



Project Concept Document – 18twenty8° #NOTNEXT Project

Project Rationale

Between January to March 2013, we conducted the **Hip & Healthy** project at Etwatwa High School in the community of Wattville, (Ekurhuleni Municipality in Gauteng). This project informed high school girls, from grade 9 to 11, about making positive decisions about their health and sexuality. It was here that we realised that the complex issues of GBV, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS are intertwined.

Social constructions of masculinity are enforced at an early age with the first exposure to gender-inequality stemming from caregivers. The family, as the most significant institution in society, is instrumental in perpetuating or diffusing gender stereotyping. Since most children spend the bulk of their time at school, schools serve as the second-most important socialising mechanism after the family.

Following Women's Month in South Africa, the horrific rape and murder of 19-year-old student Uyinene Mrwetyana during a daytime visit to the post office in Cape Town hit national and international headlines. Ever since, there has been widespread protest and civil action against gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, including the #AmINext campaign on social media.

This led President Ramaphosa to make public statements about the importance of ramping up efforts to protect girls and women in South Africa, including an “emergency action plan” to combat violence against women and children, and the release of more than R1bn to tackle the scourge.

In November 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa convened the Presidential Summit Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Femicide. In his opening address, Pres. Ramaphosa referred to gender-based violence as “[an] affront to our shared humanity”. The 2019 #AmINext movement, however, demonstrates that the affront continues.

The **18twenty8° #NOTNEXT Project** is a pilot project that will engage teenage girls at FET-level (that is from grade 10 and 12) at one of our partner high schools in the Gauteng province during the third term of the 2020 school year, about GBV in order for girls to remain safe in their schools, homes, communities as well as when they access higher education.



A concerning pandemic in South Africa is School-Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV), this not only includes traditional forms of bullying and intimidation but rape, murder, drug-trafficking and teacher-to-learner abuse and harassment.

Knowledge of the status of teenage pregnancy in South Africa is also crucial to promote adolescent health. The factors that contribute to the number of teenagers who fall pregnant include gender power imbalances (associated with significantly older partners in particular), early sexual debut, barriers to contraceptive use (seldom used at sexual initiation) and misinformation on sexual health matters. Pregnancy at a very young age may result in pregnancy complications that can lead to the death of the young mother and/or her baby. Other associated consequences include the increased risk of infant morbidity, as well as the possibility of emotional and financial strain for the mother. To generalise, teenage pregnancy is indicative of unsafe sex and should be understood in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) identifies youth aged 15 – 24 years as a specific target group for all interventions, particularly those aimed at the prevention of infection.

The **18twenty8° #NOTNEXT** project will provide:

- Specialised training for girls on how to anticipate and avoid the risks of GBV, including physical self-defence training and workshop on how to avoid risky spaces and situations. This will include training on how our beneficiaries should minimise putting themselves at risk on social media, as well as what to do if they feel at risk of GBV from within their own schools, families, friends or community
- One-on-one professional counselling and peer-support group established for girls who have either experienced, or witnessed, GBV, in partnership with Decolonial Mental Health. This will include creative healing methods such as painting, knitting, singing and drawing



- Training and support from anti-GBV activists/NGOs on how to get involved in the movement to stop GBV in South Africa, spread awareness and help protect friends, family and fellow girls
- Collaboration between ourselves and men's organisations to co-create a strategy for tackling the problem together

Project objectives

- To encourage high school girls at FET-level (grade 10 to 12) from to assume responsibility for their safety and sexuality.
- To reduce the high number of unplanned pregnancies among high school girls.
- To minimise the transmission and spread of HIV and STI's among high school girls.
- To motivate high school girls to lead safe and responsible lifestyles and stay focused on their educational and personal goals.
- To create sustainable initiatives that can be replicated or improved in other high schools and communities in order to reduce GBV.



Description

Using seven (7) modules, our project stimulates vibrant dialogue, through frank discussions, between high school girls, their peers, role models and experts on GBV.

Our project provides high school girls with access to health and GBV resources.

As a Level 1 BBBEE Contributor it is incumbent upon us to have meaningful community engagements.

The impact of our project will, therefore, not only lie in benefitting the girls who take part in it. Our project will also recruit and train six young women, who are former learners of the school with which we will partner to pilot the project, to become peer educators and serve as youth facilitators on the importance of combatting GBV. This will empower them with marketable skills and alleviate the problem of youth unemployment as they will each receive a stipend for their services. Furthermore, since they are community-based, our youth facilitators' relatability, appeal and relevance will be enhanced.

The Department of Basic Education has set the following calendar for the 2020 school year

2020 SCHOOL TERMS

Term	Dates	No. of weeks	No. of days	No. of Public Holidays	Actual No. of school days
1	15 Jan - 20 Mar	10	48	0	48
2	31 Mar - 12 Jun	11	54	4	50
3	7 Jul - 18 Sep	11	54	1	53
4	29 Sep - 2 Dec	10	47	0	47
Total:		42	203	5	198

Depending on the amount, and timing of the receipt of funds, we anticipate that the project will be piloted during the 3rd term for girls in grade 10 and 12, at one partner high school in Gauteng, and reach approximately 200 girls.