

RESTORING DIGNITY

Organic soap-making project will empower abused women

In late 2016, the first batch of soap was produced in a unique project funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in which Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network and the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children have partnered to empower abused women with entrepreneurial skills.

The Restoring Dignity project initiated in 2016 is aimed at building financial independence through the establishment of a soap manufacturing social enterprise. The women beneficiaries of the project will be empowered with skills to generate the financial means to support themselves and their families. The project incorporates soap-making activities and an educational training hub to give abused women the knowledge, skills and confidence to regain their dignity and become independent.

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Nokuthula Mbenyane of Biblionef SA instructed the principals of seven Early Childhood Development facilities in Philippi East, Old Crossroads and Khayelitsha in the art of storytelling in preparation for the establishment of reading corners at the schools.

[Read more inside](#)



From left to right: Bregje Wijsenbeek, Senior Policy Officer: Political Affairs at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network; and Dutch Soap Making and Education Hub Project Manager, Liezl van der Westhuizen, with the first products.

Restoring Dignity

Soap-making project to empower abused women

Continued from front page. In December 2016 a trial production run of liquid organic soap was conducted under direction of the Dutch Soap Making and Education Hub Project Manager, Liezl van der Westhuizen, and an expert and technical specialist who is advising Mhani Gingi on the project. Assisted by visiting internship student Roos Reijnsbach de Haan, from the Netherlands, the trial run produced 20 litres of soap packaged in 250ml and 500ml containers.

Already, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Cape Town has placed the first order for 150 units of the soap. In addition to that, the Consul General in Cape Town, Bonnie Horbach, and the Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Marisa Gerards, will visit the project in February 2017.

Phase One

In Phase One of the Dutch Soap Making and Education Hub Project, five women from the Residential Programme at the Saartjie Baartman Centre will be selected early in 2017 to be trained to produce and package liquid soap that can be marketed and sold to clinics, community centres, guest houses and shops. The women will gain skills and a stipend while employed on the programme.

The Saartjie Baartman Centre is situated in Manenberg on the Cape Flats, which is the site of high rates of crime, gangsterism, child abuse, unemployment, substance abuse and domestic violence. The services offered by the centre for the management, treatment and prevention of violence against women and children include 24-hour crisis response; a residential shelter and transitional housing for abused women and their children; legal assistance; and job-skills training. On average, some 22 women and 35 children stay in the four-month Residential Programme at a time.

Phase Two

Successive groups of women beneficiaries will be selected to join the Dutch Soap Making and Education Hub Project programme and will gain the technical and business expertise needed to expand the volume of production so that the soap-making enterprise, in Phase Two, will become a fully-fledged business.

The Education Hub will offer workshops by a number of subject matter experts to facilitate greater awareness around women's legal rights and responsibilities as well as to build their self-esteem. In addition, a series of business workshops will aim to teach participants the basic level of technical skills required to run their own small enterprises. These workshops will be open to other women in the Mhani Gingi network and at the Saartjie Baartman centre who have suffered emotional or physical abuse.



Lillian Masebenza and Liezl van der Westhuizen at the trial production run.

STEP 1

Public employment should be expanded to provide work for the unemployed, with a specific focus on youth and women.

STEP 2

The transformation of the economy should involve the active participation and empowerment of women.

STEP 3

The role of women as leaders in all sectors of society should be actively supported.

STEP 4

By 2030, people living in South Africa should have no fear of crime. The vulnerable should feel protected.

Restoring Dignity

Measureable impact and sustainable change

“The Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children are thrilled to be partnering with Mhani Gingi for the soap-making project,” said Shaheema Mcleod, Director of the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children. “This new venture has great potential for all concerned!”

“More importantly though, the clients benefiting from this initiative have the ability to not only access training but to acquire a new scarce skill, earn a stipend while learning, gain business skills and the potential to develop a small business after an extended learning programme.

“Our clients come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are seldom given an opportunity that could very well change their life path. The participants will see a measurable impact and sustainable change from this learning experience,” Mcleod said.

Bregje Wijsenbeek, Senior Political Officer: Political Affairs at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, commented on the role that the project could play in helping women to recover from trauma in their lives. “Financial independence for women will make women less vulnerable to domestic abuse. This project goes further though, as learning a new skill and being creative can also help a person to heal from traumatic experiences.

“The embassy is very proud to support this project and we are grateful that we can benefit by having clean nice smelling hands too,” Wijsenbeek added.

Organic ingredients and environmental sustainability

The soap that is being manufactured uses mostly organic ingredients and employs environmentally sustainable methods where possible. The Restoring Dignity project builds on experience and expertise in the art of soap manufacturing, packaging, brand design and consumer marketing that Mhani Gingi gained from its Hope Soap project launched in 2012. That project used recycled materials from the hotel industry.



International internship student, Roos Reijnsbach de Haan; left, from the Netherlands, helped test the production process.



A WOMAN IS RAPED EVERY **26** SECONDS

one in **4** women are victims of domestic violence

A WOMAN IS KILLED EVERY **6** HOURS BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER

42,4 billion rand is the estimated cost of violence against women in a study by KPMG in 2013

For enquiries please e-mail Dutch Soap Making and Education Hub Project Manager, Liezl van der Westhuizen, at director@creatividad.co.za.

 **Saartjie Baartman Centre**
FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN

1ST PINELANDS CUBS SPREAD THE JOY OF READING TO ECDS

Scouts South Africa, Biblionef SA and TEKIOO Design and Technology for Kids have helped to bring the joy of reading to about 300 children by the creation of book nooks at seven Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres supported by Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network in townships of Cape Town.



Nokuthula Mbenyane of Biblionef SA instructed the principals of seven Early Childhood Development facilities in Philippi East, Old Crossroads and Khayelitsha in the art of storytelling.

A project initiated by the 1st Pinelands Cub Pack will see the delivery of a bookcase and 30 colourful story books in isiXhosa and English – supplied by Biblionef SA – to each of the seven ECD facilities situated in Philippi, Old Crossroads and Khayelitsha. This will give the children at the schools access to reading material and to regular reading activities while also enabling the schools to begin their own book collections or libraries.

To launch the roll-out of this project, each of the ECD principals attended a storytelling workshop on 15 October 2016 in which Nokuthula Mbenyane from Biblionef SA instructed them in the art of bringing across stories to young audiences. Mbenyane also taught the school principals how to integrate particular stories into their daily programmes for the children. She has studied drama at the Cape Academy of Dramatic Arts, where she developed an interest in literacy and theatre.

Biblionef SA and Scouts South Africa donate storybooks to ECDs

Biblionef SA is a non-profit company (NPC) that supplies relevant reading material to schools that do not have books or libraries, with the aim of promoting a culture of reading amongst children. Biblionef SA donates new storybooks in all of South Africa's indigenous languages and in English to the schools and also ensures that teachers and caregivers have the skills to use the material to fully benefit the children.

The ECDs who are benefiting from this project are Enkuthazweni Educare, Ikhayaletu Educare, Landisiwe Educare, Lidinga Educare, Little Angels Educare, Siyamthanda Educare and Stars of Tomorrow Educare. Mhani Gingi provides teacher training and other forms of support to develop these facilities and their principals.

Joann Lugt, Akela of 1st Pinelands Cub Pack, and Russel Brown, Director of TEKIOO Design and Technology for Kids, designed and built the seven bookcases that the ECDs will receive. The 1st Pinelands Cubs and a few parents did the construction under guidance of Brown, who facilitates mobile woodwork classes. Scouts SA provided the funding through grants made available last year for projects to support 100 ECDs around South Africa in celebration of the worldwide centenary of cubbing in 2016.

Social Responsibility



Good Turn Project for ECD children develops woodwork skills of Cubs

“We wanted to do a project in which the Cubs could be involved in order for them to learn to care for people in need. This is called a Good Turn Project,” Lugt said. The Cubs who gave their time to assist with building the bookcases acquired woodwork skills in the process. “It is good for the Cubs to learn they have something to give, young as they are, that can make a difference for the children at the ECDs,” Lugt added.

Scouts SA funded 75% of the 210 storybooks which were sourced, selected and packed by Biblionef SA for the ECDs. “Ist Pack Pinelands was instrumental in raising the funds for two-thirds of the books and getting the books covered in durable plastic. Biblionef donated 70 storybooks to this project and arranged for an unemployed lady to get the books covered. A Biblionef staff member also showed the facilitators from these seven sites how to use the books in storytelling,” said Sunitha Amod, Operations Manager of Biblionef SA.

Since its establishment in 1998, the organisation has donated 1 419 139 new storybooks to 8 236 children's organisations, reaching about 3 840 938 children countrywide, according to the website. Biblionef SA has also assisted 51 schools and communities with informal libraries which include shelves, cupboards and containers and has commissioned the translation and publication or reprint of 90 titles in one or more of South Africa's 11 official languages.

TEKIOO Design and Technology for Kids is a non-profit organisation (NPO) that teaches woodwork, design and technology skills to children.



Summer events in Pinelands raise funds for Mhani Gingi beneficiaries

Sue Walker Events and Projects Management and a variety of musicians helped Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network to raise more than R7 600 in funds to support Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres during 2016 through a successful Summer of Fun Festival held in December and a series of 'Last Thursday' live music gigs at Pinelands Club.

The Summer of Fun Festival held at the Pinelands Club on 11 December featured food, tastings, arts and crafts, live music, a teen zone and a kiddies' play area. Fifty percent of the day's proceeds benefited Mhani Gingi. The funds raised through the Summer of Fun Festival and the 'Last Thursday' music events go towards Mhani Gingi's Social Responsibility Programme which supports vulnerable groups – such as children and the elderly – including about 300 children at ECD facilities in townships of Cape Town.

The musicians who performed the series of 'Last Thursday' live music gigs at Pinelands Club Thursday Food Market included folk and alternative rock musician and poet, Brynn, on 24 November. Before that 16-year-old singer-songwriter from Cape Town, Jasmine Minter, performed in October; *The Voice* semi-finalist, Jono Grayson, was the featured artist in September and *The Voice South Africa* contestant, Chris Werge, performed in August.

The increasingly popular 'Last Thursday' events offer a winning combination of good food and live music and take place from 6.15 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. at the Pinelands Club in Lonsdale Way. The R20 donation entrance fee goes towards the work of Mhani Gingi. Entrance is free for under-14-year-olds.

Mhani Gingi is a non-profit organisation that works towards alleviating poverty through providing innovative and sustainable business solutions for women, youth and the unemployed. The Social Responsibility Programme believes that supporting early childhood development helps to build a sound foundation for tomorrow's society.

These successful 'Last Thursday' live entertainment events will continue into 2017. For further information please contact Mhani Gingi Trustee, Joan Wright. **Cell phone:** 072 040 3169. **E-mail:** pjwright@telkomsa.net. Or contact Sue Walker of SW Events and Projects Management. **Cell phone:** 072 914 4837. **E-mail:** sweventsprojects@gmail.com.



1.6 Million Club SA



Members of the Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies undergoing TRE® trauma release training with the TRE® for Africa Foundation.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM: Defeating Violence for Peace

The Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies, partners with Mhani Gingi and the 1.6 Million Club South Africa in the series of Health Events that are held during Women's Month in August, presented an Awareness Event on the theme of "Defeating Violence for Peace" during the worldwide 16 Days of Activism against the abuse of women and children in November-December 2016.



Speakers at the Awareness Event for 16 Days of Activism For a Life Free of Abuse for Women and Children held in the Bonteheuwel Community Centre on 30 November included Nuraan Osman, Director of the Itaha Shelter for abused women, and Vanessa Rivera de la Fuente, a writer, consultant, community educator and human rights activist, who has led initiatives for the empowerment of grassroots women in Equator, Peru, Argentina, Morocco and the United Kingdom.

Another speaker was Wendy Pekeur, Co-Founder of the Ubuntu Rural Women and Youth Movement and a committed advocate of the rights of women and workers in the agricultural and wine sector. A Peace Walk to "spread the seeds of peace" took place down Apricot Street, Amandel Road and Jakkalsvlei Avenue to the shopping centre in Bonteheuwel and past the place where gang shooting occurred that cut short the health seminar on 27 August last year.

Breaking the silence around domestic violence

The Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies also attended the Peace Festival organised by the International Peace Youth Group (IPYG), International Women's Peace Group (IWPG) and Heavenly Culture World Peace and Restoration of Light (HWPL) at the close of the 16 Days of Activism on 10 December. Founder of the Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies and a member of the IWPG, Soraya Salie, said purpose of the activities was to bring about hope and to break the silence around domestic violence.

She told the *Athlone News*: "There is so much violence in the world, especially in Cape Town. We want to address this violence with peace. We are telling our people to let us find that inner peace."

Release for Peace

In another activity, in October 2016, 53 members of the Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies underwent six weeks of training in TRE® tension, stress and trauma release through the TRE® for Africa Foundation. Salie said: "Everybody needs trauma release in a society afflicted as ours by myriad forms of violence."

There is a link to Mhani Gingi's Women's Interactive Health Event held in Observatory during Women's Month in 2015 as that is where the Bonteheuwel Walking Ladies first met Advanced TRE® Provider and Certification Trainee, Desiree English, who has subsequently worked with the group.

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING – TRUST WOMEN CONFERENCE 2016

Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network, attended the annual Trust Women Conference organised by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in London on 30 November and 1 December 2016. The event brings together concerned individuals, organisations and activists the field of women's rights and anti-slavery from the world over.



Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network with Keynote Speaker, Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize winner and founder of Grameen Bank.

Among the keynote speakers was Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize winner and founder of Grameen Bank, pictured above with Masebenza. After the opening by Monique Villa, Chief Executive Officer of the Thomson Reuters Foundation on Day 1, the topic under discussion by representatives from global corporations, lawyers, government representatives, and pioneers in the field of women's rights was Fighting Human Trafficking & Slavery.

Subjects dealt with in the plenary sessions included Cleaning the Supply Chains from Forced Labour and a session on Migrants moderated by Hillary Margolis, Researcher at the Women's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch. There was also a screening of the 2014 film, *SOLD - The Movie*, which is based on a Patricia McCormick novel.

Trust Women Actions

The Trust Women delegates take action and forge tangible commitments to empower women worldwide and to fight modern-day slavery. These initiatives, according to the event website, include:

An information And Training Initiative For African Female Entrepreneurs, to empower African female entrepreneurs to increase job creation and change the public perception of African women living in Africa.

Closing The Credit Gap For Female Entrepreneurs, which entails researching the restrictions around women entrepreneurs' access to capital and collateral in 14 developing countries.

The Hotel Industry Network To Stop Slavery to bring together leading hoteliers to create a 'stop slavery standard' across the sector.

Creating Jobs to Restore the Lives of Slavery Survivors and Prevent Re-trafficking.

Fighting Online Sex Trafficking.

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING – TRUST WOMEN CONFERENCE 2016



Lillian Masebenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network, at Table 6 at the Trust Women Conference in London on 30 November and 1 December 2016.

The topic under discussion on Day 2 was Women Entrepreneurs, Breaking Taboos and Deradicalisation. Cherie Blair, Lawyer and Founder of the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women, moderated a plenary session termed Women Entrepreneurs: They Make it Happen. Another keynote speaker was Nadia Murad Basee Taha, Yazidi Human Rights Activist and Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking of the United Nations.

The Trust Women delegates commit to actions that will empower women worldwide and fight modern-day slavery. The actions embrace the solutions that speakers and experts who address the conference suggest to answer the conference themes. The Trust Women Actions include empowering African female entrepreneurs to increase job creation and change the public perception of African women living in Africa. Attempting to close the credit gap for female entrepreneurs is another action. Establishing an industry-wide blueprint by bringing together leading hoteliers to create a 'stop slavery standard' across the sector, creating jobs to restore the lives of trafficking survivors and addressing online sex trafficking are other Trust Women Actions.

WISHING OUR PARTNERS A FRUITFUL AND PROSPEROUS 2017

Lillian Masabenza, Founding Director of Mhani Gingi Social Entrepreneurial Network, is pictured alongside with produce from the Flagship Programme. Mhani Gingi's Flagship Programme incorporates the environmental activities which include the Mhani Gingi Organic Herb and Seedling Nursery as well as community vegetable gardens and hanging gardens. Mhani Gingi promotes inclusivity by including mentally and physically disabled people in gardening activities. Mhani Gingi's approach also uses innovation by establishing gardens in open spaces that are identified at institutions, schools and crèches. The produce is marketed for sale or consumed by the community to provide healthy nutrition.



Community gardens have been established at Langa Cheshire Home for Disabled Adults, at Uitsig community and at Blouvillei School for children with special needs in Retreat in Cape Town. Plans to expand the Flagship Programme in 2017 include the establishment of further wall gardens at corporations to promote green building practices and environmental sustainability. The environmental activities of the Flagship Programme are supported by Old Mutual, Pick n Pay Foundation and General Mills through United World Way, amongst others.

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