

WOMEN TACKLE ABUSE!

By **NOKO MASHILO**

THE Rise Women's Club offers victims the opportunity to speak about gender violence.

During a discussion the group held yesterday at the Soul City offices in Joburg, Thoko Budaza spoke about her experiences as a survivor of multiple rapes.

The 33-year-old from East London, Eastern Cape said she was only eight when she was raped

for the first time. She was also raped as a teenager and as an adult.

Thoko said a big part of Mzansi's rape problem is that men who attack women are not punished by the law.

She also said many women don't have access to legal services and young boys and girls don't understand the need for gender equality.

"As long as men run away

from their wrongdoings with no consequences, we will encounter these challenges," she said.

She said the solution is to take gender-based violence seriously in homes and communities to make sure everyone understands the problem and holds the government accountable.

Dr Taskeen Khan said gender-based violence has many causes.

"However, we can identify risk factors like low levels of edu-

cation, harmful use of alcohol, exposure to child abuse, an acceptance of violence and a lack of gender equality," she said.

Mbuyiselo Botha of Sonke Gender Justice said: "This is a fight between unequal powers.

"Men with more power than women attack them. We need to talk more to boys at school and church.

"We need to engage traditional leaders as much as we can."



Rape survivor Thoko Budaza believes people need to accept gender equality..
Photo by Noko Mashilo