



DANGEROUS BORDERS: VULNERABLE IN TRANSIT

CHANGE THE STORY: REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS SPEAK AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE – TALKING POINT NO.3

Lisa is a 23-year old young woman living with her paternal uncle, who has taken care of her since the day her parents were killed in the violence that has caused havoc in her country. Once kind and caring, over the years the uncle has become very abusive, treats her badly, and has begun to make sexual advances. One day after an altercation, tired and beaten, she flees to try to find a new life in South Africa. Along the way she is raped by a taxi driver. She is lucky to find help from someone at home once she reaches her destination, but the psychological trauma remains long after her bruises have healed.

ISSUES RAISED

- Rape and sexual assault.
- Vulnerabilities of women refugees and migrants during travel
- Long term psychological trauma

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Anecdotal evidence from women and girls travelling across borders, especially into South Africa, points to serious vulnerabilities to assault, sexual violence, and sexual harassment. Women and girls who attempt to cross without documentation, through the surrounding fences, are often robbed, assaulted, and raped by the smugglers paid to help them cross. On a number of occasions, border officials themselves have been charged with sexual assaults. The vulnerability is not just at the border, but also all along the transit route, women travelling may be assaulted, or be forced into transactional sex as a way to make the journey possible. Along with the short term physical

impact and the economic hardship of losing whatever small goods and money they are travelling with, survivors also face long term trauma

It is important to make sure that people are not only safe but that they are also given medical and psychological attention when in need. All migrants by virtue of their humanity have the right to dignity without discrimination are protected by international human rights law; however immigrants continue to suffer abuse and xenophobia despite the legal framework that is put in place.

“WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAFETY AND SECURITY, NO MATTER WHERE WE ARE FROM. THIS DRAMA IS PART OF A SERIES PRODUCED BY AFRICANS STANDING UP TO SAY NO TO GENDER VIOLENCE, NO TO SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE. THESE ARE OUR EXPERIENCES. BUT TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE THE STORY.”

KEY MESSAGES

- Enough is enough. As Africans we say no to violence, and yes to rights for everyone everywhere, even beyond borders.
- Stop and report crimes that happen at the borders, the nearest TCC or Welcome Centre have counselors and police officers to provide help.
- Get counseling - keeping quiet makes the burden heavier and creates long term trauma, speak up and get help.
- Lend an ear – if you think someone has survived a sexual assault, reach out and offer a sympathetic ear or a helping hand.
- Education and sensitization: it is important to know and talk about our basic human rights. Find out more, talk to your friends, family, colleagues, students, church group etc – about sexual violence.
- Men can be part of the problem, or part of the solution – it's time to say no more violence in my name.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What made Lisa vulnerable, and is there anything that could be done by NGOs, governments to help protect people like her?
- What do you think of the behavior of the driver, does this really happen?
- What can be done to ensure that the borders are safe?
- How do such assaults traumatise the survivor? What is the impact on their health and well-being?
- What kinds of services are available to help people –i.e. the Thuthuzela Care Centres, and other support services?
- Why is it important to speak up?



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- While some people can hear and speak official languages, some people cannot. Be sure to take these listeners into consideration.
- Background information on the topics is always good to have so as to know not to use certain words that are not 'politically correct' or that might raise controversies.
- Avoid the word "foreigner" which creates a barrier between "us and them."
- Privacy of survivors is always a must, while some people might not mind being known it is also important to respect their dignities and their experiences.

POSSIBLE GUESTS

- **Sonke Gender Justice** is happy to be a guest on the show, or to put you in touch with other possible sources.
- Invite a **counselors from local TCC or a psychologist**, to discuss long term trauma of sexual violence. and Police Officers to give information on what to do in such cases.
- **Centre for the Study of Violence and reconciliation**, Gender based Violence programme - Romi Sigsworth, rf Fuller@csvr.org.za, +27 (0) 11 403 5650

ABOUT THE SERIES.....

The radio dramas series and talking points were produced for Sonke Gender Justice Migrant Health and Rights project, by CMFD productions. The dramas were written during a participatory workshop process, and acted by, those most affected – refugees and foreign nationals themselves.

CONTACT

Sonke Gender Justice

Refugee Health and Rights Project, Tel: 27 (0) 11 339 3589, info@genderjustice.org.za, <http://genderjustice.org.za/>

TIPS FOR THE SHOW

- Provide an overview of the different factors that make refugees and migrants, both cross border and internal, vulnerable to abuse.
- Discuss the various impacts of sexual violence – short term and long term, physical, emotional, psychological, and economic.
- Involve men as part of the solution – feature role models of men who stand up to say no to violence.

CMFD Productions

Tel: + 27 (0) 11 615 6278, indo@cmfd.org, <http://www.cmfd.org>

Dangerous Borders: Vulnerable in Transit

Written and voiced by Sandra Lelu, Cindy Adelola, Bridgette Sibanda, Patou Lumumba, Mbiya Theo Nandu

Music

Daniel Walter/ Sigauque Project
www.sigauqueproject.com

