

Havas launches Take This Thread, a bold movement to help break the patterns of abuse

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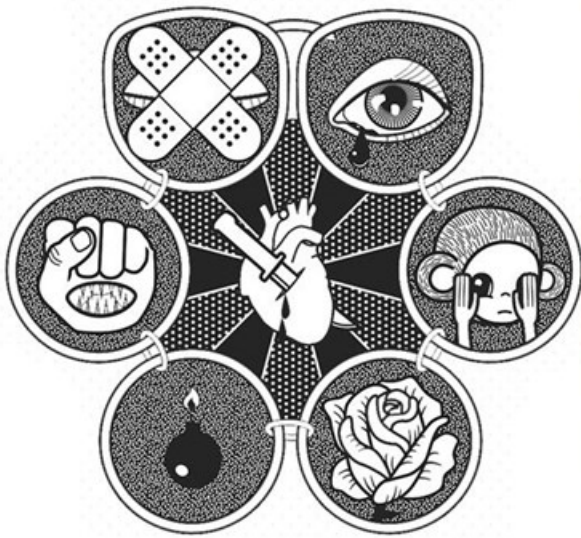
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The statistics regarding domestic abuse in South Africa are beyond comprehension. With one out of five women a victim of domestic violence, there are, on average, 360 incidences of sexual and physical assault daily. With these horrifying figures, it should come as no surprise that domestic violence is the leading cause of death among our nation's women.



To understand the complexities of domestic abuse is to understand that there is no easy way out. A huge factor for many victims is intentionally imposed financial dependence by their abusive partners. It is a tool of manipulation that binds victims to their circumstances and it is this pattern of abuse that Take This Thread aims to break. The project hopes to provide victims of domestic abuse with skills that encourage them to become self-sufficient and, on a deeper level, heal the wounds of their pasts.

Take This Thread was conceptualised and brought to life over the course of three years by the creative minds at Havas Johannesburg, who have spent countless hours of their own time working on this project which they so strongly believe in. It is an ambitious cause that puts the empowerment of women at the heart of the initiative with the intention of facilitating change in society. Through a partnership with People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), the project will focus on skills development, by way of providing women living in POWA safe houses with the custom-designed Take This Thread fabric, sewing kits and training to make doeks (and, at a later stage, other items), which will then be available for purchase for each seamstress's profit. This allows survivors of abuse to develop useful skills and achieve financial independence, while creating a new, positive pattern for the future. The unique fabric has been designed to raise awareness of the patterns of abuse, reflecting the cycle of events as motifs within the literal pattern. The project centres itself around creating opportunities for those affected by abuse and living in POWA safe houses to find purpose, acquire skills and become self-sustainable.



"Focusing on empowerment of these women is about helping to facilitate independence among victims of abuse. By 2024, we want to have reduced the statistics of abused women by 20% - that is one million women in five years. This is an audacious ambition, but we strongly believe that by engaging with victims as individuals, Take This Thread will make a difference in a compelling and accessible way," said Lynn Madeley, CEO of Havas Southern Africa.

"We didn't just want to create a charity fund and try to throw money at the problem," added Fiona O'Connor, Joint Executive Creative Director at Havas Southern Africa. "It was so much more important to us to teach useful skills like sewing and selling merchandise, getting them started on establishing their own independence, while building confidence and helping to heal. We hope participants use this campaign, along with the help offered at POWA, to start out on their own while keeping a connection to Take This Thread, making their own lives better and passing this thread on to others who need it."

Placing emphasis on the doek or headwrap in the campaign's launch pays homage to a universal symbol of dignity amongst women. The doek has long been a poignant flag of defiance for women's issues, whether at home, at work, or in public. Women have rallied together wearing doeks – they have celebrated each other, fought, mourned, and tapped into it as a source of strength and stood tall. Survivors living in POWA safe houses will be making doeks, encouraging the spirit which positions Take This Thread into an existing narrative that emphasises the emancipation of victims in South Africa.

In launching the campaign, Take This Thread has partnered with Doek on Fleek, a social movement started by businesswoman Thandi Mavata. Doek On Fleek centres itself around the doek as a point of pride. It's a women only movement, and at each event, all attending women don doeks and celebrate female empowerment. All of which makes Doek On Fleek the perfect partner for Take This Thread. On 20th October, Take This Thread doeks, made by survivors of domestic violence living in a POWA safehouses in Johannesburg, will be available for the first time. The event will be held in Honningstkaans, Pretoria and as it stands, tickets are still available for purchase at Computicket here:

<https://bit.ly/2EmOOuU>.

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