

It's more than gender-based violence...

 By [Ingrid von Stein](#)

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It's more than gender-based violence - it's a complete collapse of our moral fibre and care for our fellow man.



Source: pixabay.com

If we step back from our emotions of anger, grief, sadness, vulnerability, rage and helplessness we see a mirror that is fractured.

I wonder if at any time the mirror was whole and reflective?

Today the mirror in South Africa is shattered. There is high unemployment, a severe lack of skills development, a failing education and health system. The rate of crime is off the charts. The violation and murders of women and children are at epidemic proportions. Its not just women and children - included in these horrific statistics are the most vulnerable of our society – the differently-abled.

They have no voice. They are hidden. They are not spoken about. The politicians like to include them in their reports, studies, endless summits and have written (like all women and children) their rights into our constitution

They too have the right to shelter, protection and the right to speak up and out – but for many, this ability is not possible. It is, therefore, our, and I mean each and every citizen of this country to protect their rights. It is the right of every citizen in this country to be protected and to be safe. But we are not and only **we together** who can change this.

We could continue and play the blame game, but this achieves nothing other than a lot of hot air. We – that means you and me have to stand up and enforce these rights. We have to start with ourselves. What are you doing, saying and putting out into society?

Just think about it for a moment; when you hoot and shout out your window...you stupid fool! What are you actually doing and saying. You are the example for your child and every other person in your community.

Not just physical, but economic and emotional abuse

It is not just physical abuse and murder that our most vulnerable are becoming a victim of, its also economic and emotional abuse. The differently-abled are shoved to the fringes of our society. The state facilities are run down and lacking in resources. The state grants are not enough to keep these members of our communities going. They are not being fed properly, clothed adequately or receiving any form of therapies as in many cases their grants are taken by others and used for others – this is financial abuse!

We all say things like, "Well what can I do or how do I make a difference?" In every community, there are differently-abled members. You can make a difference by just offering your support, your protection, your care and consideration. There are NGO's that do incredible work in these sectors of our society – support them, encourage them, give of your time, skill or money to them. Just do something!

Recently the Orion Organisation NPC, based in Atlantis in the Western Cape launched a "BackaBuddy" campaign to raise much-needed funds to assist them in the care, therapies, skills development and residential care facilities that they offer and have been doing so for over 35 years.

They are a safe place and in many cases the only home their residents have. How is it possible that since the launch of their campaign they have only raised R810 towards the goal of R500,000. They have shared on every social platform and even spent money on Facebook advertising, sent out mailers to their over 20,000 data-base, communicated with and appealed to corporate, SMEs, groups, societies and the only money that has come in is R810!

I can't even fathom this. We all complain that our lives "suck" and we are "so over this", imagine if you did not even have a voice or legs to walk in protest or shout in protest?

Take a look around you right now as you sit or stand reading this article and say out loud what you see – a smartphone, shoes and clothing on your body, you have good eyesight and can see this; you probably have either your wallet or purse on you and I bet it has either cards or cash in it. I completely understand that many won't have anything spare to offer to someone else, but those of you who are reading this have access to media, data, cellphones, clothing and a roof over your head.

A take-away coffee is about R22, you give R5 to the car guard at least once a week, you eat out at least twice a month or get a takeaway. The smallest amount of money on a regular basis can and will make a difference in the lives of the disabled

at Orion. If not to Orion then find a local NGO to support with either a small financial monthly contribution or offer your skill i.e. plumbing, painting, building maintenance, reading, gardening – anything that you can.

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