

Orange is the new black at Edgars

 By [Cindy Peters](#)

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After running successful pilots in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, Edgars recently launched its UNiTE Orange Day campaign in the Western Cape. The initiative is run in association with the United Nations' [UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign](#) which aims to raise awareness, increase resources, and galvanise action to end violence against women and girls around the world.



L-R Mercia Mserumule, Edcon executive for CSI & Sustainability; Tina Thiart, director of the 1000 Women Trust; and Phindi Gule, marketing and communications director of Edcon.

Edgars, together with its various partners in the public, private and NPO sector, via the UNiTE Orange Day campaign, is utilising its expertise and network in the fashion sector to advance skills development and entrepreneurship amongst survivors of gender-based violence. The initiative entails three months of accredited training in sewing, followed by three months of work placement. The ultimate goal of the programme is to allow participants to gain a sense of hope and confidence in their abilities, opening their hearts and minds to the possibility of an independent future through creativity.

Said Ntozanele, one of the participants in the Gauteng-leg of the Edgars UNiTE Orange Day campaign: "Edcon has given me a second chance in life. I have rediscovered myself, and I have been left amazed at what I have been able to achieve. I am now a better mother, and am helping other women who have gone through something similar to me. I have hope for my future, and I want to be a successful woman who is making a meaningful contribution to society."

As part of the initiative, South Africans from all sectors are invited to don orange on the 25th of every month to show solidarity with the cause. "The reason why we are here today is because we, as Edcon, felt that there was an opportunity for us to make a difference using our footprint. If we really are to paint the world orange, as the UN wants us to in terms of raising awareness about gender-based violence, we felt that we had a good opportunity to do so via our customers," said Edcon executive for CSI & Sustainability Mercia Mserumule.

Edgars UNiTE Orange Dialogue

As part of the Cape Town launch, Edcon also hosted the inaugural Edgars UNiTE Orange Dialogue with guest speakers including [author](#) and activist Grizelda Grootboom, and director of the [1000 Women Trust](#) Tina Thiart. Grootboom shared her survival story that began when she was gang raped in her township, and continues with her current work as an activist against human trafficking, supporting fellow survivors undergoing rehabilitation. Thiart shared the story of how the 1000

Women Trust was founded, and how it hopes its partnership with Edgars UNiTE will allow it to reach out to more shelters. She also encouraged more women to step up as individuals in financially supporting women-focused causes as the economic downturn continues to impact private sector CSI spend.

The dialogue also covered various concerns from attendees including the spate of cases in Cape Town involving the rape and murder of children, the importance of men being part of the dialogue addressing gender-based violence, and the lack of information and misdirection in the handling of cases of abuse.

Mserumule highlighted the dialogue as an opportunity for Edcon to work with organisations that empower women: "We are learners in this process, and the dialogue is one of those mechanisms that we are punting in order to hear from you. How do we really paint South Africa orange and not only when a story makes the news?"

"Wear orange," she encouraged, "to make people aware that we are aware that there are many more stories that aren't being told."

For more info, go to the [Edgars UNiTE Orange Day Facebook page](#).

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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