

African Bank Ltd press release

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African Bank teams up with Sonke Gender Justice to help end the scourge of GBV

African Bank is striving to do more in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) during the 16 Days of Activism campaign this year with a unique in-house campaign and a partnership with Sonke Gender Justice.

Staff will have the opportunity to learn self-defence (in online sessions) while Sonke Gender Justice rolls out an awareness and educational campaign in line with the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children, which runs from November 25 to December 10.

The global theme this year is Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”

Lindiwe Miyambu, African Bank’s Group Executive: Human Capital, explains their campaign and partnership with Sonke Gender Justice is focused on staff but has a broader societal goal.

“Firstly, we want to strengthen African Bank’s workplace GBV policy to ensure a safe, trusted, respectful and inclusive work environment across all our offices. Secondly, we want our customers and the general public to understand the impact of GBV, be equipped to take measures to prevent and respond to it and also be able to mitigate the risk in the workplace and society.

“Sonke will be assisting us in various ways to not only explore attitudes towards gender, diversity, inclusion, GBV and other related topics, but also to create awareness about the causes and how to be sensitised and supportive to victims. This will be done through surveys and videos, for example.

“We are pleased to announce the videos will also be available to our customers online, through our website and social media platforms.

“Through education, we hope to see our staff and broader society become activists against GBV in their homes, communities and at work by being brave enough to challenge cultural norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and the abuse of women and children.”

Miyambu highlights that this year’s 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children marks a particularly devastating year for GBV statistics in South Africa.

“As Sonke Gender Justice will concur, this year’s 16 Days of Activism campaign comes at a very unique time. As the world retreated inside homes due to lockdown, reports showed an alarming increase in the already existing pandemic of violence against women and children.

“Locally, government’s GBV and Femicide Command Centre recorded over 120 000 victims in the first three weeks of lockdown. There is no doubt GBV is a national crisis that must be fought relentlessly, which is why we have launched this in-house campaign. We want to

leave our mark and rally our staff, their families, friends and others to help stop the scourge - not only for 16 days, but as a way of life.”

The African Bank initiative is being rolled out under the theme Everybody is Somebody, Everybody is #MADE2BEMORE.

According to Sonke Gender Justice, gender transformation means changing the way in which we conceptualise gender and gender relations.

Effective interventions, the NGO believes, must target men and women to undo ingrained beliefs about masculinity, gender and sexuality to identify equitable norms that promote women’s self-efficacy and the respect of their human rights.

Miyambu explained Sonke’s mission is to strengthen government, civil society and citizen capacity across Africa to promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.

“Since its launch in 2006, Sonke has made significant contributions to the global field of gender equality and human rights, and has extensive experience providing training and technical assistance to UN agencies, governments, international NGOs, local organisations and individuals on gender transformative approaches.

“We are very excited about partnering with Sonke this year and are confident their expertise in the field of GBV will leave a lasting impression with everyone who has the privilege of being part of our 16 Days of Activism project,” Miyambu concluded.

The project is being run by the bank’s CSI team on a volunteer basis and African Bank have committed to donate R100 000 to Sonke Gender Justice projects.

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PREPARED ON BEHALF OF AFRICAN BANK BY CATHY FINDLEY PR. CONTACT JACQUI MOLOI ON JACQUI@FINDLEYPR.CO.ZA OR 071 7648233 WITH ANY CONSUMER PR QUERIES.