV every week.

Thembeke's Relationship

When Thembeke Zikali* was seventeen, she started a transactional relationship with a man who was fifteen years older than her. She met her 'boyfriend' in Vosloorus, Johannesburg. She was in Matric when she started the relationship with him. She met him on a Saturday morning when her mother had sent her to the shops. "He seemed nice," said Thembeke. He insisted on taking her home so that she could save the taxi fare for herself. Thembeke didn't take up his offer to take her home, but decided to give him her number anyway.

“... most men involved in transactional relationships or sex with teenage girls are either married, or have multiple partners. This increases the risk of HIV transmission.”



Image from Checkpoint, eNCA on YouTube.

“I would say that he wasn't rich but he seemed to have money all the time. And I must admit, I liked that because I wanted nice things.” said Thembeke.

Transactional relationships may be hard to identify as they usually look like any other relationship where two people develop feelings for each other. We live in a patriarchal society that expects men to provide for their partners and families, so seeing the difference between an equal healthy relationship and a transactional relationship is sometimes difficult. Many believe that receiving material gifts or money in exchange for sex is normal, or a small price to pay to put food on the table.

The Danger of Power

Thembeke's 31-year-old boyfriend would fetch her from school and expect her to miss her lessons to spend the day with him on his days off. Thembeke would often go straight to where he was renting a room, and spend the day there. “He didn't like using condoms. He said using condoms went against his beliefs. I allowed it because I liked it when he gave me money.” said Thembeke.

UN statistics say that most men involved in transactional relationships or sex with teenage girls are either married, or have multiple partners. This increases the risk of HIV transmission.

Risky sexual behaviour may lead to unwanted or unplanned pregnancies. The responsibility of decreasing the new HIV infections should not only be the responsibility of young girls and women but should also be the responsibility of the men that they have relationships with. Transactional relationships create a vicious cycle. Men who use money and power to gain sexual favours put their wives and girlfriends at risk of contracting HIV and STIs.

Bad Choices

Thembeke and her older boyfriend continued their relationship, even after he was violent towards her.

Thembeke said that the money he gave her was worth it at the time because she could treat herself and her friends to nice things. A year later Thembeke found out that she was pregnant and that her boyfriend had two children by two different mothers. She found the courage to leave the relationship.

“When I told him I was pregnant, we were in his car, driving back home from a night out. I told him that I thought I was going to have his baby and he became very angry. He stopped at a petrol station and told me to get out of his car. He was drunk. He said I was crazy to think that he would believe that it was his child because I'm a whore. He said that I wouldn't get a cent out of him. When I got out of the car, he followed me and took a bucket of dirty soap water from the carwash and poured it all over me before driving off.” said Thembeke.

Thembeke is just one example of the many young women who fall into the trap of transactional relationships. With such a large number of young women being infected with HIV, we need to think of how this negatively affects our futures. If a young girl or woman has no power in a sexual relationship, it makes asking to use a condom very difficult.

The burden to stop the spread of HIV is on all of us as a society. Let us make men more accountable so that we can protect our young women.

* Not her real name

“In a transactional relationship, the one who provides the money has more power.”



Creating Life Goals

BY SINOXOLO DUMA

We are all born with a purpose in life. Finding this purpose and working steadily to achieve it, is the mark of a well-lived life.

Setting goals for ourselves is one of the main ways to finding our life purpose. We all have things we want to achieve in life. We must figure out ways to reach our objectives.

No matter how big, or ambitious our goals may seem, reaching them will take many small steps. The first step is that we set goals that are clear and specific.

Our goals must also be **measurable**. If my goal is to run a 20km race, I must run at least 3kms a day in training for one week, and increase the distance I run as I become fitter.

Give yourself a **timeline** for how long it might take to reach a certain goal. If you want to lose weight, for instance, you need to be realistic about how much weight you can lose in one month to avoid giving yourself unnecessary pressure and stress.

Are your goals **realistic**? Can you reach them alone, or do you need help?

Are your goals things you want to do to pass the time, or are the goals for your long-term development? These are important questions to think about.



Create a **vision board**. This is a piece of paper with all the things you would like to achieve. Add pictures and timelines for each goal. Make it colourful and beautiful! Place it where you can always see it so that it gives you a good feeling every time you walk past it.



Goals give us **focus**, and are a way to keep ourselves motivated.

You will know you are on the right path when you wake up each day and feel excited and motivated by what you do.



What are your life goals? Discuss this with your club and motivate each other.

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP IN A lonely, noisy world

BY KGALALELO KEDIJANG

“You have such a great job!”
“Don’t be ungrateful; many girls would die for an opportunity like this.”

“Are you sure you want to give up this salary and benefits?”

These were the voices running through my head as I sat in a tall city building overlooking the sea. I was a black girl wearing a white shirt and black pencil skirt hugging my body.

I remember the very first day I walked into the top law firm in the country. I had made my parents proud. I was even more proud of myself because I felt that I was making my ancestors’ wildest dreams come true.

My grandfather had always wanted to be a lawyer but because of apartheid oppression, this dream was simply out of reach. It did not stop him though because he kept all the law textbooks he had collected. He gave them to me when I started law school. He was a fine teacher and raised his girl-children to go for their dreams. So it was easy for me to be comfortable being a smart black girl.

Lonely World

As time in this great job passed, I began to feel alone because this tall city building did not have many people who looked like me. Everything about my workspace said that success did not come in the shape of a black woman. I felt frustrated and sometimes worthless. I knew that I had to do something to change the way I looked at myself but did not know where to start and how to get my power back. We hear so much talk about self-love but no one prepares us for the lonely journey it becomes.

On many days, I could not get out of bed to go to that tall city building where I earned a good salary. I felt

ungrateful because I knew that it was a privilege to have such an opportunity but I also felt dead inside because I was not living my truth.

After fighting with my fear for many months, I left the job at the tall city building overlooking the sea.

Noisy World

“Would my parents still be proud of me?” “How would I earn a living?” “Did I just make the biggest mistake of my life in search of freedom that might not even exist?”

I did not have all the answers but that is what being a leader is about. It is about following the voice in your heart telling you that you deserve to feel free, happy and smart and that no tall city building can ever decide your worth.

Later, I realised that my frustration was not because of the tall city building and the people inside it. I realised that my frustration was because I was not living my purpose. Every single one of us is born with a unique gift and our one purpose is to answer that calling.

My World

I am thankful that I was brave enough to follow that voice even though it has been a very difficult journey. No one else is you, therefore no one else’s journey looks like yours.

If you are looking for examples of what personal leadership looks like, the answer is within you.

Today, I am an art and human rights lawyer focusing on the protection of art and innovation, and women’s rights in Africa. I am an attorney in the High Court of the Republic of South Africa. I have also founded my own

“BE BRAVE BLACK GIRL, KEEP FIGHTING FOR WHAT YOU WANT YOUR TOMORROW TO BE.”

law firm, The Creative Bar. My role at Soul City is to project manage Not Yet Uhuru, a feminist multimedia content hub.

I am also an African young taskforce member of the Commission on the Status of Women convened by UN Women. I use my work to help other young black girls discover the leader inside them. I might not be in a tall city building looking over the sea but I know that my grandfather's star shines even brighter for me because I chose to be brave.

[PERSONAL LEADERSHIP]... IS ABOUT FOLLOWING THE VOICE IN YOUR HEART TELLING YOU THAT YOU DESERVE TO FEEL FREE, HAPPY AND SMART AND THAT NO TALL CITY BUILDING CAN EVER DECIDE YOUR WORTH.



Parenting

RAISING HEALTHY AND STRONG CHILDREN



SINGING SONGS

Singing songs is a wonderful way to help children learn words and what they mean. You could play music around the house and encourage your child to sing with you, no matter their age. You could also teach them traditional songs or make up new songs together.

ALPHABETS

Teach your child the alphabet sounds in English and in your home language. Help them recognise the letters by reading with them from a book about alphabets or writing them down and showing them the different letters. Singing the alphabet song is also great fun for children.

COUNTING

As you go through your day with your toddler, look for the many things that your child could be counting. They could count their shoes, the slices of bread on your plate or eggs in the fridge. The possibilities are endless!

SOUNDS

When you are spending the day with your child, listen for different sounds and teach them what and where each sound belongs. You could identify different sounds like cars driving outside, animals in your neighbourhood, sounds of nature and so forth. This will help your child understand how each different thing has its own sound.

SHAPES AND COLOURS

Teach your child different shapes and colours. You could show them shapes and tell them what they are. You could say 'this plate is a circle and it is green' or 'the TV is a rectangle' or 'your ball is round and yellow.' As they grow up, you could ask them to describe the different shapes and colours that they see in their home.

All children develop at their own individual pace. There are many things they need in order to develop properly. They need healthy food, calcium for their bones, stimulation and play time to help grow their brains. Sometimes as parents, we don't know how to help our children grow healthier bodies and minds. We may feel we don't have the tools but there are many simple things we can do to help our children grow healthy and strong.

MAKING CHOICES

Let your child make simple choices throughout the day. They could even pick their outfit! Allow them to make a choice between two different t-shirts. Or they could pick between an apple and a banana at snack-time. This will help them learn what they like. It will be good practice for when they grow older and have to make decisions.

ASKING QUESTIONS

Ask your child questions to help them understand things better and exercise their brain. You could ask them questions like, 'Why do you think you should not run across the road?' This helps them understand actions and their consequences.

INTERESTING PLACES

You could take your child to the park or outside to look up at the clouds. Even going to the supermarket is interesting for your child. Ask them questions about their experience and engage them on their answers.

PLAYING WITH THINGS AT HOME

Have your child match the lids of the Tupperware in the cupboard or have them count the spoons in the drawer. They could run from tree to tree outside and count their steps. You could also set up obstacle courses with items you have in your home and play with them.

DIFFERENT GAMES

Change things up everyday to keep your child interested in learning and playing. Perhaps you could draw up a time-table of different activities for different days so that you don't have to think too much about how to keep your child entertained as they grow and learn.

SILENCE

It is important to also have quiet time around the home. Turn off the television and radio and allow your child to relax. This will reduce their levels of stress and also give them the opportunity to explore things that they are interested in. Children should develop the ability to entertain themselves with limited resources. Silence will also help your child sleep better during the day, giving you some much needed resting time!



Sisterhood

Discuss in your club:

Are there any mothers in your club?
What are their struggles? Are there ways you can support each other to create healthier environments for your children?



#NAKEDTRUTH

BY LEBOGANG MOTSUMI

LIVING POSITIVELY

I joined a youth support group at Helen Joseph Hospital and that made me realise I was not the only young person living with this virus. In 2012, with the help and support of the group, I decided to go public and disclose my status. The first time I said, "I am HIV positive" outside of the support group was at the SAPS Camp for Orphans. The more I spoke about it, the better I felt. The more people I told, the more healing I found.

DISCLOSING MY STATUS

The reason I decided to disclose was because I wanted to help change a lot of young people's lives. The only motivational HIV speakers I knew were older. I felt I couldn't relate to their stories so I couldn't listen to their advice. I thought maybe a lot of other young people felt the same. I decided to target young people infected with and affected by HIV, and those who are still uneducated when it comes to the virus.

Young people living with HIV need to know how important their medication is. They need to learn to take it properly. We all need to use condoms and live healthy lives.

MY DREAM

I am working on opening a foundation with five other young people infected and affected with the virus. This foundation will strictly be working with the youth, 'WE ARE THE YOUTH FOR THE YOUTH'.

Our main focus is HIV/AIDS, but we also look at all issues that are affecting the youth, for example, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and rape. Fighting the stigma and discrimination towards infected youth is very important. We would also like to train learners to be peer educators at their schools.



#ABOUTME

I still remain Lebogang Brenda Motsumi. I still remain a 30-year-old mother, daughter, sister, friend, God fearing woman, HIV speaker, HIV coach, HIV activist, aspiring business woman, radio and TV presenter and producer.

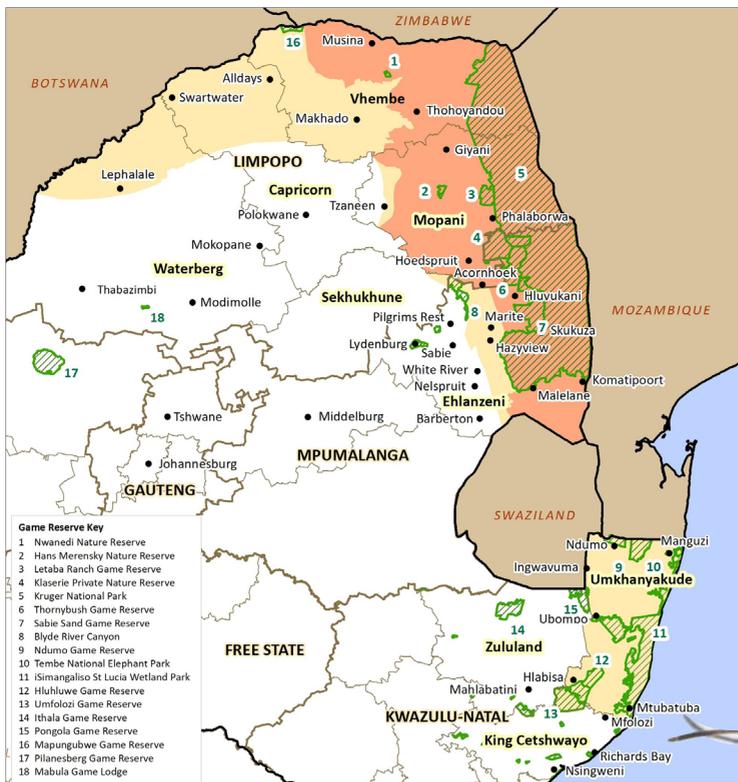
I have turned my mess into a message.

I have taken accountability for the role I played in making uninformed choices.

Living positively for me is a daily reminder that I am worth it. I am love. I am blessed, and I can do any and everything I put my mind to. I am young, beautiful, intelligent, energetic and living with HIV.

And ...

I AM GREATER THAN HIV!



LOW RISK

Only non-drug measures to prevent mosquitos bites are recommended from September to May



MODERATE RISK

Antimalarial drugs are recommended from Sept -May for all travelers.



MALARIA RISK EXISTS IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES

Malaria is a disease which is carried by female Anopheles mosquitoes. People can get malaria if they are bitten by this type of mosquito. Not all mosquitoes carry malaria and not every mosquito bite leads to malaria.



WHAT IS MALARIA?

BY MAIA MARIE

There is a higher risk of getting malaria between September and May, during the rainy season, when there are more mosquitoes. This is because mosquitos lay their eggs in water.

You are most likely to get bitten by a mosquito between sunset and sunrise.

WHY IS MALARIA DANGEROUS?

If not treated quickly with the right medicine, malaria can seriously affect your health or even cause death.

HOW TO RECOGNISE MALARIA

Symptoms may include:

- Fevers (very high temperatures) which may come and go
- Feeling very cold
- Sweating a lot
- Muscle and joint pain
- Headache
- Confusion (not understanding things)
- Wanting to vomit

If you have any of these symptoms, and you live in or have visited a malaria risk area, see a doctor or go to the clinic immediately.

THE SASSA GRANT

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) pays out a child grant for education. The SASSA grant should only be used on the children and their school needs.

BY VANGILE MAKWAKWA

TO GET THIS GRANT:

- The primary caregiver of the child must be a South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee.
- Both the person applying for the card (applicant) and the child must live in South Africa.
- The applicant must be the primary caregiver of the child/children.
- The child/children must have been born after 31 December 1993.
- The applicant and spouse must meet the requirements of the means test.
- Parents or guardians must earn less than R4 000 a month.
- The applicant cannot apply for more than six non biological children
- The child cannot be cared for in a state institution.

The SASSA grant is paid into the beneficiary's bank account. The SASSA card works in the same way as a bank card. **It is illegal for anyone to keep your SASSA card because they have loaned you money.**

HOW TO USE YOUR SASSA CARD

- You need a pin number to withdraw money. Always keep your pin number a secret.
- If you forget your pin number, go to the nearest SASSA office.
- Once a month, you can use your card to withdraw money for free at the Post Office.
- Three times a month, you can also withdraw money for free at cash tills at shops like Boxer, Pick n Pay, and Shoprite.
- You can also withdraw money at ATMs with the Visa sign. You will be charged a fee.
- You can use your card to pay for goods at major shops. When you use your card to pay for goods, you will not be charged a fee.
- You can get a free bank statement at the ATMs, major shops and SASSA cash points.
- You cannot use your card to pay for monthly debit orders like clothing accounts, or to pay off loans.
- You cannot buy airtime or electricity using a SASSA card.



Sisterhood

Discuss in your club:

Do you or someone you know need to apply for a SASSA grant for their child? Go to your nearest SASSA offices to complete and submit an application.

Tollfree contact: 0800 60 10 11
grantenquiries@sassa.gov.za

YOUR HAIR IS FINE

CARE FOR YOUR NATURAL HAIR



● YOUR NATURAL HAIR IS BEAUTIFUL

Everyone's texture is different and that is perfect. Accept and love what you have.

● HEALTHY DIET

Eating vegetables and fruit doesn't just keep your body healthy, it keeps your hair healthy too.

● AVOID HEAT AND CHEMICALS

Try not to dye or blow-dry your hair. Both may cause hair breakage.

● ONLY WASH YOUR HAIR ONCE A WEEK

If your hair doesn't look or feel dirty, washing once every two weeks is fine.

● CONSISTENCY IS IMPORTANT

Stick to the hair routine you've chosen. Give your routine at least a month to show you results.

● WATER IS THE BEST MOISTURISER

Oil does not moisturise your hair. Oil works as a sealer. Always spritz water on your hair before sealing the moisture in with oil.

● TO KEEP YOUR AFRO SOFT

Plait it into maphondo (bantu knots) before going to sleep. Undo and style in the morning.

● TO STRETCH YOUR HAIR

Think about African threading. The Benny and Betty hairstyle is neat and long lasting.

8

USE NATURAL INGREDIENTS FOR NATURAL HAIR

1. Baking soda instead of shampoo

Mix it with water and apply it to your hair. Leave on for 20 minutes and rinse.

2. Aloe as a conditioner

Pick, peel and mash. Apply it to your hair. Rinse after a few minutes.



3. Beetroot water

Use as a rinse if you have dandruff.

4. Lemon juice for reducing dandruff

This will help to remove build-up on your hair.

5. Castor oil to help your hairline grow

Rub into your temples every night before you go to sleep.

6. Guava leaves to strengthen your hair

Boil the leaves and rinse your hair with the water twice a week.

7. Rice water to make a hair spray

Save the water when you wash rice. Put the water into an old spray bottle and spray it onto your hair three to four times a week.

8. Vinegar and warm water to soak your hair piece before styling.

It will make the itching on your scalp less.

Ask the experts

The experts answer you health and wellbeing questions. Get in touch with us.



Soul City Institute
Rise Talk Show
Rise Women's Clubs



@soulcity_sa
@RiseTalkShow

Lifestyle questions

STRICT PARENTS

How can I learn to accept that my parents are strict and abusive towards me? Please help.

CONCERNED

DEAR CONCERNED

It is hard to advise you without knowing your age and other details. It is important to take note what your parents are strict about and really avoid those behaviours. Have you tried to speak to your parents about their abusive behaviour? If you have, and they have not stopped, is there an extended family member that you trust, that could speak to them? Are there family members that could offer you shelter? You can also speak to a social worker to find out what options are available to you.

YOU CALL ALSO CALL CHILDLINE: 0800 55 555

GOSSIP GIRLS

How can we deal with gossip and backstabbing in RISE Clubs?

WORRIED

DEAR WORRIED

Don't take part in those behaviours. When someone approaches you to gossip or backstab, tell them to stop. You can also call a meeting with your club members to talk about your concerns because the club is a space of safety, encouragement and empowerment. Encourage people to talk directly to each other. If they feel they cannot talk face to face, organise a third, unbiased person to help the conversation along.

GENDER IDENTITY

My parents expect me to be like other girls and compare me to other girls. I don't like being a girl. I feel that I am a boy. My parents don't understand. They believe that if you are a girl, you must live like a girl. It is very hard for me because I am pretending to be a person that I am not. Please help me.

TRAPPED

DEAR TRAPPED

I am wondering if what you are going through could be about being born in a certain body but feeling like you belong to a different body. Support for these type of feelings is still very hard to come by. Is there a friend you trust who you can tell, or someone within your family. Try to make contact with people who are openly gender-fluid within your community.

FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:

Gender DynamiX on 021 447 4797

<https://genderdynamix.org.za>

or

OUT: 066 190 5612

GALA: 011 717 4239

SADAG 0800121314

DATING?

How do I tell my mother that I have started dating? I am worried about how she might react.

SCARED

DEAR SCARED

Your mom's reaction will depend on your age, if she knows the person you are dating, and the kind of relationship you have with your mother. Be prepared to answer her questions. Try to be as open as possible with her. She might be angry or surprised because you had not asked for her permission. You will need to have reasons why you did not ask her.

Talk to her when she is alone and calm. Show her respect. Dating is a normal part of life but it's something that has to be negotiated with your parents.

NEW SCHOOL

I've just started a new school and have no friends. I am having a hard time fitting in. The only people interested in being friends with me are involved with smoking, drinking alcohol and partying. I do not want to do bad things but I would love to be friends with them. What should I do?

DESPERATE

DEAR DESPERATE

It takes time to build friendships. Join up for social and sporting activities or clubs at your school. Think about your interests. You could start a club that other scholars in your school may be interested in. Introduce yourself to other students, especially when someone is on their own. Ask if it's possible to hang out with them. You also need to have strong boundaries and not give in to peer pressure.

Health questions

CONTRACEPTIVES

It has been 13 months since I started using contraceptives. Why don't we have our period when we are using contraceptives? Why is it that even when using oral contraceptives, you sometimes get a long, heavy period?

CURIOUS

DEAR CURIOUS

Injectable and oral contraceptives work by changing the hormonal balance in your body. This often causes a person to not have periods. If you are using oral contraceptives and sometimes bleed a lot, you might have to change to another oral contraceptive. Discuss this with your health worker.

NO PERIOD

What are the effects of not having your period for a long time after starting contraception?

Ten City

DEAR TEN CITY

There are no bad effects so just continue with your contraception. If you stop your contraception, then not having periods could mean you are pregnant. Remember to always use condoms to protect you from STIs.

STI

What are the symptoms of a sexually transmitted infection (STI)?

CONCERNED

DEAR CONCERNED

There are different symptoms for different STIs. In women, there may be no symptoms at all. So, if your partner has an STI, go and get treated too. The most common symptoms for women are smelly vaginal discharge and sores on or around the vulva or in the vagina. It might be painful when you pass urine. Always use condoms when you have sex whether you have an STI or not.

PILES?

When I visit the rest room, I always feel like I have piles. What causes them?

LEBOGANG

DEAR LEBOGANG

Piles are a condition which causes pain when you go to the toilet. It is caused by a problem with the veins in the anus. Piles often happen when a person is very constipated.

To avoid constipation eat lots of fruit and vegetables, and drink enough water. Piles can be easily treated.

NOT SEXUALLY ACTIVE

I am going through puberty. I am not sexually active. Is it compulsory to use contraceptives?

Wondering

DEAR WONDERING

Never let someone else tell you that you have to have sex when you don't want to, or that you have to use contraceptives if you don't want to. If you do want to have sex, you must make sure that you have safe sex to protect you from pregnancy and from sexually transmitted diseases. You can also use other contraceptives to be doubly sure about preventing pregnancy.

NORMAL LIFE?

How do you protect yourself and continue living a normal life, if you are HIV positive?

POSITIVITY

DEAR POSITIVITY

Being HIV positive is an illness. If you take your tablets regularly, you can live a normal life. You should always have protected sex (whether you are HIV positive or not). Protected sex means using condoms every time you have sex. There are millions of HIV positive South Africans on treatment and living normal happy lives.

LIVING WITH HIV

I want to learn more about living with HIV. How do you prevent other illnesses and how do you reduce the risk of TB?

CONCERNED

DEAR CONCERNED

The most important thing that you can do to keep healthy while living with HIV is to take your ART every day. This will keep you healthy. Don't smoke, drink moderately (not more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day), eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, exercise for 30 mins three times a week. All these things will help to keep you healthy. While you are taking ART, don't take other medicines without checking with your health worker.

PUBERTY

I am 15 years old. I have not menstruated and my breasts are very small. Is there something wrong with me? Am I suffering from a disorder?

WORRIED

DEAR WORRIED

A girl's first period can happen any time between 10 and 16 years old. It happens when the hormonal system is 'switched on'. The hormones also cause breasts to enlarge and hair to grow in the pubic area and under the arms. If you are worried, you can go to the clinic to get checked but it is most likely normal.

HIV AND ORAL SEX

Can you get HIV from oral sex?

DOUBTFUL

DEAR DOUBTFUL,

It is very unlikely to get HIV from oral sex. It is possible if you have bad gums or sores in your mouth. Remember to always use condoms for vaginal or anal sex.

Black girl

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Sometimes I think that everything is possible. I look back at my life and realise how lucky it has been. This may be surprising because I grew up in Taung, a village where not much happens to this very day.

BY REFILWE MADUMO

JUST A LITTLE GIRL

I remember my crèche graduation. We all had to say what we wanted to be when we grew up. I said proudly that I wanted to be an actor. My teacher said, "There are many things you could do but acting is not possible. Pick something more practical. Don't you want to help people? You could be a nurse or a teacher, or a police officer. But there is absolutely no way that you can be an actor." My heart broke for the first time that day. I was 5.

I started to change the course of my life in my head. I thought maybe my dream wasn't acceptable because it didn't help people. Stories were the only way I made sense of the world. So I started telling myself stories about how I could help people. My mother was diagnosed with osteoarthritis so I imagined being a bone-doctor to help my mother with her pain.

DREAMING BIG

I was 9 years old when Sarafina came out. I saw, for the first time, young black people doing what I longed to do. I would practice the songs and dance moves every day after school.

I began to understand that acting isn't just about performance. It is also about telling real stories. Stories that showed people the reality of their lives. So I started writing the stories that I wanted to see - stories about black girls finding purpose in a world that makes little room for them. I could see the effect that my stories had on my community. I could see how the stories affected women, young and old.

I had a surprising thought; 'what if this is my way of helping people?' I knew I wasn't going to just stand by and let my life happen to me. Somehow I had to chase my dreams. The 'how' wasn't important because I truly believed the world that I was looking for, was looking for me too.

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

This is what I've learnt; 'your dreams are never too big or too far out of reach'. Your dreams can become real in greater ways than you can imagine. There is no one right



I started writing the stories that I wanted to see - stories about black girls finding purpose in a world that makes little room for them. I could see the effect that my stories had on my community and how the stories affected women, young and old.

way to how you can impact the world. If you doubt this, think of the story of a girl who grew up in a run-down village, where nothing ever happens, to become a celebrated actress, story-teller and the commissioning editor of this magazine.

Dream big, claim your destiny and walk in the magic you create every day by being bold, black and beautiful.



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



European Union