



# ***Voice and Choice*** ***Summit 2026***-Leadership

Category

**South Africa: From Silence to  
Strength – Empowering Youth,  
Ending GBV**



# Synopsis– brief overview what this is about

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nokukhanya Silondokuhle Khumalo</b>
<b>Designation</b>	Founder, Co-Partner of Sereto Sa Bothle & GBV Advocate
<b>Organisation</b>	Women of the South Speak Out
<b>Country</b>	South Africa
<b>Category</b>	Gender-Based Violence & Youth Empowerment
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Nokukhanya Khumalo is a GBV Advocate, WOSSO Fellow, and Co-Partner of SERETO SA BOTLHE, dedicated to healing communities and empowering young people in South Africa. Her work combines gender-based violence prevention with youth development, focusing on safe spaces, mentoring, and building self-awareness and confidence. Through community dialogues, advocacy platforms, and initiatives such as the Diepsloot Youth Programme, she supports survivors while equipping youth to transform their talents into sustainable opportunities. Nokukhanya’s leadership is grounded in feminist advocacy and community engagement, breaking cycles of silence and inequality to create safer, stronger, and more resilient communities.</b>

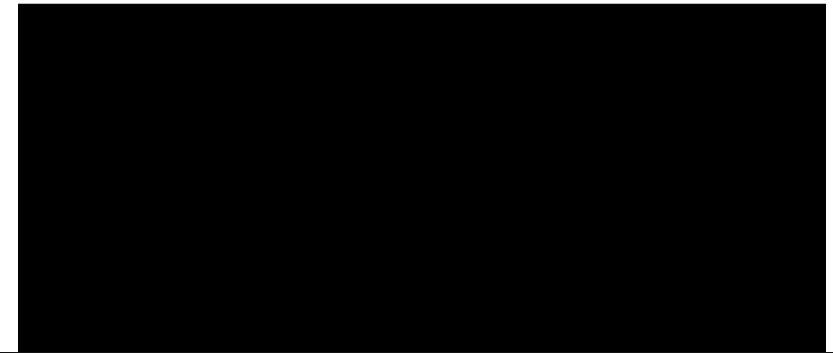
# Background(problem, actions, change, evidence)

I am Nokukhanya Khumalo, a GBV advocate and youth empowerment practitioner from South Africa. I co-lead SERETO SA BOTLHE, an organisation rooted in healing communities and empowering young people. My work is driven by one belief: when we protect women and empower youth, we break cycles of violence.



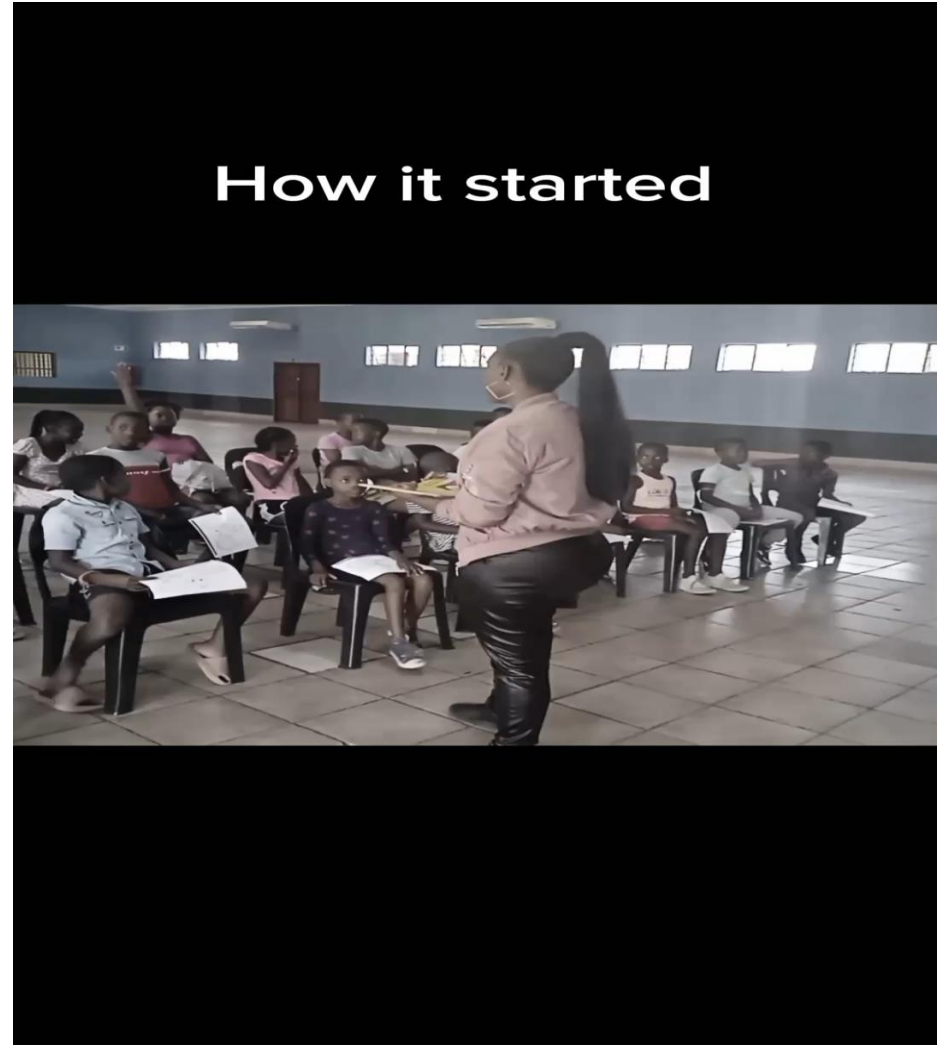
SERETO SA BOTLHE

"Talents that speaks, careers that grow"



# Background(problem, actions, change, evidence)

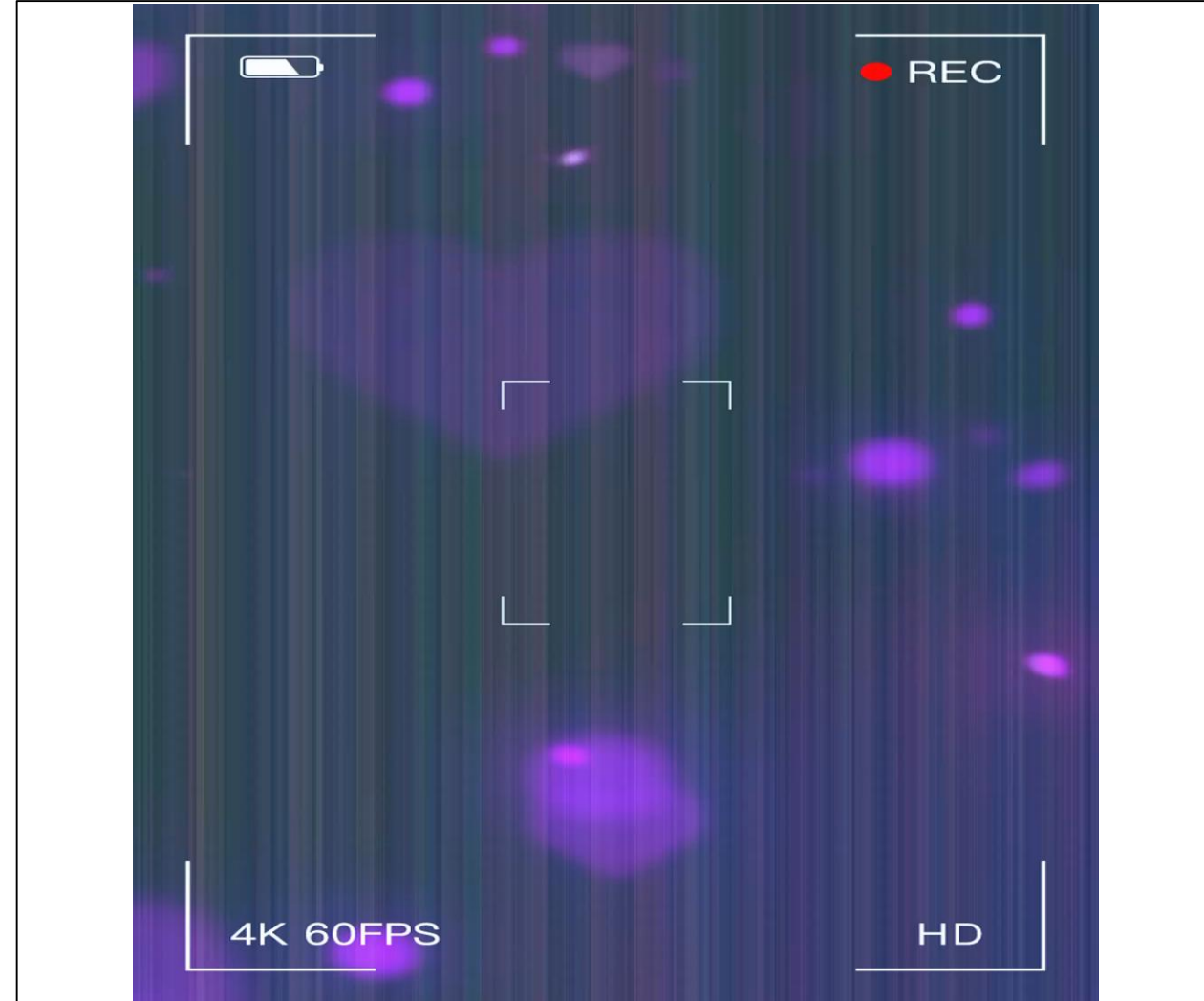
In many communities, gender-based violence continues to affect women and families, while many young people with great talent lack mentorship and opportunities to grow. What makes my work unique is that we address both challenges together; advocating against GBV while empowering youth to build self-awareness, confidence, and turn their talents into positive opportunities for themselves and their communities.



# Change

## How did the change come about?

My journey began at the **Johannesburg Library**, where I engaged with children, teenagers and adults through learning activities and community displays. Many young people shared the challenges they face, including poverty, hunger, and exposure to gender-based violence. These experiences inspired me to mentor youth to see their talents as tools for empowerment and opportunities to support themselves and their families. My advocacy journey was later strengthened through the **Women of the South Speak Out (WOSSO) Fellowship**, which affirmed my voice in feminist leadership and inspired me to co-lead **SERETO SA BOTLHE**. Through this work, and by supporting initiatives like the **Diepsloot Youth Programme (DYP)**, we raise awareness on GBV, create safe spaces for survivors, and mentor young people in self-awareness and talent development.



# Impact

As a result, we began to see increased awareness around gender-based violence, stronger youth engagement, and more open conversations within the community. Survivors felt heard, and young people began to recognize their talents and voices as tools for positive change. For now, this change is happening mainly at a local level, but through sharing our work and messages on social media, the impact is beginning to reach wider audiences and has the potential to influence conversations regionally.



# Recognition

My leadership and advocacy have been recognized and affirmed in multiple ways. I was selected as a Women of the South Speak Out (WOSSO) Fellow, which strengthened my voice in feminist leadership. I have been invited to women's forums and advocacy platforms to share my work, and the community has consistently shown trust and appreciation for my initiatives. Being entrusted to co-lead SERETO SA BOTLHE further affirms my commitment and the impact of my work in empowering youth and supporting survivors of GBV.



# Challenges & Lessons learnt

## Challenges

- Limited resources and funding.
- Stigma and silence around gender-based violence.
- Limited engagement .

## Lessons Learnt

- Sustainable change happens when communities take ownership
- Empowering youth to lead drives long-term impact
- Healing and empowerment must go hand-in-hand
- Mentorship and safe spaces create opportunities for talent and growth

# Sustainability

To sustain the work, we have put in place youth mentorship structures, safe spaces for survivors, and ongoing GBV awareness programs. We also document activities and outcomes to track impact and share lessons learnt. Looking ahead, we plan to expand SERETO SA BOTLHE programs, publish a self-awareness book series for youth, strengthen partnerships, and continue amplifying youth and feminist voices. By equipping young people with leadership skills and creative tools, we aim to scale the impact from local communities to wider regional influence over time.



# Next Steps

I am currently developing a self-awareness book series for youth to help them build confidence, identity, and leadership. Our goal is to expand the work of SERETO SA BOTLHE, strengthen partnerships, and continue empowering youth while advocating for safer communities. For the near future, if we secure enough funding and support, we plan to open a centre that will educate to amplify youth talents and provide employment opportunities for local community members who are currently unemployed.

“When we nurture potential, amplify voices, and create safe spaces, we do more than empower youth...we change the future.”

*Nokukhanya S. Khumalo*