supporting women in townships through Africa tikkun’s Cradle to career Development model

*Success Story: Defending the Defenceless*

The Matsinhe family were initially referred to Afrika Tikkun’s Centre in Orange Farm by the South African Police. The family consists of four young children – the eldest being 21 and the youngest, 7 years old. The family originally came from Mozambique to South Africa with their parents and a so-called “uncle”. The problem came about when the parents returned to Mozambique, leaving their 4 children behind with the “uncle”. They were left behind without any source of income and couldn’t afford food and clothes, and a decent living. That is when Afrika Tikkun stepped in, taking the family under their care by providing them with monthly food parcels and donations in the form of clothes and shoes.

The parents were away for almost 2 years. During that time, the abuse of the two girls (age 16 and 18) began. They were raped by their “uncle” who lived with them in their shack. The matter was brought to us, and we assisted by pressing charges at the police station. The perpetrator was apprehended on the same day and to this day, he remains behind bars. Thankfully, the mother was recently reunited with her children. The family receive ongoing support from us, and are part of our Family Support Services, and Child and Youth Development Programme.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

Women living in the 6 townships where Afrika Tikkun operates, face challenges on a number of different levels. Here a few are highlighted:

* **They are single parents:** 46-50% of the households we serve monthly are headed by single, unemployed and unskilled mothers, who rely on child support grants for an income.
* **They are less educated:** The largest number of our beneficiaries come from households with little or no education and granny headed households.
* **They are the first to drop out of School:** Because “females are considerably more vulnerable to family commitments”, they are more likely to sacrifice their education to take care of family.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* **They are victims of High Teenage Pregnancy:** In 2014, the Department of Basic Education reported 20,000 teenage pregnancies recorded from South African schools, and 223 of these are from primary schools.
* **They do not have decent work:** Unemployment is a widespread problem, and young black women have the highest rate of unemployment (see footnote 1). Moreover, women do a lot of work that they are not paid for – like childcare and household chores. Society benefits from the work, but they are not rewarded financially. The majority of women who do work are in the service industry, where salaries are much lower than industries where men dominate. Their skills are therefore under-valued.
* **They are vulnerable to HIV:** Women between the ages of 15 and 39, have a 31% HIV prevalence (SA’s national prevalence is 11%).
* **They are vulnerable to gender violence:** The mothers and female caregivers of our beneficiaries are extremely vulnerable to gender violence. This is partly because there is a lack of support from local government services for women; a lack of information and a cultural environment where gender discrimination is tolerated and reinforced.
* **They do not always have the power to negotiate sex and exercise agency with regard to sexual and reproductive health rights**: Given the entrenched inequality in relationships to men and women; and the status of black women as the most economically disempowered nationally – women are frequently not in a position to negotiate sex, condom use or reproductive health. Their partners frequently make those decisions for them. Furthermore, in situations of poverty, women enter into inter-generational “sugar daddy” relationships, where gifts, rewards and money are exchanged for sex. In those relationships the woman has even less power to negotiate Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.

**THE CRADLE TO CAREER MODEL: A HOLISTIC, EMPOWERING AND SUSTAINABLE APPROACH:**

Afrika Tikkun frees women to develop their skills to improve their chances of employment, become employed and/or take hold of entrepreneurial opportunities. We do this in the following ways:

* We support their family and children through nutrition and food security services, family support services, primary health care and education for their children – all in **close proximity** to their homes.
* HIV+ women, grandmothers and mothers of children with disabilities have extra support in the form of support groups, home-based care and home visits, regular food parcels and donations of clothes, shoes, blankets, clothes and where needed, we rebuild shacks.
* We offer computer literacy classes, including training in the Microsoft Office Suite.
* We provide accredited career readiness skills development training, computer literacy classes and entry – level work and internship opportunities.
* We place graduates in entry-level work and learnership opportunities.
* We train and mobilise young women to advocate for decent work, with a living wage and decent work conditions.
* We train and support girls to become leaders and history makers.
* 85.8% of the 555 staff we employ are women recruited and trained from the communities where we are based.

**WHY WE ARE DIFFERENT:**

* AT offers holistic services that address the educational, psychosocial, health and economic needs of families.
* AT ensures that community-based interventions are available for women, children, youth and the disabled.
* AT focuses on building a community presence and growing the resources of the community.
* AT is value-based and develops solutions that make a tangible impact on breaking the cycle of poverty.
* AT focuses on delivery and, therefore, builds on strategic partnerships to maximise the utilisation of resources and to avoid duplication.

**IMPACT:**

1. Up to 20 000 beneficiaries receive appropriate educational, nutritional, family and health interventions necessary for sound development;
2. Over 500 people placed in entry level jobs/ learnership/internships over the last 2 years;
3. 1300 young people skilled to become employable over the last 2 years;
4. 99% Matric Pass Rate with 66 Distinctions in 2014
5. 1,200 preschool beneficiaries reached per annum with early childhood development programmes; with approximately 350 Grade R beneficiaries transitioning into primary schools school ready per annum.
6. Over 1000 families supported per annum to become self-sustainable;
7. 2.1 Million Meals and food parcels served to the thousands of beneficiaries that participate in our cradle to career programmes in the 2014 Financial Year;
8. 10 568 women reached through Gender-based Violence outreaches in the first quarter of 2015;
9. 5800 young women trained, supported and mobilised to lobby for work rights and sexual and reproductive health rights in the last quarter.

**WHAT WILL YOUR INVESTMENT PROVIDE?**

* $100 gives one girl the gift of nursery school, inclusive of two hot meals a day for one month.
* $300 provides a girl with a disability and her family access to our Empowerment Program.
* $600 opens a new world of possibilities for a young girl to become employable through our marquee Skill Development and Career Readiness Program.
* $1,200 supports the Cradle to Career development of two young girls for one year.
* $10,000 pays for an entire nursery school class for six months.
* $20,000 makes it possible to run an entire nursery school class for an entire year.

Your investment makes certain we provide women and girls with life changing skills, and a safe and secure environment where they can flourish. With your contribution we would be able to expand our outreach and continue serving one of the most vulnerable population in South Africa.

On behalf of our 19,000 beneficiaries and 600+ team members, thank you in advance for your support!

1. Report on the Status of Woman in South African Economy August 2015 p11 Office of the Presidency [↑](#footnote-ref-1)