

SONKE One Man Can campaign takes a stand against domestic violence

Funded by FNB and under the banner of Sonke Gender Justice Network, the One Man Can (OMC) Campaign was launched in 2006 and developed to support men and boys to take action to end domestic and sexual violence, prevent HIV and to promote healthy relationships that men and women can enjoy.

A growing number of men and boys are concerned about the escalating levels of domestic and sexual violence. "Sonke Gender Justice is just one beneficiary that is making a difference in the lives of not only boys, men and women, but also the community as a whole. They have committed to making a meaningful impact in local and rural communities by highlighting the importance of gender equality and taking active stands against domestic and sexual violence," says Howard Arrand, chairperson of the FNB Fund.

Villages will be monitored

In January 2012, Sonke implemented the OMC Campaign in 11 rural villages in the Bushbuckridge area in Mpumalanga to evaluate whether One Man Can community mobilisation activities are aimed at changing men's gender and HIV related attitudes and practices, are able to mobilise men and boys to support gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence, decrease men's sexual risk taking and thereby decrease HIV infection amongst high school aged girls.

During the three year research project, the villages will be monitored for incidences of gender based violence including rape, HIV prevalence, health-seeking behaviours including self-reported habits of condom use, and more.

The research project forms part of the prestigious HIV Prevention Trials Network funded by the US National Institutes of Health. It is the most thorough research project ever funded to assess the impact of an intervention intended to change men's gender and HIV related practices.

Central to the successful implementation of OMC is the belief that community-based organisations are best placed to identify the particular needs of the communities they serve, and to adapt public awareness initiatives on gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS so that they resonate with their constituency.

Campaign includes African countries

The OMC campaign was launched in Johannesburg and Cape Town on 25 November 2006 to mark the beginning of 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. The campaign is implemented in five provinces across South Africa and has also been implemented in a number of countries including Sudan, Namibia, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia.

The campaign has been identified by the World Health Organisation and by UNAIDS as an example of best practice in ending violence against women and girls and decreasing the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.