

How Take This Thread is using skills development to empower GBV survivors

Take This Thread is a movement aimed at helping break the pattern of abuse by focusing on helping survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) achieve financial independence. In partnership with People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), Take This Thread uses creativity, skills development, psychosocial support and entrepreneurship to raise awareness of the pattern of abuse.



The movement provides GBV survivors at POWA safehouses with sewing skills training, fabric and other raw materials to make merchandise. The items are sold on [TakeThisThread.com](https://www.takethisthread.com) and the proceeds go to the individual women who had a hand in making the products.

“Research continuously shows that financial dependence is one of the main reasons why women stay in abusive relationships, and to break the pattern of abuse, survivors need to be financially independent. Through Take This Thread, we open that door where survivors witness the possibility of making their own money so that leaving abusive relationships has less of a financial impact. It is also more than that. It is also about finding a sense of purpose, fostering sisterhood and enabling psychosocial support to survivors,” said Lynn Madeley, CEO of Havas Southern African and patron of Take This Thread.

Illustrating the pattern of abuse

The available merchandise includes scatter cushions, pillows and head scarves, each with a story from the survivors involved in the production. The items are made using a specially designed shweshwe-inspired material that illustrates the pattern of abuse. The unique fabric reflects the cycle of events as motifs and comes in three colour swatches.

“The lockdown glared many inequalities in our society, one of which is that women in South Africa are not safe in their own homes. We also know that because of the way our society is set up, leaving an abusive relationship is not always an easy choice. One of the factors that makes leaving difficult is intentionally imposed financial dependence by abusive partners. It becomes a tool of manipulation that binds women to remain within a cycle of abuse and it is this pattern of abuse that Take This Thread aims to break,” added Madeley.

For more information, go to www.takethisthread.com.

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