

# Sonke radio campaign creates awareness of gender and HIV issues

The 'Sonke Gender Justice One Man Can' community radio campaign was launched to reach and engage listeners - especially in rural areas - on issues relating to gender and HIV as a means of creating awareness, educating communities and ultimately changing behaviour.

Previously, Sonke would conduct workshops in various areas to create this awareness on gender related issues. Due to low interest and attendance rate from community members, Sonke recognised the need to utilise vernacular community radio stations to reach and engage with the community on these issues with the ultimate aim of positively changing behaviour.

"It's great to see how Sonke Gender Justice is using an already dominant media platform in rural communities to spread its message. It empowers local people to take action against issues that are relatively not spoken about," says Howard Arrand, chairperson of FNB Fund. Zithulele Dlakavu, Sonke radio station coordinator, says that most topics covered on the programmes are on HIV, gender related issues and children issues, but flexibility is allowed in order to tackle urgent issues that affect communities.

## Results are encouraging

Since the launch of this programme, approximately 782 people in various communities have been trained. This number includes radio presenters who are exposed to gender based violence related issues, so that they will be comfortable facilitating these topics during their shows. Local community based organisations were also taken through the programme to get support, buy-in and encouraged to participate during shows.

Results from the two-year One Man Can Community Radio Project are encouraging. Some radio stations have formal listener-clubs. "The scope of knowledge has improved, and presenters now speak with informed voices. It is very effective as presenters approach programmes in an educative manner," says presenter Futhi Khumalo from Izwi Lomzansi 98.0fm.

"Continuous education and awareness is key in creating positive mindshifts. We need to provide ongoing support to beneficiaries who are striving to make a difference in our community and the world," concludes Arrand.