

## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CHILD PROTECTION WEEK: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH**

National Child Protection Week (CPW) is commemorated in South Africa annually to raise awareness of the rights of children as articulated in the Children's Act of 2005.

The campaign is led by the Minister of Social Development; however it is incumbent on all of us to play a role in protecting children and creating a safe and secure environment for them.

Children in South Africa live in a society with a Constitution that has the highest regard for their rights and for the equality and dignity of everyone. The aim of child protection is to ensure the safety, well-being, care and protection of children through an integrated multi-disciplinary approach. Despite the best efforts of the South African Government and civil society to protect children from child abuse, neglect and exploitation, many children still remain vulnerable.

Reducing the high levels of violence against children is among South Africa's most overwhelming tasks, yet it requires a partnership approach.

#### **Badisa's partnership with the Department of Social Development.**

BADISA is a designated child protection organisation, appointed by the Department of Social Development, with a statutory obligation to protect children in accordance with the Children's Act. They do this through 44 social service offices rendering services to deal with all mentions of professed child neglect, molestation or abuse.. Social workers assess children and families, and deliver and present court reports to the Children's Court. If children have been neglected or abused, they are placed with safety parents in safety homes, foster care or child and youth care centres (children's homes).

For the execution of the above they receive some financial assistance from the Department, but still have various proactive projects aimed at prevention and early intervention strategies that require urgent funding.

Statistics show that Badisa has provided protection to 23 977 children in the last year of which 657 were abused, 511 sexually abused and 2 235 neglected. It also included 171 street children, 493 abandoned children and 422 orphans.

An interesting statistic shows that 3 452 of these parents had severely insufficient parenting skills.

Says Ronel van Zyl, Director of Social Services at Badisa, “Children is our future, yet, they are treated as if they are worthless. They suffer abuse and neglect at the hands of their parents and primary caregivers and the cycle of abuse leads to a future generation of parents who also abuse or neglect their children. Our communities are disintegrating and lacking moral fibre. The change in family structures, lack of support for new parents and the pressure of modern day living are all contributing factors. We need to start creating communities that care for their children, raise awareness and intervene before it is too late”.

### **Role players in our communities as partners to Badisa**

It is evident that we need healthy role models and caring individuals to break the cycle.

ECD centres form part of Badisa’s vision to create safe spaces in their respective communities and they do this through 20 pre-primary daycare centres and 7 aftercare centres. For 5 hours a day these centres provide children with a caring environment and food - basic needs that would otherwise not have been met.

The latest statistics show that Badisa has delivered services to 1 386 children in registered daycare and 415 children in the care of home based mothers

The role of these centres must not be underestimated. Children that are not placed in safe daycare facilities are extremely vulnerable and exposed to community violence.

### **Badisa as the connection between role players and exposed children**

Badisa serves as a link to connect role players in the community and vulnerable children. They simply cannot do it alone and require assistance with:

- Social worker salaries
- Infrastructure
- Professional Pro Bono services by therapists, such as occupational therapists and psychologists, as they cannot deliver these assessments themselves
- Donations for food and clothing
- Awareness campaigns in churches and other community structures on children’s rights and reporting mechanisms

### **Green ribbon**

Government urges everyone to wear the Green ribbon during Child Protection Week to show support for the promotion of the rights, care and protection of the child. The Green ribbon was adopted by the National Child Protection Committee in 2004:

Amongst other it emphasises the importance of partnerships to tackle child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To find out how you can get involved as an active partner, please visit [www.badisa.org.za](http://www.badisa.org.za)

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**ENDS**

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