

VOICES FOR CHANGE STORY REPORT FORM

This form should accompany the stories of challenge / change that you collected from your partners, stakeholders, staff, community members and volunteers (one form for each story). The stories themselves can be written up or take the form of photos, short videos, drawings, poetry, etc.

Name of the organisation and person collecting the story:

The story was collected for South Africa Volunteer Work Camp Association (SAVWA) by Mzwakhe Vilane, who serves as a youth mentor at the organization. At the time of the interview, he was based in Arcadia, Pretoria.

Who provided the story and in which form:

The story was shared by Ms. Silindile Gcadinja, a community programme facilitator at Community Media Trust an organization affectionately known as *Siyanqoba*, meaning “we’re conquering.” The story was conveyed through a physical interview and recorded in audio format.

When and where did the challenges/changes illustrated in the story take place:

The challenges described by Ms. Gcadinja occurred in 2020 in Atteridgeville, an informal settlement in Gauteng. At that time, she worked as a girls’ mentor for Community Media Trust, focusing on sexual and reproductive health and keeping girls in school.

She faced numerous challenges, including the stigma surrounding sexual health education, lack of parental support, and a high dropout rate among girls due to early pregnancy and poverty.

The turning point came when she was promoted to facilitator. This new role enabled her to broaden her impact by introducing safe spaces for open discussion, partnering with schools, and distributing sanitary pads. These efforts significantly improved awareness and reduced school dropouts among girls in the community.

What kind of projects were implemented by your organisation in the place the story refers to:

In Atteridgeville, the setting of Ms. Gcadinja’s story, SAVWA implemented an after-school program called the **Girls and Boys Empowerment Movement (G/BEM)**. This initiative aimed at the holistic development of young adolescent girls and boys in the community.

The program provided personal development and leadership training, as well as academic support through tutoring. In addition, it incorporated skills development through gardening and permaculture practices, promoting sustainability and practical life skills.

G/BEM offered a safe and supportive environment for youth to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. The program complemented the efforts of partners like Community Media Trust in empowering and educating young people in Atteridgeville.

What does the storyteller believe is the significance of the events described in the story?

Ms. Silindile Gcadinja believes the events in her story are significant because they demonstrate the transformative power of education, mentorship, and open dialogue. Her journey from a girls' mentor to a facilitator allowed her to witness real and lasting change girls gaining confidence, remaining in school, and making informed decisions about their health.

She views her work as part of a broader movement to break the cycles of poverty, stigma, and gender inequality in underserved communities like Atteridgeville. For her, the story symbolizes hope, empowerment, and the critical importance of creating safe spaces where youth can thrive.

PHOTOGALLERY

