



## **Gender-Based Violence Survivors Supported by People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) Benefit from Skills Development Opportunities**

**8 December 2021** - In line with ensuring gender-based violence (GBV) survivors are economically empowered, POWA recently ran a range of skills development programmes for 21 survivors supported by the organisation.

These programmes have enabled 10 of them to get learners and driving licences, while 11 others have benefited from gaining skills in wig making, nailcare and eyelash extension. While some beneficiaries of this initiative were accommodated at POWA's East Rand and West Rand shelters, others have received counselling at the organisation's branch offices in Johannesburg.

Jeanette Sera, POWA's Acting Executive Director, says the organisation provides various skills development programmes to GBV survivors to enable them to generate an income. "A large number of abused women supported by POWA are young, unemployed and/or unskilled, so struggle to make a living," she explains. "Skills development opportunities are critical to enabling them to build their confidence, unleash their potential and earn an income. By having a greater degree of financial independence, they are less likely to return to their abusers because they can support themselves and their children."

Over the years, women across the country have fallen victim to being raped, robbed and trafficked by men offering them fake job opportunities. By providing women with skills to assist them to make a living, they are less likely to be lured by promises of employment that put them in danger.

Funding to enable these 21 GBV survivors to get their driving licences and various skills in beauty therapy was provided by HSBC, one of the world's largest banking and financial services institutions.

Through this wonderful skills development initiative, 10 survivors had the opportunity to get their Code 10 Drivers Licence which will enable them to drive a light and heavy motor vehicle. POWA linked them to various driving schools in Gauteng to undergo both theoretical and practical driving lessons. They had classes where they read over their K53 learners handbook in a quiet environment and could ask any questions about what they were studying. On receiving their Learners Licences, they went on to do driving lessons.

Miriam Mulaudzi, the owner of Khubeka Driving School on the Vaal and the Shumani Driving School in Soweto, where some survivors received their training, says it gives her great pleasure to have empowered them to learn to drive. "It's necessary for women to know how to drive so they can transport their children to school and run their errands easily, which enables them to manage their homes more effectively," she says. "Having a licence also empowers GBV survivors to pursue a better life after abuse because it betters their chances of finding employment in various fields. It also gives them the opportunity to generate an income by becoming Uber or Bolt drivers."

Puleng Makaba (31), a GBV survivor who received counselling at the POWA Evaton office, is one of the women to benefit from this initiative. "I like that we weren't given Learner's Licence manuals to study on our own at home, but that the driving school had classes on the manuals which helped a lot. I was so excited to get my Driving Licence. It's an amazing feeling to get behind the wheel!"

Getting the chance to learn how to drive is something Puleng describes as a "wonderful opportunity I grabbed with both hands". She is currently unemployed and feels that having a licence will increase her chances of finding a job in office administration. "I put my whole heart into getting my driving licence," she says. "Driving lessons are expensive and there's no way I would have been able to afford them as I'm not working. I'm truly grateful to have been given this big opportunity."

A survivor who stayed at POWA's East Rand Shelter has now also got her licence, which is a stepping stone towards fulfilling her goal of pursuing a career in tourism. "Getting my licence has really built my confidence," she says. "My ex-partner called me useless and said I couldn't do anything. Now I know I'm none of those things. Before I put all my time and efforts into him and my kids. Now I get to develop myself which I really appreciate."

In addition to the 10 survivors who have received their licences, 11 more have earned a range of skills to enter the beauty industry. Through training provided by Carol Monstho, the founder and owner of Rabboni Beauty Salon in Johannesburg, they were taught to make full cap wigs, mesh wigs and side part wigs, how to do acrylic and gel nails as well as eyelash extensions. Additionally, they were empowered with marketing tips, gaining valuable insights on various issues like producing pamphlets and videos to promote a beauty salon business and the importance of staying on top of new trends.

"It is such a great honour to have been given the opportunity to impart skills to GBV survivors to enable them to go out anywhere in the world and use them to survive on their own and serve the public as well," says Carol. "I strongly believe giving someone a skill is the best weapon ever these days. Each survivor who participated in the training has received a certificate that will assist them to find work at a salon or even open their own one going forward. I would like to thank POWA for the opportunity it gave me to change lives, to give someone hope, to hear and see the confidence of the women that believe they can make it. That gives me so much pleasure."

Thato Mogane (27), who worked in the beauty business for a number of years, says the training was really beneficial as she learnt new techniques of doing nails, applying lashes and structuring wigs. "I

like how it also provided knowledge on how to market and run a beauty salon business,” she adds. “I learnt about branding, how to manage and clean your equipment, take care of your clients and the secret of having your own unique selling point to make your business special and stand out from the rest. Working in the beauty industry fulfils me because if you look good, you feel good.”

The start-up kits - providing a UV light, soaking bowls, acrylic powder, brushes, buffers, shiners and more - given to all training participants will go a long way in helping her set up her business: “My salon will enable me to make my own money, buy nice things and provide for myself and my kids, without ever having to beg anyone for food and for clothes.”

Thato adds that the verbal and physical abuse she suffered at the hands of her ex-boyfriend dampened her confidence, making her unsure of herself and her skills. “This training and the counselling I’ve received through POWA have enhanced my self-esteem and I no longer question my abilities. I now know who I am and what I want from my life and relationships.”

One survivor, staying at a POWA shelter, has just come out of a financially and emotionally abusive 30-year marriage. Having recently qualified as an estate agent, she says the beauty skills training will assist her to earn an income during periods when she doesn’t make property sales.

**If you have any skills development opportunities for GBV survivors supported by POWA, you can email [info@powa.co.za](mailto:info@powa.co.za) or phone (011) 642 4345/6.**

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**ABOUT POWA**

POWA is a feminist, non-profit organisation that was established in 1979. Its vision is a safe and equal society intolerant of all forms of violence against women and girls in all our diversity, where we are treated with respect and dignity and our rights are promoted.

POWA provides advocacy, skills development opportunities, counselling, sheltering and legal services to gender-based violence survivors.

Our work is rooted in the belief that change can only be effective when women's lives are directly improved through our interventions. POWA also believes that there is no single route to change, and so constantly seek new and creative approaches in our programming to achieve the change we seek.