



Gender-Based Violence Survivors Gaining a Range of Skills through the JOKO/POWA #EndDomesticSilence Initiative

18 May 2022 - Fifty-five gender-based violence (GBV) survivors across South Africa have just completed training on various skills through the #EndDomesticSilence initiative being run by Unilever tea brand, JOKO in partnership with People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA). Launched in 2019, the initiative aims to end the silence around domestic violence and increase the speaking out, reporting of, awareness and education around domestic violence.

By providing survivors with skills to empower them to generate an income, they are more likely to speak out and report abuse if they ever experience it again, or if they're in abusive relationships, because they aren't financially dependent on their abusers.

Thandiwe McCloy, POWA's Communications Manager, says many women are stuck in abusive relationships because they depend on the perpetrator to survive. "Having skills assists them to break the cycle of abuse, grow their confidence, unleash their potential and develop hope in the future," she adds. "I'm happy the first group of survivors have completed their training. Some service providers have offered to provide ongoing mentorship, which is great."

Women throughout the country have fallen victim to being robbed, raped and trafficked by men offering them fake job interviews. By providing women with know-how to make a living, either through finding employment or starting their own small businesses, they are less likely to be lured by job promises that put them in danger.

With South Africa's official unemployment rate at 35.3% according to Statistics South Africa, attaining skills is critical to empowering women to become self-employed and thereby better protect themselves.

Through this nationwide initiative, running until the end of the year, GBV survivors are gaining knowledge on doing make-up, wig-making, nail care and eyelash extension, learning to drive and attaining sewing, baking, computer and HIV lay counselling skills. Beneficiaries of the programme are abused women who've received counselling at POWA offices and at various NGOs that POWA has partnered with through the #EndDomesticSilence initiative. These NGOs, all based in GBV hotspots, include Ubuhle Bobunye Bomanyano in Gauteng, On Eagles Wings in the Eastern Cape, Banna Ba Kae in the North West Province, Bushbuckridge Youth Development Organisation in Mpumalanga, Batho Ba Lerato in the Free State and Nhlayiso Community Health and Counselling Centre in Limpopo among others.

In addition to providing survivors supported by these organisations with skills, the partnership has also included training them on numerous aspects of domestic violence and hosting Healing Days where GBV survivors share their experiences of abuse and how they rose above them.

A 44-year-old survivor, who attended the skills development programme, said she loved the classes on nail care, make-up, wig-making and eye-lash extension. She went on to say that her abuser hurt her arm when he pushed her and damaged her fingers when he twisted her hand. She therefore struggled with learning to do acrylic nails, but her trainer also has problems with her fingers, and motivated her to keep going.

He also bit her nose, which has left her with a huge scar. She is an actress and he dented her confidence by always reminding her of it. The sessions on make-up in the training made her pay more attention to how bad her scar is, and this has encouraged her to press charges against him. She is thankful to the police for encouraging her to open a case.

She enjoys doing her nails, which takes her mind off the abuse. One of her goals is to open a nail parlour and she will soon launch her own YouTube Channel, highlighting various aspects of GBV. Through the skills she has gained, she'll now be able to do her own make-up and that of those she interviews on her show.

Kholofelo Duma, the owner of KD Royalty, provided the beauty skills training in Soweto. "I really liked making a difference in the lives of survivors," she says. "My training will not only assist them to earn an income but will also motivate them to focus on where they're going and not where they're from."

Buyi Mgcclwane (51), who received counselling from Ubuhle Bobunye Bomanyano (beauty of women in faith in Zulu), based in Daveyton, was trained on baking skills, together with five other women. "I'm unemployed and support myself by selling cakes, snowballs and cinnamon rolls," she says. "This programme has taught me to make bread and biscuits, which will help me earn more money because most people eat bread every day. I want to become a baking facilitator and share my knowledge with other women and also open a bakery, but I need to raise money for an oven."

In addition to counselling GBV survivors, Ubuhle Bobunye Bomanyano strongly focuses on running skills development programmes for women and youth. "The baking course will assist survivors to support themselves through enabling them to sell baked goods," says Penny Ndhlovu, the President of the organisation. "The certificates they'll earn will assist them to become catering and baking facilitators and to access funding if they choose to open bakeries."

In Mpumalanga, five women supported by Bushbuckridge Youth Development Organisation (BRYDO), which runs various programmes including those to address GBV and substance abuse, have undergone training to do make up, massages, manicures and pedicures. "I'm fulfilled they now have these skills because there is a high demand for them in our area," says Clifford Mahlake, Manager and Life Coach at BRYDO. "This training will enable them to create sustainable livelihoods."

Five GBV survivors based in Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape benefited from sewing classes. Mercy Cwayi, Head of On Eagles Wings Multi-Purpose Centre, that provides counselling, education and life skills to victims of trauma, domestic violence and rape, says the training will not only make it easier for women to leave abusive relationships, but will also build their confidence because they can earn their own money so won't be totally dependent on their partners for everything: "A woman not contributing to the household income can cause frustration and resentment, so enabling her to make monetary contributions is very important."

In the North West Province, five abused women receiving counselling from Banna Ba Kae (meaning Where are the Men? in Tswana), in Potchefstroom, are having driving lessons. In addition to

counselling survivors, Banna Ba Kae's programmes develop boys and men and nurture positive role models with the overall goal of addressing GBV.

The second group, made up of 47 survivors, recently started their training. There are 100 more survivors countrywide who will be empowered by gaining skills through the #EndDomesticSilence initiative.

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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.

ABOUT JOKO AND #ENDDOMESTICSILENCE

With the scourge of domestic violence against women in South Africa, JOKO has decided to play its part in helping women of strength in these abusive relationships by helping create safe spaces for women to be heard. #EndDomesticSilence is an initiative in partnership with POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) to make a significant impact towards ending the silence surrounding domestic violence because tea and conversations go together.

JOKO's social mission is to leverage the strength of JOKO tea to harness the power of conversations to help reduce domestic violence and the stigma faced by survivors. It aims to do this through the #EndDomesticSilence initiative by harnessing both the strength of South African women and the immense power of humble conversations in which women facing domestic violence are listened to, believed and supported.

- JOKO is using newly branded red and purple packs to drive awareness around the need for women in abusive relationships to end their silence.

- JOKO is donating R1 from every JOKO 100's pack sold to POWA to create more safe spaces in which women can feel secure enough to end their silence.
- A JOKO website dedicated to the purpose gives women essential information around domestic violence and advises them on how to either get or give help. Visit www.joko.co.za.
- JOKO is engaging with prominent SA women to champion #EndDomesticSilence in their own ways.

Together, with the help of all its consumers, JOKO aims to make a real difference to fight domestic violence against women in South Africa.