



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SUMMARY OF RADIO DOUMENTARY: "SENZENI NA? STRUGGLE OF LESBIAN GIRLS"

"SENZENI NA? STRUGGLE OF LESBIAN GIRLS" unearths issues of violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian girls within their families, communities, schools and key community service providers like Police and clinic. The issues were gathered through dialogues of different community groups and schools including those of lesbians in the areas of Kathorus in Ekurhuleni district and Evaton in the Vaal area within the Gauteng Province in 2017.

The intention of this documentary is to ensure that stakeholders and communities engage on issues of violence and discrimination as experienced by lesbian girls. The engagement should be driven by reaching solutions of an inclusive service delivery, where everyone is accepted without discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and colour amongst others as our Constitution of South Africa provides. "Everyone" deserves to be treated as a first class citizen and access same service irrespective of their sexual orientation in all spaces of life, in a democratic country.

EPISODE 1

It is after school a girl by the name of Refiloe is walking down the streets of Vaal and she sees three of her friends (boys). The friends are Sello, Thapelo and one who hates lesbians Papiki, sitting by the street corner talking and laughing. Papiki walks closer to Refiloe and verbally harassing her, calling her names, and telling her how Refiloe thinks she is a man, showing how he hates lesbians that they need to be taught a lesson.

At home Refiloe is a pastor's child, and she has a brother by the name of Thabang. Refiloe has not told anyone including her parents about being lesbian. It is hard for her because everybody is putting pressure on her. She is expected to be a good example to the youth at church especially to girls. Her mom walks in her bedroom without knocking and finds Refiloe on her bed in boxer shorts, her mom got annoyed and screamed at her and ask her why she is wearing boy's boxer shorts? What kind of a girl is she? Her mom tells her to get ready for night services and she must come dressed like a proper girl.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

1. Why are lesbian mostly attacked for no wrong doing? Kidnapped, raped and killed.
2. Why is it that communities treat lesbians as less of human beings?
3. Is it always safe for lesbians to always retaliate whenever they are attacked or harassed?
4. Why do parents take it as a curse when they get lesbian children?
5. Are lesbian demon possessed, and therefore not welcome in churches?
6. How can the situation be changed to have a non-violent and non-discriminatory Country where everyone feels loved, and accepted?

EPISODE 2

Refiloe and her lesbian friends like night outings, so she often get home late. Refiloe's mom is trying to get Refiloe married to Sipho a very descent young man who is from a descent family and is studying law. Same night Refiloe's brother Thabang come to Refiloe's bedroom to talk to her about her sexuality. Refiloe denied everything, but her brother told her that he can see that she is lesbian and that he does not have a problem with her being a lesbian, but she must tell their parent since they are preparing her wedding and her ceremony of being "*Mokgatlong wa barwetsana*" (girls society).

The following day Refiloe's mom wakes her up and tell her to get ready for her visitors. Refiloe shows up looking beautiful wearing the dress even though she was not comfortable, she did it for her parents. But her father could see that something was not right, he tried to ask her if everything was okay and Refiloe pretended to be okay. Thabang interferes and begs Refiloe to tell her father the truth but she could not. Refiloe's biggest challenge is that she is a Pastor's child and is always expected to behave in a certain way. She took time to come out because she did not want to disappoint her parents.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why would parents not want to accept their children as they are?
2. Why would parents be in denial of their children's sexuality to a point where they can organise marriage hopping that it would change someone sexuality?
3. Is forced marriage allowed in cases of lesbian girls, with the hope that marriage will change them?
4. Will lesbian ever be accepted by communities, if the families from which they are born from do not? How long will this journey take us to achieve transformation?

EPISODE 3

Refiloe is in grade 11 and she is a very wise young women. As she was walking to the class, she pass three boys standing by the boy's toilets, they pull her into boys' toilets and assaulted her. They touch her bums and breasts in an uncomfortable way and started kicking her swearing at her, they called her names and spit on her.

When the teacher arrive they run away, he assist Refiloe to the principal's office and on his way there he come across his colleague Mrs Masondo. She asked what the problem was. The teacher explained that some boys assaulted Refiloe in the boys toilet. Mrs Masondo did not seem to care but she just made things worse for Refiloe. She said Refiloe deserved what she got. What was she doing in to the boy's toilet? And that Refiloe just loves the attention. She added that Refiloe is confused and she does not know whether she is a woman or man and that Refiloe is just full of evil spirits and she needs prayers.

Most of the lesbians drop out of school because they are being harassed by the fellow school mates, and some teachers do not protect them instead they also harass them, thereby perpetuating the sigma and discrimination experienced by this group.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are schools providing safe learning environments for the lesbian girls?
2. Why is violence and discrimination perpetrated by teachers and other learners at school not taken seriously as abuse experienced by other learners?
3. Does the community and teachers understand the impact of discrimination and violence perpetrated against lesbian girls?
4. What need to be done to ensure that schools are safe and no one feels discriminated as compared to others for access to education?

EPISODE 4

Refiloe's mom come from church and finds Refiloe and her lesbian friends sitting outside and laughing. She get annoyed and starts shouting at them. When Refiloe's mom walk inside her house she finds her standing by the stove preparing to cook, she then ask her what is she doing. Refiloe

try to tell her mom that she is cooking as requested. Then her mom turns and tell Refiloe to leave her pots alone, she chose to be a boy in this house so she must leave the girl duties and go do boys duties.

This did not sit well with Refiloe but there was nothing she can do. Her mother set her down and ask her why did she chose this kind of life. She told her that being lesbian is a curse and that lesbians are not liked by anyone. They are outcasts and victims who do not have bright future. They are killed and not appreciated by anybody. Refiloe tells her mom that she did not choose to be a lesbian, but she was interrupted before she could even finish her sentence. She is told that she chose to be a lesbian, she was born a girl and raised as a girl.

Her mom tells her that she is very selfish, her decisions will not only affect her but they will also affect them too and when the church congregation finds out they will chase them away. Especially her father. A church elder come to see Refiloe's father, here is Makhanyile she is a close friend of Pastor Molefe, she came to give him an advice on how to handle Refiloe's matter. She once had a lesbian daughter and lost her, her daughter was brutally killed by four man who did not like lesbians, so they were teaching her a lesson. She feels guilty and blames herself for not accepting her child for who she was and supported her. So she is here to advice Pastor Molefe on how to support his child no matter what. The pastor was relived after the visit from his old friend and advices she gave him.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How can the parents of lesbian children be assisted to accept their children?
2. How can the same parents support one another in empowering and accepting their children as they are?
3. Are the communities aware that parents who bring children to earth have the responsibility to care for the child and give them love and necessary support throughout their development as of the necessities?
4. What are our views around Christianity and non-acceptance of lesbians in such spaces?
5. Do the lesbians have and enjoy the right to religious association like everyone in the country?

EPISODE 5

Dipuo is walking with the love of her life Refiloe, they meet with Stone, Refiloe's best friend who has been through a lot in her life. She was kicked out by her parents after they find out that she is lesbian She was raped by four of her best friends, people she trusted with her life turned against her and hurt her badly. She feels safe and happy when she's around Refiloe because she feels like Refiloe understands her more than anyone.

There is a meeting with elders and the church committee about Refiloe's issue of being a lesbian and having to be part of "*mokgatlo wa barwetsana*" (Girls society at church). Thabang and his Father speak on Refiloe's behalf and makes it clear that they have her back and that they will do anything to protect her. Thabang explains to the elders and committee that lesbians are humans they deserve to be protected and respected and that they harm no one, but live their lives and minding their own business.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Support from family is everything. Are families of lesbian girls realising that if they accept their lesbian children and love them, communities will also do the same, and even if they do not, the family support can give them enough strength to withstand critiques and stigma from outside.
2. Do lesbians have the rights to express their love everywhere anytime in terms of holding hands in public just like anyone else? No one is entitled to be offended by such simply because it is done by a lesbian.
3. Do lesbians deserve to be happy like everyone in this country?
4. Can lesbian legally marry and register their marriage in South Africa?
5. Can lesbian have children or legally adopt children in South Africa?

EPISODE 6

Refiloe and her partner Dipuo go to the clinic to do an HIV test. Dipuo finds that she has an HIV infection. One nurse ask Dipuo as to how she got to be infected, because their way of having sex is safe, she ask them to explain how they have sex. She continue to say that if they think they have HIV it simply means they are sleeping around with man and pretend to be lesbians around people. They even say Dipuo got an infection because she sleeps with man and that is the only way she can get infected.

Dipuo highlights to them that lesbians have rights too and when they come to the clinic they expect to be assisted without been asked insensitive and unnecessary questions as if they do not have emotions. She explains to them about how Lesbians get infections and she also inform them about the things they use for protection like dental dam, and finger dam. They looked confused and uninformed but one nurse came and assisted them. She knew everything about lesbian's sexual intercourse and their protective mechanisms for safe sex.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do clinics have lesbian (LGBTIQ) sexual rights services?
2. Are the clinic personnel offering friendly services to the lesbians without judgement and stigma?
3. Do nurse have the knowledge about the LGBTI sector and their rights in South Africa?
4. Are lesbians not experiencing secondary victimisation at the clinics?
5. Is the lesbian right to health and life realised in South African health centres?

EPISODE 7

The first thing the police ask when they get to the scene of stone's murder is "what was she doing alone at night, these lesbians like to take risks as if they are man".

Papiki express how he feels about what his father is doing; sleeping with lesbians and giving them money. He ask his father that as to why is it that he does not offer them jobs instead of sleeping with them. His father felt that Papiki is disrespecting him and tried hit him, but Papiki was ready for anything and he made sure that his father knows that he is not a child anymore. And he can defend himself physically. While they were arguing the police knock at the door and ask for Papiki, they arrest him for the murder of Stone. The court sentenced him and his friends 25 years in prison for the murder of Seipati Stone Tsotetsi.

The lesbian friends of stone were matching outside signing their struggle songs, they wrote a poem for stone and every lesbian girl facing the struggle of being harassed and assaulted by the

community and family. At the end Dipuo came out and told her mom that she is lesbian and the love of her life is Refiloe. Her mom could not believe, she fainted.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why are lesbian targeted for brutal killings and corrective rape?
2. Most of the lesbians drop out of school because of the way they are treated
3. Are we aware that In South Africa there is high unemployment rate among youth? And in the process when lesbians are not treated with equality in schools they thereby drop out of school, end up being without skill and not even having completed matric to get employed, and this is due to our actions?
4. Why lesbians are always blamed for any violence they experience either from community or family?
5. Are we aware that most lesbians have children out of rape, being married forcefully, and they also get HIV because of rape and being unemployed and ending up selling their bodies in exchange of money?

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