

PMG challenges businesses to help combat GBV

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The Provantage Media Group (PMG) has donated R6m of their inventory to spotlight gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa. During a webinar presented with Shared Value on 7 December 2021, PMG's head of Human Capital and Group Projects, Chris Hitchings, called on businesses to stand up and help - now.

South Africa's gender-based violence statistics are devastating. According to the African Health Organisation (AHO), a 2010 Gauteng sample noted 51% of women as saying that they had experienced GBV, with 76% of men saying they had perpetrated it at some point.

During 2019 and 2020, 53,293 sexual offences were reported – averaging around 146 per day. Many more cases remain unreported.

Also, during 2019/2020, 2,695 women were murdered – so, on average, a woman was murdered every three hours. Femicide in South Africa is five times the global average. The AHO states that South Africa has “the fourth-highest female interpersonal violence death rate out of the 183 countries listed by the WHO in 2016.”

It adds that “at the start of level 3 lockdown, 21 women and children were murdered in two weeks, leading the president to cite ‘...two devastating epidemics: Covid-19 and GBV’”.



GBV affects everyone

“I am saddened and ashamed by the data, as we all should be,” Hitchings told the webinar audience. He too compared the GBV crisis with the pandemic: “Like the Coronavirus, GBV is not someone else’s problem – it’s our collective problem. It’s not happening out there; it’s happening right here. It’s happening to you, or your colleague, or your sister, or your mom, or maybe your wife or girlfriend. It’s happening in the townships, and in the suburbs. It’s happening across the road, and next door, and maybe – in your home.”

South Africa's failure to stem this crisis profoundly affects women, their families, society as a whole, and the economy.

Don't look away

Tiekie Barnard, CEO and founder of the Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI) quotes the late Ban Ki Moon, eighth secretary-general of the United Nations as saying “there is one universal truth... violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, and never tolerable”.

“Sadly, in our society we have normalised gender-based violence – we don’t speak up, we look away, we find it uncomfortable to talk about it,” she says. “Until it starts affecting us personally, we will do nothing.”

Because “silence breeds violence”, the Provantage Media Group is contributing R6m of outdoor advertising inventory to the 2022 GBV campaign, to create further awareness of this critical social issue. They challenge other businesses to do likewise.

“This is a critical social issue, and business really needs to get behind it. Start by starting – do something big, or do something small,” said Hitchings.

“The Provantage Media Group, our management team and our employees are proud to add our voices to this movement, to support the GBV National Strategic Plan in its fight to eliminate GBV in all its forms.”

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