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