

KGOTSONG MEN'S FORUM

Men's Forums have an important role to play in reversing gender-based inequality and violence, and also to become advocates for issues affecting men in societies and to afford men a chance to engage and do self-introspection concerning their role in society.

Mr Modisenyane from Kgotsong in Bothaville believed that starting a men's forum in his town would help tackle the issues affecting men and activating men to take their active role to tackle societal ills reported or discovered by community members. He is the co-founder of the Kgotsong Men's Forum founded in 2013 and registered with the Department of Social Development as NPO in 2014.. The forum currently consists of 15 executive members and has members in all Kgotsong wards.

The establishment of the Forum was brought up by the large number of child and women abuse, substance abuse and gangsterism in Kgotsong. The forum hold their meetings once a week with other stakeholders such as SAPS and Municipality to discuss cases reported by community members and interventions needed from different stakeholders operating within the community. Progress work on cases reported are also discussed during these meetings. Their roles or responsibilities also include assisting schools and family members affected by substance abuse, assist with gangsterism cases and provide security services to high schools during final Grade 12 exam camps.

Kgotsong Men's forum regularly conduct awareness campaigns and outreach programs at the Naledi informal settlement in Kgotsong. The aim of the campaigns is to address issues of rape, girl-child abuse and 'sugar daddies' phenomenon experienced by local girls especially with the taxi drivers. He said young school girls often become some local Taxi drivers' victims who lure them with pocket money or even force them to have intimate relationships with them. These was one of the major issues that prompted the establishment of the men's forum and they are backed by the local Mayor Cllr. Speelman who was involved in mobilising the young and older men in joining the forum.

Mr Modisenyane works hard to encourage young men to work together in their communities so that they could inspire other men to join forces to fight abuse of children and women and make young men to become better men in the future. The forum was instrumental and vocal to ensure that the men who raped a five year old girl gets a maximum sentence.

He emphasizes the need to strengthen the forums on the ground and localise it so that every man can relate to their (forum) programmes and most importantly, implement the resolutions they come up with. In June 2016, the Department of Social Development

honoured Kgotsong Men's Forum for their hard work by presenting them with a cheque of R150.000.00 during Operation Hlasela in Bothaville, which would assist them to tackle challenges which needed funding for them to continue with their work.