

***What about the Boys* initiative to fight GBV launches**

The *What About The Boys* initiative, to curb Gender-Based Violence (GBV), was launched yesterday at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE).



Supplied. From the left to right: MD Primestars - Martin Stewart, head of business - The Foschini Group (Markham) - Jenni Lee, Markham head of marketing- Nicol Rademeyer and COO Primestars - Nkosinathi Mshoana at the launch of the *What About The Boys* initiative at the JSE

The initiative plans to reach as many as 10,000 boys to start and comes three years after the national outcry to end GBV following the murder of 19-year-old student Uyinene Mrwetyana in 2019.

According to South African crime statistics for last year, of the 902 women murdered between October to December, 232 were directly linked to domestic violence.

Statistics South Africa's Crimes Against Women in South Africa report of 2021 paints a grim picture of the plight facing the country, suggesting that one in five South African women had experienced violence at the hands of their partners, and in 2015, the country's femicide rate was nearly four times that of global figures.

Challenging toxic masculinity

***What About The Boys* is run by Primestars - a company that focuses on youth development through the use of educational theatre - alongside Markhams, part of The Foschini Group.**

“The growing incidents of GBV have compelled us to take a stand alongside Primestars,” says Nicol Rademeyer, Markham’s head of marketing.

“As a prominent men’s brand in South Africa, we believe that the future of the country is dependent on a nation of good men, who know right from wrong and challenge toxic masculinity to protect those who often cannot protect themselves by speaking out against violence inflicted on women and children,” explains Rademeyer.

Creating a better world

Markham’s involvement in the fight against GBV is part of the company’s drive to create a better world.

As a company, it has pledged to the message of *Help! Don’t harm!*; an expression to foster discussions around raising a nation of good men who stand against GBV in the fight for a better South Africa.

The expression forms part of the company’s three-pillar strategy to tackle violence, beginning with creating better men for the future.

This is followed by protection, which focuses on protecting people from harm, while the third, educate to empower, spotlights early childhood development.

“This is why three years ago we decided to stand up - not only for women and children - but for a better South Africa. Within five days of Uyinenene’s murder, we launched our ‘Help! Don’t Harm!’ campaign and pledged our assistance to help change the future of South Africa,” he says.

To date, the campaign has raised over R6,3m for social upliftment initiatives through the sale of masks and fashion merchandise.



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24 Jun 2022



Join the fight against GBV

“We are pleased that there are initiatives such as these and we hope that it helps reshape the minds of boys into what real masculinity is,” says Rademeyer.

We believe that all boys, and men, should be comfortable expressing their emotions in healthy ways and be taught what it means to be a good man. And that means standing up for what is right, displaying a righteous character and becoming the role model that so many boys in the country desperately need,” concludes Rademeyer.

Markham urges other corporates to join the fight against GBV by partnering with the *What About The Boys* initiative in the hopes that the greater the collaborative efforts the more boys the campaign can reach, and the better standing the country will find itself in for future generations.