



MEDIA RELEASE

loveLife launches a revamped community centre to uplift despondent youth

Limpopo – Thursday, 09 June 2022: Today, loveLife in partnership with the Kurisani Soutpan Trust and the Blouberg Local Municipality launched the revamped Ratanang Community Centre to help the community in the upskilling, empowerment and upliftment of the local youth.

The Centre, is a result of a loveLife research project which assessed the needs of the local youth, and is built on land where an Old Ratanang drop-in centre once stood in Bochum. New additions to the original structure include a computer lab, a counselling room, an outdoor gym as well as a basketball court.

The research, conducted by loveLife, within the Blouberg and Molemole Municipalities in 2017, found that the two municipalities were similarly challenged in that there were social ills identified and found to be crucial prohibitive barriers that threaten the general welfare and advancement of young people.

The Soutpan loveLife Youth Centre project, which kick started in 2021, and is funded by the Soutpan Solar Project through the Kurisani Soutpan Trust, was subsequently established to address this problem. The findings of the study included concerning issues like the prevalence of gender based violence, a chronic lack of skills – where only one percent of the population has a tertiary education, 28.3% have no schooling and only 15.3% have matric.

The study also found a despondency among the youth, a prevalence of teenage pregnancy and a shocking tendency towards high-risk sexual behaviour which in some cases led to the contraction of HIV/AIDS. There was, according to the researchers, also prevailing youth unemployment – 47% of the participants reported that they had no jobs and a higher percentage were rated to having never worked at all. The dependency rate was found to be 86%.

"It is great to see all the hard work put into this project come together in time to celebrate the youth month," Willie Van Nierkerk from the Soutpan Solar Project said.

The Ratanang Community Centre project's targeted group is young people between the ages of 10 and 24 living within the 50km radius of the Soutpan Solar Project. loveLife aims to implement programs to alleviate some of the social ills identified by the study. The Blouberg Local Municipality supplied the land where the NGO has set up shop – it was chosen for its accessibility to potential users from both municipalities.

"We're grateful for the partnership with all of the parties that put their hands on deck, for this project. The study clearly showed us that if we're to eliminate social ills like gender based violence, there is a lot of work to be done," said Councillor Maria Thamaga, Mayor of the Blouberg Local Municipality.

loveLife CEO, Dr Linda Ncube-Nkomo, added that the boy child would not be left out of the programmes that would be implemented at the Centre. "While we advocate for and work with all youth, we have come to realise that the boy child needs to see value in himself in order for him to grow up to be a better man, father, leader and member of society. This is but a small step towards healing our society.

"This community needs all the help it can get. The youth is the future, we start now to sow the seed," Ncube-Nkomo concluded.

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About loveLife

The New loveLife Trust, also known as "loveLife", is a South African non-profit youth organisation that was established in 1999. loveLife's mission is to ensure that the South Africa's youth is provided with safety, good health and opportunity using peer-led education model to address challenges they face. These challenges include: joblessness, rising suicide cases, mental health, home-related stresses, lack of access to education, poor education, lack of access to opportunities in sport or business, and a public health care system that is not designed to cater for the needs of adolescents and youth have been exacerbated by numerous factors in particular the COVID-19 pandemic and an ailing economy.

About Kurisani Soutpan Trust

The Kurisani Soutpan Trust is the legal entity through which the 10% community shareholding was acquired. The shareholding was paid for through loans from the public

Investment cooperation (PIC) and Kurisani Youth Development Trust. The distributions from the plant to the Trust are used partly to pay off the loans and to Implement interventions that are aimed at addressing social ill faced by the communities within the 50 Kilometre radius of the plant.

About Blouberg Local Municipality

The Blouberg Local Municipality is a Category B municipality situated within the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province. It is the largest of four municipalities in the district, making up almost half of its geographical area.