

INTERCEPTING VULNERABILITY IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE AMONGST GIRLS AND WOMEN IN KHAYELITSHA.

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THOPE FOUNDATION AND MAMA MENTORS PROGRAM

What is Mama-Mentors?

- Pilot study
- Workshops over 3 month period
- Narratives and discussions about daily life and struggles
- Centred around peer relationships, family dynamics, school systems, wider community

Why an intergenerational focus?

- Insight into differences
- Communication brings people together
- Shared experiences for marginalised groups
- Increases personal value and sense of self
- Value within community as collective



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WHAT IS VULNERABILITY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Thope's definition:

“Vulnerability in our context describes the powerlessness felt by individuals or groups which render them unable to withstand the effects of adversity.”

Powerlessness manifests as :

- Personal safety
- Blockages to development
- Limitations to personal agency in order to progress and to grasp one's full potential
- Impediments to self determination
- Lack of opportunities for meaningful economic participation



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THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM MAMA MENTORS

- Desire for participation and mentorship
- Need for personal safety
- Bridging intergenerational differences
- Facilitation of communication
- Normative gender binaries
- Aspirations for class mobility
- Encouraging girls to explore diverse career opportunities



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WHAT DO THESE THEMES INDICATE?

- The need for safety and security.
- Education as an essential game changer.
- The correct tools are needed (communication, ICT skills, research skills).
- Social support is necessary for personal development.
- A gender sensitive approach is necessary in development planning (gender aware budgets and indicators).
- Girl specific spaces are vital for developing strong sisterhood bonds.
- The need to break everyday gender binaries.



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WHAT IS THOPE DOING TO INTERCEPT VULNERABILITY

- Education (formal and informal)
- Promoting safe and comfortable spaces (physical and emotional spaces)
- Encouraging girls to engage, communicate and be heard
- Personal empowerment through lifeskills and personal development
- Providing tools, resources, opportunities and training for strengthening personal agency
- Strengthening interpersonal relationships through communication



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WHEN GIRLS ARE VISIBLE AND CONSCIOUS OF THEIR OWN VOICES THEY BECOME POWERFUL AGENTS OF CHANGE



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