



Imagine if, for 16 Days, there was no rape, no Child abuse

South Africans took part in the global 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against

Women and Children campaign, which ran from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) through to International Human Right Day on 10 December. With the theme "Count me in: Together moving a non-violent South Africa forward", the National department facilitated a four (4) day community mobilization workshop in one of Xhariep district's small town called Wepener. Wepener is located near the Lesotho border hence it and was chosen to be the host town for 2015's - 16 Days of Activism campaign.

Wepener has also a high rate of unemployment and high statistics of woman and children abuse reported in Xhariep district. The high unemployment rate especially amongst men contributes to community members resorting to alcohol abuse as a way to suppress their frustration. This dependence on alcohol escalates other social problems such as the abuse of women and children; which is why the National and provincial departments of Social Development saw it fit that they put their focus on this town to educate the community about the dangers of women and child abuse and how this menace has a ripple effect on the community at large.

The government, business, civil society organisations and the faith-based organisations participated in the drive to increase awareness of the negative impact of violence and abuse on women and children. On the first day the focus was on training volunteers on issues of abuse. They were taught how to identify victims of abuse and how to deal with their cases. The volunteers were also given skills on educating their fellow community members on issues of abuse as this will enable the message to reach a wider market even long after the 16 Days are over.

The second day was devoted to door to door activities within the community of Qibing. Various stakeholders such as SAPS, the district municipality, Child Welfare and NPO's joined the volunteers during door to door visits. The visits were conducted to educate Qibing community on issues of abuse and to act if cases are identified or reported during the visit.

Day three saw the community of Qibing coming together at the community hall for a dialogue with the stakeholders, where ideas were shared on how to win the fight against the abuse of women and children. Community members voiced their frustrations and also enlightened the stakeholders of why abuse happens and why they sometimes don't report these cases. Stakeholders such as SAPS and Child Welfare made a commitment to strengthen their efforts when dealing with their cases.

The main highlight of the week was a visit to Van Rooyenshek and Ha Sephapho border posts. Where the stakeholders handed out educational material and had one on one dialogues with the commuters that were moving in and out of South Africa via these border posts. Stakeholders were also engaged with community members at the local taxi rank, and handed out information and educational material to commuters at the taxi rank.

South Africans support this campaign by wearing a white ribbon - a symbol of peace, during the 16 day period to symbolise their commitment to never commit or condone violence against women or children.

