

1000 Women Trust launches ICT facility at Saartjie Baartman Centre

The 1000 Women Trust and its partners have launched a new fully furnished women's ICT centre at the Saartjie Baartman Centre in Cape Town. The goal is to increase the employability of women based at the centre, explained Bernadine Bachar, director of the Saartjie Baartman Centre, an initiative for women and children who are survivors of abuse.



The centre accommodates 120 women and children who stay at the facility for between four and ten months. It has an intake section which offers women legal assistance and a counselling programme for children in the community. These services are free of charge. The centre also has a substance abuse unit for survivors of gender-based violence who are addicted to substances and an early childhood development centre for the children who accompany their mothers to the centre. Its outreach programme aims to educate the community about gender-based violence and the resources that are available to address it.

"We are launching a skills lab, a computer centre for young women who are shelter residents. Many women don't know how to work with laptops. We are helping the 150 women in the shelters and other women in the community in Manenberg, Heideveld, Bonteheuwel and Bridgetown," said Caroline Peters, programme manager at the 1000 Women Trust.

Women empowerment

"We are establishing a partnership between 1000 women trust and the Saartjie Baartman centre. When women leave the Baartman Centre, the ICT centre will empower them to have job skills because many women leave the centre and go back to bread winners who provide economic assistance, but are also abusive and violent."

Peters said the ICT centre is a skills lab where young women that are shelter residents can be empowered. But the online computer courses are not only for the shelter residents, but also for women in the whole of the Athlone area that includes Manenberg, Heideveld and Bonteheuwel.

“A lot of women come to the centre with nothing, just to escape from an abusive relationship and after four months they leave with legal assistance, job skills programmes and this ICT programme will just add to their equipment to find employment,” said Peters.

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