

# NICRO's Safety Ambassador Programme combats crime in schools

In 2011, FNB joined forces with NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders) to implement the Safety Ambassador initiative to combat crime and gangsterism in schools. To date, the programme has assisted and trained 159 students and their communities with the tools and resources to fight crime.

This intervention is grounded in developing and mentoring "safety ambassadors" at secondary school level. Learners between the ages of 13 and 18 are empowered with skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to serve as positive role models who interact with and influence circles of youths, dissuading them from participating in antisocial behaviour and the commission of crime.

NICRO has created community initiatives that build, develop, train and promote equality with communities and with the youths. The programme was conceptualised against the backdrop of thousands of young people entering the criminal justice system as offenders and the need to mitigate the growing incidence of juvenile crime within their environments.

"Communities everywhere are faced with violence on a daily basis. The increase in gangsterism and substance abuse is a key risk factor facing our youths today. Through the Safety Ambassador Programme the youths are encouraged to make positive decisions in their lives and to become role models within their schools and communities," said Soraya Solomon, NICRO's CEO.

## Crime, poverty and violence

Youths are instrumental in developing and making a difference in South Africa. "Crime, poverty, violence are but some of the issues that youths face on a daily basis. NICRO is just one beneficiary that is committed to making a meaningful impact on youths and local communities. Programmes like those offered by NICRO help us highlight the importance of community building as well as the importance of supporting and empowering the youths in our country," said Pearl Mphuthi, FNB fund manager.

Themes that are conveyed through the programme include increasing self-esteem and confidence, understanding the consequences of crime, goal setting, conflict resolution, anger management, decision making and communication. NICRO's main aim is to provide interventions that change offending behaviour in youths and adults.

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