



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM! Against Gender-Based Violence

9 December 2020

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Initiated in 1991 by the Women's Global Leadership Institute at Rutgers University, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is now recognized as a global awareness campaign to draw attention to the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide (GBV/F). This campaign also gives support to organizations dedicated to addressing this issue. A focus area of the **National Business Initiative's (NBI)** Social Transformation work is partnering with business and civil society in urgently responding to the ongoing devastating effects of GBV/F in South Africa.

Eradicating GBV/F requires a multi-pronged approach which encompasses the socio-economic effects. Through various media reports, the COVID-19 lockdown also resulted in an escalation of incidents of GBV, sending shockwaves across the country around the severity and extent of violence embedded in our social fabric and an urgency for a collective response to this crisis. During this campaign, we collectively mourn all those who have lost their lives to GBV and femicide. We also understand that practical interventions are required to effectively respond to eradicate the violence and provide ongoing support to survivors of GBV.

In facilitating discussions with and between business and civil society, the NBI is rooted in interventions focused on eradicating GBV and the provision of support and care for survivors. This can be done in multiple ways:

- Funding civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations focused on addressing GBV in communities and society at large need to be based on long-term partnerships given the complex and extensive nature of GBV.
- Closing the gender pay gap is an economically strategic way for companies to provide support for survivors and their families given the income disparities which have been documented to keep women trapped in abusive circumstances and the financial security required once they are able to leave the abusive environment.
- Company policies on sexual harassments and assault in the workplace need to incorporate harm reduction practices which prioritise the support and care afforded to those who speak up and remove the accused from the workplace (through suspension, leave etc.) to limit harm to survivors and staff alike.

- In addition to company values, business leaders need to actively and continuously declare a zero-tolerance to GBV in all its forms and affirm their support to employees and society at large.
- Strengthening partnerships with mental healthcare organisations as a service must be extended to employees as a crucial way of responding to the psycho-social needs of survivors of GBV.

The collective efforts required to eradicate GBV/F is a shared responsibility for undoing the toxic masculinity and violence which has specifically marginalized women and the LGBTQIAP+ community. In doing so, it is important for care to be given to these marginalized groups, to take collective action towards justice and ensure accountability from perpetrators.

Companies interested in learning more about our Transformation & Equity pathways work are encouraged to contact Khanyisa Nomoyi: KhanyisaN@nbi.org.za.



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The National Business Initiative (NBI) is an independent and voluntary coalition of South African and multinational businesses launched in 1995 by the then President, Nelson Mandela.

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