

Deathly silence hangs over the Rooiplein

CARLA VISAGIE

Dagbreek Men's Residence organised a silent protest from the entrance of the residence to the Rooiplein on Friday, 4 October.

The approximately 30 protesters, dressed in black, had posters such as "STOP THE VIOLENCE END THE SILENCE", "MEN AGAINST GBV", and "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH". The protest was part of Dagbreek's gender-based violence (GBV) week, which also included three critical engagement sessions on the topic.

"Through this week we want to bring light to the issue and try to wake men up in our own immediate and greater spaces. We want to take some sort of collective responsibility and try to amend a culture that clearly has gotten way out of hand and is costing lives now," said Rob Kucera, HK member of Student Affairs and third-year BA (PPE) student.

According to Kucera they took the specific approach of a silent



MEN IN BLACK Dagbrekers protesting on their way to the library stairs to protest against gender-based violence. Photo: Erin Johnston

protest to "stand behind the movement" and to "encourage other men to stand with them as a sign of taking collective responsibility".

"We believe a very big part of remedying GBV is a sense of collective responsibility that all men need to take. Regardless if you have a squeaky clean record or you have never spoken to a woman in your life, all of us as men need to

take some sort of action in amending a culture that is now harming women," Kucera said.

According to Kucera, it is completely justified to have verbal protests, but he says there is power in having a silent protest.

"In a time like this protests are often very loud and conversations get very heated and very angry, there is obviously a time and

place for that and we respect that. I think there's a significant power in silence, especially since the entire premise of this protest was to just publicly promote men to get behind the idea of a collective responsibility that we all have and show that men are mobilizing and we are standing behind the movement and to encourage other men to do the same."

Thandile Ngxikwe, one of the leading figures in the Anti-GBV movement, criticised Dagbreek's approach.

"I don't feel like this is the right approach. Women have been talking to men right, and they don't hear us. So for men, especially in a res as big as Dagbreek, to have a silent protest, doesn't make sense," Ngxikwe said.

Ngxikwe addressed the crowd at the protest and said, "In a time where we actually need men to actually be a voice in saying 'listen, gross' we need a man-to-man kind of situation. When you guys are silent, you are perpetuating silence again. I'm not understanding

the logic. We have been screaming and they still don't listen, they are men, they are still quiet, it doesn't make logical sense, especially because you are standing against gender-based violence and then a woman comes [to talk to you] and then you are silent."

According to a protestor, JW Beukes, a first-year BCom (Actuarial Science) student, he decided to join the protest because he "believes everybody needs to stand together against GBV" and it "will worsen if action isn't taken".

"GBV is a symptom of much bigger problems, not only at universities or in the Western Cape, but nationally, [and it is a symptom of] of the society that is starting to get worse. This can be corrected by educating people on what is the right thing to do, like introducing a compulsory seminar for all first years on what these different movements are about. Universities are places that bring about change, and I think it is exactly why we should make an immediate difference," Beukes said.

Sonop, Majuba meets on the middle ground

NICOLE NASSON

SONOP women's residence and Majuba men's residence hosted a debating event on 25 September styled after the popular Middle Ground and Spectrum series on YouTube. The styles were made famous by Jubilee Media, a media group who makes "shareable human-centric videos that bridge people together, challenge conventional thinking, and inspire love", according to their YouTube biography.

Middle Ground allows two groups of people from opposing sides of a subject to discuss their opinions and find a middle ground. Spectrum, on the other hand, allows a group of people, who are usually generalised to believe the same thing, to see where each of

them fall on the spectrum when it comes to issues pertaining to that specific group of people.

Facilitated by Emma Wiehman, former Pieke 2018/2019 HK-member and PGCE student, the event aimed to "find consensus around what rape culture is, how it affects campus and what is influencing on it", says Daniëlle Rossouw, Sonop's Womxn Empowerment HK.

The idea to host such an event came after a conversation Rossouw and Sven Kühn, Vice-Prim of Majuba, had discussing the anti-gender-based violence movement that erupted across the country during the past month.

Some of the topics that were discussed included rape culture, residence drinking culture and consent.

Markle skenk aan US

CARLA VISAGIE

MEGHAN MARKLE, hertogin van Sussex en die beskermheer van die Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), het verlede Dinsdag aangekondig dat die ACU 'n bedrag geld van £1000 (ongeveer R18 500) aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US) gaan toeken om hul projek vir gendergelykheid te bevorder.

Markle het in Junie vanjaar die rol as beskermheer van die ACU, 'n internasionale organisasie wat wêrelduniversiteite in verbinding bring, by koningin Elizabeth oorgeneem. Die ACU ken jaarliks hierdie bedrag geld aan universiteite wêreldwyd toe met die doel om gendergelykheid te bevorder. Drie Suid-Afrikaanse universiteite se projekte het die toekenning ontvang, die US, Universiteit van Johannesburg (UJ) en Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland (UWK).

Markle het in 'n ACU-persverklaring gesê sy poog om toegang tot hoërsonderwys te verhoog en die hoeveelheid vrouens wat in wetenskap, tegnologie, ingenieurswese en wiskunde werk, 'n hupstoot wil gee.

"As 'n vrou bemagtig is, verander dit absoluut alles in 'n gemeenskap, en om 'n opvoedkundige atmosfeer te skep is 'n kernaspek daarvan," Markle said.

Volgens Monica du Toit, Monica-koshuiskop en ResEd-groepskoördineerder by die Sentrum vir Studentegemeenskappe (SSG), het die geleentheid nie net die projek 'n finansiële hupstoot gegee nie, maar die mediablootstelling het ook baie vir die projek beteken.

"Ek het eintlik gedog hulle het 'n fout gemaak toe ek die e-pos kry dat ek vir Meghan gaan ontmoet. Een van die goed wat vir my verras het, is dat Meghan wel gelees en gedink het oor hoe seer die gesprekke oor gendergebaseerde geweld in Suid-Afrika



Hertogin van harte Die hertogin van Sussex besig om 'n toespraak te lewer by die Universiteit van Johannesburg. Foto: ACU/Flickr

is op die oomblik. Soos sy gesels en gevra het oor die projek kon 'n mens regtig sien sy het dit gelees, en dit was vir my lekker dat sy belangstel. Iets van haar besoek het my laat dink aan hoe jongmense op universiteit vandag nie meer net 'n graad wil kry nie, maar ook die wêreld wil verander," sê Du Toit. Volgens Du Toit moes universiteite hul konsep vir 'n gendergelykheidsprogram by die ACU indien, waarna dit aan 'n keuringsproses, wat bepaal of die geld toegeken word, onderhewig was.

"Die ACU het 'n tyd terug 'n beroep gedoen op universiteite om aansoek te doen vir eintlik 'n klein bedraggie geld. Wat lekker is, is dat die geld ongebonde is. Dit is nie net vir navorsingsprojekte nie, maar kan aangewend word op enige plek waar mens iets ter bevordering van gendergelykheid kan doen."

Du Toit het gesê dat hierdie geld aangewend gaan word vir die Gender Detour-projek, 'n projek wat poog om 'n wandelpaadje op kampus te maak om doelbewuste gesprekke tussen mense van diverse agtergronde te bewerkstellig.

"Ons wou begin kyk na groot gesprekke waar jy almal in 'n hoek druk en dan moet almal saam daaroor praat. Die tyd is reg om terug te keer na klein gesprekke wat die

hele tyd aan die gang is."

"Stellenbosch as dorp het stories en plekke het stories, en jy hoef nie altyd iemand te hê wat jou lei nie. Partykeer as jy net langs iets gaan staan, dink jy daaroor en ons wou daardie metodiek gebruik het. Ons sal die roetes in die vorm van interaktiewe kaarte wil hê."

Gideon Basson, 'n nagraadse LLB-student, het saam met Du Toit aan die Gender Detour-konsep gewerk.

"Ons het ook vasgestel dat dit 'n genuanseerde onderwerp is en dat hier diep, onvertelde stories op ons kampus en dorp rondom geslagsongelykheid en persone met nie-konformerende identiteite lê. Die verhouding tussen ras, geweld en gender is ook nog duidelik sigbaar, nie net in Suid-Afrika nie, maar ook op ons kampus. Die bewegings op universiteitskampusse het ons opnuut laat besef dat gender nog 'n groot vlek op ons samelewing is," het Basson gesê.

Basson sê dat hierdie gesprekke kan help om "gedeeltelik sin [te] kan maak van die verlede".

"[Deur die gesprekke] behoort ons voortdurend bewus te wees, anders gaan hierdie geskiedenis ons nie uitloos nie. Dan gaan dit aaneenlopende traumas uitlok en oppervlakkige en blote numeriese transformasie daarstel," het Basson gesê.

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Die student se fotograaf

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