

DSD NEWS

DSD SPECIAL EDITION

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MONTH



Strengthening our response to recovery through DSD services

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social development

Department:
Social Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

BY: LUMKA OLIPHANT

Welcome once again to another edition of DSD News where we try to keep the sector abreast of the news and developments in the sector.

The month of October was a very important time for the Department of Social Development and its entities. It was during this month where we commemorated Social Development Month. A time where we took our services to the people and found ways of improving the delivery of these crucial services.

The year 2020 has been a challenging year as the country and the world has been battling with the COVID-19 pandemic. The DSD sector has had to look at different and new ways of delivering services relying heavily on IT systems.

We have had to change even the way we conduct our campaigns. Ordinarily, we would have had our Golden Games which were scheduled to be in the Western Cape but this was not to be because of the pandemic. We had to improvise but not compromise on this important campaign which seeks to celebrate the contribution of older persons while reminding them about the importance of keeping active so that they can live a longer life.

It would have been amiss if we were to speak about Social Development month without acknowledging the violence against women and children and the importance of the social development work in this area. It is a fact that women and children are dying every single day in our country at the hands of men and Gender Based Violence and Femicide has been made a priority by the President.

The Department of Social of Development plays a very important role in the fight against this scourge. As the DSD, we need to be cognisant of the fact that we, colleagues, are at the coalface of fighting poverty, unemployment and inequality.





— FROM THE DESK OF —
THE PRESIDENT



PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS

DEAR FELLOW SOUTH AFRICAN

The jacaranda trees are in full bloom across the nation's capital, heralding the start of summer. After a long and difficult winter, the beginning of a new season should fill us with optimism.

When the National State of Disaster was declared in March, our immediate priority was to contain the spread of the virus and provide emergency relief to citizens, communities, workers and businesses.

Over the course of eight months and with the support of our social partners, we rolled out a comprehensive set of measures to limit the social and economic impact of the pandemic.

We massively expanded social protection on a scale that has never been attempted before in this country. We are one of the few countries in the world where the right of access to social security is enshrined in the Constitution, and we can be proud that during this grave crisis we gave practical expression to this right in many ways.

In addition to our existing social grants, which reach more than 17 million people every month, we topped-up the Old Age, Disability and Child Support Grants. We rolled out a Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant, which has reached some 6 million people to date. This was done within weeks of the National State of Disaster being declared.

The scale of such an undertaking cannot be understated. To bring this system online there was extensive collaboration between the South African Social Security Agency, the South African Revenue Service, Home Affairs and many others.

We set up a fully automated application and disbursement process, and integrated multiple databases, including the National

Population Register and the Unemployment Insurance Fund database. We set up new application channels like WhatsApp and USSD, and created systems with the commercial banks to enable banking detail verification. This is a remarkable achievement in a very short space of time.

Alongside the measures we took to protect and sustain livelihoods, we also supported ailing businesses. We provided relief to small businesses in the form of debt relief, finance, tax payment deferrals and other instruments.

We implemented a COVID-19 Loan Guarantee Scheme to enable businesses to meet their operational expenses during the lockdown, and are currently looking at how this scheme can reach more companies in need.

We provided income protection to workers and relief to business owners through the Temporary Employer Relief Scheme administered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

These were all in direct response to an emergency and were by nature

temporary. Some are now coming to an end, while others have been extended as the labour market recovers.

The measures we implemented went a long way towards protecting our society from the harsh winds of COVID-19. The additional grants helped to prevent millions of people from falling below the food poverty line.

Had we not intervened to secure livelihoods and save businesses, the living conditions of our people and the circumstances of thousands of businesses would have been considerably worse.

Now we are in a transition from relief to recovery.

The emergency measures we put in place have laid a firm foundation on which to rebuild our economy. As our focus now shifts to the implementation of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, our priority will be to stimulate growth and create jobs.

There has already been progress in a number of areas. We are seeing new funding

commitments for infrastructure development following an infrastructure project roundtable last week. A number of employment programmes under the Presidential Employment Stimulus have started. We are pushing ahead with economic reforms in areas such as energy and telecommunications.

Plans are being converted to action and commitments are being reflected in jobs and opportunities.

It is all the more critical at this time, more so with the festive season approaching, that we do not become the architects of our own undoing.

The greatest vigilance is required from us all to keep the virus at bay.

A resurgence at any scale will not just dramatically reverse our health gains. It will choke the green shoots of economic recovery that have emerged, and take us back from spring to winter.

To prevent a second wave of COVID-19 infections, we must observe the public health guidelines that remain in place.

When we fail to wear a mask at a

social gathering, when we attend crowded events, we are not only putting ourselves and others at risk. We are also putting our economic recovery in jeopardy.

Let us all continue to play our part.

The positive actions of wearing a mask, of maintaining social distancing and of regular hand washing helped us overcome the worst effects of the pandemic. They are still our best defence.

Let us remember the sacrifices we all had to make to contain the spread of the virus in the early days.

Even as most social and economic activity has resumed, we must still observe all the health measures. This is absolutely necessary if we are to rebuild our economy and put this crisis behind us.

With best regards,

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER LINDIWE ZULU

Dear DSD Family,

Government recognises October as Social Development Month. We observe this month annually to mark government's commitment to caring for the most vulnerable in our country.

The Department, together with its agencies (NDA and SASSA) use this period to showcase a variety of its service offerings, ranging from Early Childhood Development (ECD), youth development, social protection, victim empowerment programmes, poverty eradication and anti-substance programmes - to name a few.

This year, the theme for DSD Month was: **"Strengthening our response to recovery through DSD services"** and some of the massive socio-economic challenges that were addressed included increasing poverty and hunger and food insecurity. Government through the Department of Social Development has to take the lead towards the eradication of poverty and hunger, and in addressing food insecurity.

Early in the month of October, we took our Social



Development Month campaign to Welkom in the Free State together with MEC Mamiki Qabathe. This gave us an opportunity to engage with older persons on the impact of COVID-19 and how it has changed their lives. The Department remains committed to the protection of vulnerable groups - especially older persons as they are particularly a high-risk group to infection and COVID-19 complications.

The scourge of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) continues to plague our country. As part of an ongoing national campaign to highlight the scourge of GBVF, the Department and its entities, Sassa and NDA, embarked on a two-day outreach programme to Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Together with Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane and MEC of Social Development in KwaZulu-Natal Ms Nonhlanhla Khoza, I visited gender-based violence hotspots in KwaMashu, Inanda and Phoenix and got to see the devastating effects of this violence against women and children.

I was overcome with emotion when I visited the home of 14-year-old Xolile Mdletshe, who was killed execution style, near her home in KwaMashu, north of Durban. The teenager and her friend, Erin King, were found lying in the bushes. Both had been shot in the head. We need to say enough is enough and protect our women and children from this scourge of violence.

At the end of this month, the whole world will be joining hands in support of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and I encourage each of you to play your part!

Thank you and Stay Safe!
Minister Lindiwe Zulu

DEPUTY MINISTER'S MESSAGE

HENDRIETTA BOGOPANE-ZULU



Reduce the Stigma, Hear their Voices

October, which is commemorated annually as Social Development Month, was extremely busy with an array of activities for my office. What, however, sticks out the most is when on 28 October 2020, I had the pleasure of launching the South African Network of People Who Use Drugs (SANPUD) in Bellhaven, KwaZulu-Natal Province.

I remember back in 2014 when I was sitting with Shaun Shelly in my Cape Town office. We were thinking of how a network of drug users would work. We highlighted how we were going to go about even starting one such network but also began asking ourselves questions like who would listen to people who use drugs, who cared enough to reason with their voices?

SANPUD was eventually established in 2017 and it aims to support its members - regional networks of people who use drugs, by providing them with financial, logistical, administrative and technical support.

As a visually impaired black rural woman, I have lived through stigma and I understand what it feels like to be deemed different. Stigma divides people. It gives people the idea that they are better than you are.

The stigma that is surrounding drug use has become an obstacle that has made so many struggling with drug use

too embarrassed to access the services available to them.

We are all aware that the use of substances in South Africa is a big problem and COVID-19 has not made the situation easier in our country as well as globally.

The socio-economic instability caused so much distraction that we have seen so many of the most vulnerable in our

I believe in the power of support and togetherness. Rehabilitation will make sense when you are peer-counselled by the one who walked the journey as well.

society fall through the cracks. We often find that service users are overlooked and shunned upon.

The stinging issue of designer drugs in our country has made the road to recovery for drug users a difficult one. We have seen in our recovery centers that this issue has caused a challenge of a revolving door where services users have returned repeatedly.

I believe, very strongly, that unless we strengthen the voices of people who use drugs, the mandate of the drug policy will never be fulfilled. We need the voice of drug users. It is only through this that we will get to understand and deal with the issues that lead individuals to using drugs.

The voices of drug users need to be elevated because if this is not done, our policies will always miss the mark of what they are meant to achieve.

"Leaving no one behind" cannot just be a fancy United Nation slogan, it must be practical and real.

I believe in the principle of a people-centred response. It is through the voices and stories of the drug users that the government can design policies that are supportive and responsive.

I believe in the power of support and togetherness. Rehabilitation will make sense when you are peer-counselled by the one who walked the journey as well.

We are grateful to the academics that have put in so much work in the issue of drug use and the care they have shown to the vulnerable. Thank you Team DSD for understanding the narrative of a people-centered approach. We are moving strides! Thank you for embarking on this journey with me.

Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu
Deputy Minister for Social Development

MESSAGE FROM ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

BY: LINTON MCHUNU

Once more, let me utilise this space to greet all officials of the Department of Social Development and its entities, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the National Development Agency (NDA).

I thought it would be prudent for me to remind all officials that although we have wrapped up Social Development Month, which we commemorate each year during the month of October, we should not shy away from doing our best to change and improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable citizens of our country.

The month of October marked the Department of Social Development's period to intensify awareness about the Department's mandate, policies, programmes and social services as well as the overall work of its entities. During DSD month, the Department reached out to communities in collaboration with its provincial offices and entities – SASSA and NDA.

Social Development Month is held in the context of the Government's vision of addressing the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. To this effect, the Department, in the quest to promote healthy lifestyles for the elderly, traditionally hosts the annual Active Ageing Programme during this month. However, this would not be the case in October as a result of the

COVID-19 global pandemic which has affected most of our normal face-to-face activities. As such, most activities are generally still being conducted through virtual methods to prevent any further spread and a second wave of the Coronavirus.

The protection of vulnerable groups – particularly women, children and people with disabilities, remains central to Government's objectives of improving living conditions of the underprivileged. It is in this context that all departmental activities are focused on improving the lives of poor and vulnerable South Africans through provision of social services.

It is during October Month that all South Africans, including parents, South African Police Service (SAPS), teachers, Child Caregivers, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) are encouraged to play their part and contribute towards the protection of vulnerable persons.

Since the beginning of October, the Department held several engagements most of which were virtual to raise awareness around the services provided by the Department and its entities for the benefit of the impoverished and marginalised members of society. Some of these activities took place in line with the needs of South Africans who are worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am also delighted by the President's Economic Recovery Plan which highlighted a three-month extension of the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Social Grant. The grant, which initially had to expire by the end of October, will now be extended until 31 January 2021.

As I conclude, I would like to remind all of you that we are duty bound to drum up the beat against the second pandemic which is gender-based violence and protect vulnerable women and children in need of care and support. Secondly, we are not completely out of this COVID19 storm and it is still expected from all of us to comply with the basics of regular washing of hands with soap, sanitising, keeping a social distance and avoiding handshaking during our social gatherings.

PLAY YOUR PART AND SAVE LIVES!

I thank you



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GUIDELINES ON GENERIC PROCESSES AND TOOLS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORK PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



BY THE REGISTRAR: LANGI MALANGA

The South African Council for Social Services Professions has developed guidelines for child and youth care work.

Generic processes and tools for child and youth care work practice with individual children and families have been developed by the South African Council for Social Service Professions' **Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work** to support a standardised approach to professional child and youth care work practice in both government and nongovernment settings.

These generic processes and tools provide the minimum requirements for child and youth care work practice with individual children and families. The guidelines include some information on how to apply these generic processes and tools in specific settings namely: community, residential and schools. In some settings, certain processes may not be applicable to child and youth care workers and the guidelines highlight these exceptions.

Organisations will need to review the current processes and tools used to provide child and youth care work services to individual

children and families and make adjustments where needed to ensure that their programme/setting specific processes and tools capture these minimum requirements. Adaptations to tools can be made depending on the programme/setting but the content of the generic tools must be included.

Child and youth care workers should already be familiar with implementing many of the processes in these guidelines. Some of the processes are addressed in the *Level 4 FETC: CYC curriculum* such as logging and developmental assessments and individual development plans. A fuller orientation/training is offered in the *Level 5 FETC: CYC curriculum*. In-service training will still need to be provided on any revised programme/setting specific processes and tools. Where child and youth care workers work in a multidisciplinary team, other members of the team should be involved in the in-service training to facilitate a shared understanding of the different processes and tools and clarify roles and responsibilities.

While these guidelines focus

specifically on child and youth care workers it is with the understanding that an integrated approach to service delivery is necessary to meet the prevention, early intervention, pre-statutory and statutory needs of children and youth. An integrated approach requires involving different social service practitioners e.g. social workers and community development practitioners, and allied workers e.g. nurses, teachers, police. For the management of statutory child protection cases in particular, an integrated approach to service delivery requires working in a multi-disciplinary team led by a designated social worker.

These generic processes and tools for child and youth care work practice with individual children and families are a work in progress. They will be refined following a period of testing in the field.

You can access these guidelines on this link [http://www.sacssp.co.za/2020/Guidelines%20for%20CYCW%20Practice%20with%20individual%20children%20and%20Families%20-%20Final%20\(PBCYW\)%2025.07.2020.pdf](http://www.sacssp.co.za/2020/Guidelines%20for%20CYCW%20Practice%20with%20individual%20children%20and%20Families%20-%20Final%20(PBCYW)%2025.07.2020.pdf)

BOSHOF SOLAR POWER PROVIDES A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR HERTZOGVILLE AND BOSHOF ECD CENTRES

BY: LERATO KHATEANE

A number of Social Development Early Childhood Development coordinators have been assessing and determining that ECD and partial care facilities that are in a position to reopen are verified for children's safety.

To assist, the Boshof Solar Power Park came on board with a donation of Personal Protective Equipment for the Lejweleputswa District's Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs). This was to assist the Department of Social Development and the ECDs with their state of readiness to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ms Zuki Ndlela, the Economic Development Officer for the Solar Power handed over PPEs as part of their corporate social responsibility support programme to six schools and ten ECDs in Lejweleputswa district.

The objective of Boshof Solar Power is to provide a safe learning environment as an effort to heed the government's call to assist and protect vulnerable communities during the pandemic. "Working with the support of the various government departments means that we are able to provide support to the childcare protection system especially for working single

"The objective of Boshof Solar Power is to provide a safe learning environment as an effort to heed the government's call to assist and protect vulnerable communities during the pandemic."

mothers with young children which is truly needed," says Zuki.

One of the many things that determines ECD readiness is the availability of PPEs for children and caregivers for their safety and carefully thought out Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines when they are ready to open.

PPEs were donated to ECD centres around Hertzogville and Boshof in Tokologo Local Municipality.

The 10 ECDs include Bezenet day Care Centre, Kareehof Speelgroep; Kgatelopele Creche; Leretlhabetse Educare centre; Thari ya Mme Educare; Tokologo ECD centre and others. The PPE's, which includes sanitisers, gloves, masks and cleaning material were to be distributed to these ECD's as soon as they were given the go ahead by the departmental verification teams to start allowing children to go back to ECD's.

"By providing Personal Protective Equipment for Boshof and Hertzogville ECD centres, Boshof Solar Power is helping to promote the implementation of COVID-19 health and safety measures, needed by ECDs as well as a conducive and caring environment for practitioners and children," said Mrs. Gladys Mokodutlo, Social Work Supervisor, in the Department of Social Development in Lejweleputswa District.

Through the steps taken for the safety of children at the ECD's the Department of Social Development had been conducting ECD's state of readiness to contain COVID 19 outbreak to make sure that when they reopen, parents and caregivers will be assured about the health and safety of their children.

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMISSION LAUNCHES R3.5 MILLION ECDs

BY: LERATO KHATEANE

The National Lottery Commission (NLC) and the Free State Government founded the ECD Infrastructure Legacy in September. This was followed by a partnership between the Department of Social Development, the NLC and UNICEF which led to a launch of 10 ECD centres.

According to Ms Muriel Mafico, the Deputy Representative UNICEF, their role is to ensure that no child is left behind during the registration of ECDs. "When we started the Vangisali Campaign, our aim was to reach out to our communities to register every unregistered ECD centre for monitoring and evaluation purposes."

One of the beneficiaries of this

partnership, Ms Emily Phasiwe of Tshireletsong Pre- School, says she started her school in 1992 at Section H3 in Botshabelo in the Free State. She started with 60 children in a shack and in 2017, under the stewardship of former MEC and now Premier of the FS, Ms Sisi Ntombela - NLC built the children an ECD which now accommodates more than 100 children.

Pulane Pre-School, situated at Sunflower park in Clocolan, is another beneficiary of the partnership. The ECD opened its doors to the underaged children for the first time on the 27th of May 1989 and started operating under a tree at the home of the late Ms Pulane Motloun on weekdays. When it rained, all the children

would be accommodated inside her home to continue with the daily ECD activities.

In 2000 when the number of children increased, the matron rented space at the Uniting Reformed Church. Later, Ms Motloun received a site for an ECD to be built at one of the nearby informal settlements. In 1991 they obtained their first ECD training at EDUCare Training Centre and received an advanced elementary certificate. In 1995, she received a level 1 certificate from the Department of Social Development and registered as a Non-Profit Organisation in 1999. In the year 2000, DSD gave them financial aid to run the ECD and to pay ECD staff. The centre is currently taking care of 58 children and has six staff members.





MINISTER LINDIWE ZULU ENGAGES WITH OLDER PERSONS ON THEIR CHALLENGES AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BY: SELLO TANG

Older persons are facing a myriad of challenges and are negatively affected by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu, heard during her engagement with the elderly on 09 October 2020 at Thabong Indoor Sports Centre in Welkom - Free State.

Minister Zulu was conducting dialogues with the senior citizens on the challenges facing them and also

to mark the Social Development Month and commemorating World Elderly Abuse Awareness Day.

The event was also used to celebrate the International Day for Older Persons, which is held annually on 1 October, during Social Development Month. This day is celebrated to acknowledge the importance and the role the elderly play in our communities.

Amongst other challenges they expressed, older persons said they were experiencing severe abuse in the hands of close family members. Older persons were also facing the challenge of being swindled off their pension money by the family members and criminals.

“Older persons were also affected negatively by this pandemic with some losing their lives due to vulnerability as a result of comorbidities,” said Minister Zulu.

The Minister condemned the recently-reported abuse cases and the scourge of gender-based violence against the older persons, which mostly resulted in devastating living conditions for the senior citizens of the country.

“Our elders need to be acknowledged for the contributions they have made to society and our economy. They are valued members of our community and we need to

make sure that they know this,” said the Minister.

According to Statistics South Africa’s July 2020 mid-year population estimates report, 5.43 million people in South Africa are over the age of 60. The country’s elderly growth rate rose from 1.1 per cent (2002 to 2003) to three per cent (2019 to 2020).

The Older Persons Act 13 of, 2006 states that the prevention of elder-person abuse was key in improving the quality of lives of older persons. This is also supported by the three pillars of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which calls for the development of older persons, advancement of their health and well-being into old age, as well as providing an enabling and supportive environment for them to thrive.

“With a growing elderly population, their needs must take centre stage - including social assistance programmes and easy access to food programmes and healthcare,” said Minister Zulu.

The Department, together with its entities - the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and National Development Agency (NDA), also handed over a basket of services and interventions to address a variety of challenges encountered by older persons at the event. Minister Zulu was accompanied by the MEC of Social Development in the Free State Ms Mamiki Qabathe.

WHAT LEVEL MEANS? 1

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

Additional health measures to prevent a second wave

- The number of tests will be increased, and the criteria for testing expanded
- South Africa is participating in vaccine trials and meeting in local capacity to produce and distribute vaccines
- A national antibody survey will be conducted to assess the true extent of infections and determine how many people may have been previously infected

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

Social, religious and other gatherings are permitted with the following conditions:

- The number of people in any venue must not exceed 50% of its normal capacity
- A maximum limit of 250 people applies to indoor gatherings
- A maximum limit of 500 people applies to outdoor gatherings
- A maximum of 100 people may gather at funerals, birth celebrations and other permitted events
- Masks must be worn at all times and social distancing must be maintained

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

Borders will be opened for international travel from 1 October, subject to the following conditions:

- Travel may be restricted to and from certain countries that are deemed high risk
- Only long-haul international air routes will be open for international flights
- A limited number of border posts will remain open at South Africa's land borders

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

Social and economic relief measures are working

- Over R90 billion has been paid to more than 16 million individuals through the Special COVID-19 Care and Support Grant
- Over 600,000 companies and a million workers have been supported through the COVID-19 Relief Grant
- The UIF benefit has been extended until the end of the national state of disaster to assist companies that still face a loss of revenue
- More than R20 billion in tax relief has been granted to companies and individuals in distress

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

International travellers must meet the following requirements to ensure safety:

- On arrival, travellers will need to present a negative COVID-19 test result not older than 72 hours from time of departure
- All travellers will be screened on arrival and those presenting with symptoms will be required to have a COVID test
- Where necessary, travellers will need to enter mandatory quarantine facilities at their own cost
- Travellers will be asked to download the COVID Alert South Africa mobile app

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

The following restrictions will remain in place to prevent the spread of the virus:

- The number of people allowed in a retail store, restaurant, cinema or other public space remains limited to 50% of its normal capacity to prevent the spread of the virus
- Gatherings may not exceed 50% of venue capacity with a maximum limit of 250 indoors and 500 outdoors
- Masks must be worn in public places and social distancing must be maintained

South Africa will move to Level 1 from Monday, 21 September 2020

Alert Level 1:

- The curfew time will be from midnight to 04:00am
- The sale of alcohol at retail outlets is now permitted from Monday to Friday, from 09:00 to 17:00
- Alcohol will be permitted for on-the-consumption in licensed establishments with 100% adherence to the curfew

“We are ready to open our doors again to the world, and invite travellers to enjoy our mountains, our beaches, our vibrant cities and our wildlife game parks in safety and confidence.”

President Cyril Ramaphosa
21 September 2020

DRINKING ALCOHOL DURING PREGNANCY LOCKS LIFE'S POTENTIAL

BY: EVANS MOLIMI



When the world observed the International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) awareness day in September, the Deputy Minister for Social Development Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu told community members of Orange Farm in Gauteng that FASD is hundred percent avoidable. This year, the day was commemorated under the theme: *“Through the eyes of children.”*

The awareness day is aimed at reminding pregnant women and community members not to steal the future of children while developing because the illness is preventable. “It is with sadness that we witness children suffer due to their mothers’ carelessness of abusing alcohol during pregnancy. Drinking alcohol while pregnant has a major impact on unborn babies. It disrupts their development,” said the Deputy Minister.

Most of children born with FASD are abandoned by their mothers and are forced to live under the care of caregivers and Deputy Minister Bogopane-Zulu said men need to walk side by side and inspire their women not to consume alcoholic beverages when planning to fall pregnant and during pregnancy. “We need to encourage men to be supportive to their women and to be part of the pregnancy,” she said.

The founder of the Messiah Home which cares for seven children living with FASD, Lindiwe Zondo, said that it is heart-breaking to see mothers stealing the right to life of their unborn children at an early stage of their development.

“It is every individual’s responsibility to play a role. Community members have the responsibility to encourage women that no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy. We need to find a way as community members to educate ourselves about the dangers associated with drinking alcohol during pregnancy,” she said.

HUNDREDS OF homeless persons REUNIFIED WITH FAMILIES

BY: BUSI KHESWA



The fear of losing her twin babies during the COVID-19 lockdown gave Mpho Temo the courage to give up on life on the streets and reunite with her family.

The 27-year-old from Soweto had been living on the streets of Johannesburg for more than a year before she was taken in by a shelter for homeless people in Hillbrow during lockdown. She was heavily pregnant at the time.

“I was just naive. All I wanted was freedom and to be with my friends. I just wanted to do as I like,” she said during an interview with Weekly Bulletin at her uncle’s four-room house in Pimville where she has also been reunited with her six-year-old son.

She ended up at the shelter after being bundled into a SA National Defence Force truck when soldiers were brought in to enforce the

smoking these illegal and harmful substances.” Temo acknowledged that she had been smoking but refused to say which drug she used.

Leona Pienaar, of the Mould Empower Serve (MES), a homeless shelter funded by the department of Social Development, said reunification cannot be a forced process because this could lead to the person being back in the streets within days.

Not everyone wants to go home. Those who have managed to bridge that gap need to be supported constantly.

Since the shelter is not designed to accommodate children, Social Workers tried to reunite her with her family in Pimville, Soweto. When they succeeded, Temo became one of 483 homeless people to be reintegrated after 2,752 were taken off the streets and placed in 45 city shelters when the pandemic hit.

Temporary shelters provided psychosocial support, medical assessments and treatment for substance abuse, but not all residents stayed the course. Almost 600 returned to the streets, and the same number discharged themselves from drug rehabilitation centres.

Temo said peer pressure made her leave home to live on the streets.

lockdown in March. “When I arrived at the shelter I didn’t know that I was expecting twins. I got the shock of my life during childbirth,” she explains.

Social Workers told her they would look for foster homes because the shelter was not suitable for the babies. “I didn’t want to lose my children. The centre then assisted me to get in contact with my family. Now I’m happy I took that decision to go back home,” Temo added.

Temo’s younger sister, Lebohang, said she was cautiously hopeful about the future. “Mpho is back now but still behaves the same way as when she was still in the streets,” she said. “She must now just realise that she has three children and stop

Temo’s journey home had been difficult, she said, because her family were worried about how she would stay sober and care for her children. “It took social workers and counsellors about five weeks to get them to agree to take me back,” she says.

Now social workers and counsellors visit Temo and her family weekly. “Not everyone wants to go home. Those who have managed to bridge that gap need to be supported constantly,” said Pienaar.

The Department is currently rolling out an integrated strategy that will ensure that all the role players respond adequately in response to the plight of the homeless.

KZN *good stories* ON SOCIAL GRANT

"The social grant has assisted me very much, especially the additional R500 that we received during COVID-19. It assisted me in buying groceries and winter clothes for my four children. The service that I have received at the Vulindlela Local Office is phenomenal. I would rate them 10 out of 10 due to the service they delivered to me." Londeka Mhlophe from Pietermaritzburg

"I, Agrippa Bonginkosi Ndlovu, would like to write my story about how the disability grant has helped me in different ways since I started receiving it in 2016. My daily life has been very effective and efficient because of the disability grant. I think and feel that the Howick SASSA Service Centre is doing its level best to serve the beneficiaries. They are the best in customer service and care. Thank you!" - Agrippa Bonginkosi Ndlovu from Empophomeni

"A good-hearted citizen in Pinetown by the name of Ms Shayne Farrel saw this guy with a disability who used to beg on the street corner. Shayne used to help him all the time so she did not know how to help him any further and she decided to write to SASSA Head Office. Her email was forwarded to the Pinetown Local Office. Mrs Jay Naicker, the Pinetown Local Office Manager, had a meeting with Shayne to see how they were going to assist Mxolisi Dlamini with a social grant. An application for a disability grant was lodged and it was approved on Friday 18 September 2020. I began getting my grant in October 2020." - Mxolisi Dlamini from Pinetown.

"I am Sivinasan Vasigee who was born in 1948. I have been receiving the grant since I turned 60 in 2008. I am completely disabled. The grant has been helpful in terms of affording me to pay for electricity, rates and groceries. I would not be able to survive without my social grant." - Sivinasan Vasigee from Northdale



"I would like to take this opportunity to offer my most sincere thanks to Hester for forwarding my email to the relevant parties and to the staff at the Pinetown Sassa branch - in particular Mrs Naiker for the kind and helpful support and assistance in getting a gentleman, by the name of Justice, a disability grant.

Justice's disability started when he was in his teens - though the cause of it has never been diagnosed. His parents passed on not long after then leaving Justice to fend for himself. Later, he was forced to look after his niece and her young child which he is still supporting today. He used to

receive a disability grant at one point but gave it up when Browns School for children with special needs, offered him a job as a gate security. But his constant seizures became an issue as he became unconscious for sometimes hours at a time. Justice was then let go from his work due to this. Despondent and desperate, he resorted to begging at the robots not only to support himself but also his orphaned niece and now her little boy. Due to a poor diet and lack of care his condition has deteriorated even more over the past few years. It has got to the point that he cannot walk without the aid of a walker and even then he struggles. To top it

all off, thugs broke into his house a couple of years back and stole all of their clothes and other items leaving them with only the clothes on their backs and removing the little bit of dignity he had left.

With his need to beg daily in order to feed himself and his relatives and his difficulty being in queues, getting a disability grant again was something he had all but given up on. But thanks to the wonderful response from Sassa and its staff, he received his first payment in October. He is over the moon and so excited and so am I." - Nontobeko Sibeko from Durban

BY: LONWABO GONELA

The National Development Agency (NDA) handed over a cheque of R7.1 million to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Kwa-Zulu Natal that will be implementing programmes and services for the **"Prevention, Response, Care, Support and Healing"** of all vulnerable persons affected by the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

The NDA handed over the cheque to CSOs during Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu's Social Development Month outreach programme in the eThekweni district in October 2020.

South Africa has developed a National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF to provide a cohesive strategic framework to guide the national response to this scourge. The NSP has six pillars and the Department of Social Development is responsible for pillar 4 which is Response, Care, Support and Healing.

One of the strategic interventions in the next five years is strengthening

the Care and support structures like CSOs. The NDA is mandated by the South African Parliament to channel funds and strengthen CSOs to implement community development programmes. In response to the above, the Department of Social Development, through the Criminal Asset Recovery Account (CARA), has entrusted the NDA with the implementation of a Victim Empowerment Programme by grant funding and providing capacity building to organisations implementing GBV programmes in all the nine provinces. For this purpose, the Department has dedicated R95 million to the NDA to implement the CARA programme.

"As a conduit of funds for CSOs, the NDA is looking forward to strengthening the capacity of CSOs that are rendering services to eradicate the scourge of GBV. The CSOs are a critical stakeholder as an extended arm of government in the implementation of government interventions. We have ensured that most of the organisations

funded are involved in lobbying and advocacy which will also ensure maximum awareness of the rights of women, children and LGBTQI persons in our communities," said Mrs Thamo Mzobe - the NDA Chief Executive Officer.

In January 2020, the NDA called for proposals from NPOs who work in the sector. The NDA received 525 applications of which 312 were recommended for funding nationally. Of the 312 NPOs, 75 are emerging NPOs and 237 are established. The emerging NPOs will receive R200 000 and the established NPOs R300 000 each.

A total of 25 CSOs in Kwa-Zulu Natal have been funded through the R7.1 Million. The Department of Social Development will continue to focus on the Top 30 hot spots for GBV as pronounced by President Ramaphosa in his address to the nation in August 2020. The following areas have been identified in Kwa-Zulu Natal - Osizweni, Kwa-Mashu and Ntuzuma.



THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY INVESTS R7.1 MILLION TOWARDS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN KWA-ZULU NATAL

WELL-BEING AND HEALTH, A CHALLENGE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

BY: EVANS MOLIMI

Community members of Ukhahlamba in the province of KwaZulu-Natal came in their numbers to access a basket of free services rendered by the Pink Drive in partnership with the Department of Social Development.

The objective of this partnership is to create awareness on the effects of cancer for all genders by providing education and rendering cancer screening and other health related services.

The drive delivers integrated services in poor communities across the country to their doorsteps.

According to 49-year-old Mr Lethukuthula Kwesa, most men are afraid to know their health status as compared to their female counterpart especially in rural areas.

"It is worrying to see how most men are not interested in knowing their health status especially cancer. Most men lose their lives through cancer without knowing. I have learned a lot today. I am going to launch men's forum in our area with the aim to encourage men to be observant on their health encounters. Almost 80 percent of households are fatherless. I think it is because men die without even knowing status of their wellbeing," Kwesa said.

Furthermore, Kwesa said community members need to be empowered with knowledge

because cancer is like a bullet that can hit anyone.

"I am happy to see service delivery on my doorstep. I hope this will encourage all community members especially men to visit Community Health Centres to do health check-ups and screening. Even though we know men and Doctors do not mix, but they must be encouraged for their health benefits," he said.

While there are different kinds of cancer, Deputy Minister Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu said cancer bears several negative challenges for one's physical, psychological and emotional behaviour.

"One on the negative impact of cancer, it spoils one's ability to address bedroom politics. Cancer impacts negatively on one's behaviour and it can lead to Gender-Based Violence. Bogopane-Zulu said.

During the drive Deputy Minister Bogopane-Zulu encouraged men to also screen for breast cancer because according to research conducted, 1 percent of men in South Africa have cancer.

Pink Drive is a Non-Profit Organisation which brings health related education and cancer screening services, care and support by reaching out to poor communities.

The drive includes a basket of free services to be rendered on the day, include education on women's health, pap smears for cervical cancer, clinical self-breast examinations, mammograms and PSA screening for men over the age of 40.



www.dsd.gov.za

BY: EVANS MOLIMI

In a tiny rural community of EmaDungeni in the heart of Kwa-Zulu Natal, fourteen young women are lovingly aiming to restore cultural dignity of their community by fighting high rate of teenage pregnancy, Gender-Based Violence and substance abuse.

Thabile Chiliza (27) has always loved seeing people chasing their dream than destroying them.

With a little research, she recruited fourteen young women in her area to fight high rate of social ills in their community. But this led to these young women registering a Non-Profit Organization (NPO), Ikusasa Lethu women's Project.

Most young people have thought would be a quite interesting in spoiling themselves by engaging in sexual activities and substance abuse. But Thabile and her peers knew they could be the breath of new life, and introduction of their NPO will assist in fighting social ills that are taking young people's potential backward.

The NPO may be in a deep rural area in the middle of sugar cane and forestry plantation, but the organization aims to restore the rights and dignity of young people.

Thabile said growing up in this area with less opportunities

With a little research, she recruited fourteen young women in her area to fight high rate of social ills in their community.



IKUSASA LETHU WOMEN'S PROJECT AIMS TO TRANSFORM EMADUNGENI VILLAGE

gave her courage to champion change to inspire young people to chase their dream and reach for gold.

"we are also working toward creating an awareness to engage teenagers about the dangers

associated with substance abuse and early sexual debut at our schools. Our dream is to create our destiny to change the way young people think," she said

Furthermore, Thabile said it is important and courageous to see teenager putting their mind in what they want to achieve to be the ambassadors of change since there is nothing imposable in life.

"we are going to encourage young people especially girls to be the change they want in life. We are going to support and educate them to be independent. I have realized that young girls enter into early marriages because they think they will get protection and provision of money by older men. This perception needs to change, women need the independency," Thabile said.

The lockdown has brought challenges and opportunities for Thabile. She managed to recruit young women so they can register their NPO. However, she used the little time she got during the COVID-19 lockdown to assess the challenges facing her community.

"The most common challenges in are area are teenage pregnancy, GBV, unemployment, social crimes, alcohol and drug abuse which young people indulge in these activities," she concluded.

DESTITUTE FAMILIES RECEIVE FOOD RELIEF FROM MEC MOILOA



BY: OBUSITŠWE T. KEBONÈILWE

The Department of Social Development has given about 28 households in Kgetleng Rivier local municipality food parcels and personal protective equipment (PPEs) to fight hunger, while keeping the spread of COVID 19 at bay.

Most of the households that were identified depend on odd jobs from the farms in Swaaruggens had faced hardships and hunger that was exacerbated by national lockdown.

Leading a door-to-door expedition at Borolelo, Reagile and near Swaaruggens, Boitumelo Moiloa - MEC for Social Development in the North West, noted that the Coronavirus pandemic has added an extra load on food security of many families who had to balance between making a living and observing lockdown restrictions.

As a caring government Moiloa, said the Department would do

everything within the law to assist affected families. "We share your frustrations and we will intervene in your plight. We understand that we might not cater for everyone, but being there for those who need food relief the most is a great relief to us."

Mapula Mophuthing, a resident of Reagile, was overjoyed to receive food relief from MEC Moiloa. Mophuthing and her husband stay in a dilapidated shack with their two children. They earn a living by recycling bottles and other recyclable materials. She said since the lockdown began, their lives had been difficult. "We had to ask for food from neighbours. We welcome this food parcel. We will make sure that we are not wasteful so that it will last longer," she said.

Part of the activities of the day took MEC Moiloa to Early Childhood Development centres at Mazista Settlement and

Derby to donate PPEs. The ECD practitioners told Moiloa that lockdown has caused them to lose their income.

"Parents stopped paying fees for their children as soon as the lockdown began. It has been difficult to pay electricity bills and our staff. We have learnt the hard way during this period. We will take the lessons into the future whereby we should be ready in case disaster strikes, there would be something to fall back on," Manager of Kopano Early Learning Centre at Mazista - Lindiwe Katake Kopano said.

"With these PPEs, we hope we will put the mind of parents at ease. Many parents were reluctant and afraid to release their children to us," added Moiloa as she handed sanitisers to the ECD. Moiloa expressed satisfaction at the precautionary measures and adherence to COVID-19 protocols at the centre.

YOUNG WOMEN MUST SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE SCOURGE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

BY: NGOBE COMFORT

As long as society views female counterparts as less important than their male counterparts, winning the war against violence against women and children will be a daunting task for government.

These were the views expressed by girls and young women between the ages of 14 and 22 from Mpumalanga during a Girls Assembly which was organised by the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Social Development at the Ingwenyama Conference and Sports Facilities.

An anonymous caller who wanted to be known as 'Good Enough' from Scheomansdaal in Mpumalanga spoke about her tormenting experience when both she and her friend were attacked

and raped. She attempted to commit suicide after the incident.

She said she blamed herself for the attack and began to live with anger. She then realised that it was not her fault, that the fault was with those who attacked her and today she is the survivor who offers counselling to those who may be in her situation.

"What makes me happy now is that the current government has made programs and facilities available where issues of Gender-Based Violence are addressed in a confidential and dignified manner which assists in the healing process," she says.

Social Development MEC in

Mpumalanga Ms Thandi Shongwe assured young women that the Government has put Gender-Based Violence as a priority. "As Government, we will continue to attend court cases in solidarity with those who have been victimised and offer the necessary support. We want to send a clear message that there is no mercy for those who abuse, kill, rape and abduct women in our province," she said.

MEC Shongwe concluded by urging women to refrain from withdrawing Gender Based Violence cases as this derails the government's effort in successfully prosecuting and sentencing perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence in the country.





DSD LAUNCHES VILLAGE TO VILLAGE TO IMPROVE RURAL ECONOMY

BY: EVANS MOLIMI

The launch of the village to village initiative aims to improve the rural economy and inspire traditional leaders to enthusiastically respond to Gender-Based Violence and the high number of new HIV/AIDS infection in rural areas. The Driefontein Tribal Council of Ladysmith in KwaZulu Natal is one of many tribal authorities in the country faced with a high rate of unemployment, GBV, teenage pregnancy, new HIV/AIDS infections and poverty in the country.

This is a commitment made in 2018 between the Department of Social Development and the National House of Traditional Leaders to improve the lives of people living under the rule of tribal authority.

Deputy Minister Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu encouraged the traditional leaders of Khumalo Tribal Office to mobilize community

members to form cooperatives and Non-Profit Organizations because it is their command to improve the lives of ordinary citizens.

However, community members were encouraged to be part of the commitment of social and behavioural change to fight poverty in their respective areas. Bogopane-Zulu said that the time is now for government and traditional leaders to be relevant to assist community members in forming cooperatives that shall contest to contribute to mainstream economy.

"The reality is that the village to village initiative shall contest poverty between community members to fight poverty side by side. Social Development aims to change the lives of poor people for good, but not by only providing social grants," Deputy Minister said.

According to Deputy Minister, tribal offices are the most important support of local government because they are the ones who know the difficulties and challenges facing ordinary individuals.

"The aim is to help the helpless to improve their lives on their own. I am overwhelmed and at the same time excited that this is such a big milestone for communities under tribal offices that their lives are about to change for the better through the village to village initiative. It is such a righteousness thing to do to change the lives of poor people through this initiative and beyond," Bogopane-Zulu explained.

On the day of the launch, fifty vulnerable community members who were left without any form of income as a result of lockdown regulations were given food parcels.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FUNDS CAPE TOWN SOCIETY OF THE BLIND CLINIC FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS

BY: LESEGO RANCHU

In line with best practice and in keeping abreast of technological advancements, the Cape Town Society of the Blind (CTSB) this week opened a Low Vision Clinic at their premises in Salt River, Cape Town.

Visually impaired persons will be able to visit the clinic to see an optometrist who will diagnose their needs and direct them to the rehabilitation team to assist the client with devices that will make their daily living more comfortable.

The National Development Agency (NDA) is one of the clinic's four funders, the others being The Jannie Mouton, Nussbaum and Cohen Family Foundations. The NDA has contributed R558 748, 03 for staff training, furniture, assistive sensory and visual devices including playing and learning equipment.

Persons with low vision need to have specialised assessment and rehabilitation which cannot be done by a regular optometrist. Due to the dire shortage of low vision assessment services, patients often need to wait up to a year before they receive treatment with

the result that their quality of life is affected as their eyesight continues to deteriorate. This is especially detrimental to young children and scholars who miss out on critical learning opportunities due to their limited vision.

"In line with our development approach towards the services rendered to the disability sector, NDA responded to the CTSBs application for additional funding after they had independently raised



half of the funds required to open the low vision clinic.

This brings about a strong partnership that attends to the visual and sensory needs of the elderly, young children and other vulnerable persons in less advantaged communities.

The equipment we have assisted with goes a long way towards interventions linked to the specialised assessment, restoration of sight and blindness prevention strategies," says Mrs Thamo Mzobe, Chief Executive Officer of NDA.

CTSB has a long history of providing successful programmes for the blind and is in the best position to extend its services to those with low vision as well. Over the past year, CTSB has actively engaged in fundraising efforts to secure the necessary finances to open this low vision clinic.

"I believe that this clinic could significantly improve the employability of thousands of South Africans suffering from low vision. With timely low vision intervention, assessment and rehabilitation we plan to equip low vision students to cope and excel in a sighted world. The good news is that correct low vision care will mitigate or alleviate the effects of low vision and can arrest the slide into premature blindness. We are excited and proud that the NDA shares this vision and have helped us bring it to fruition," says Lizelle De Wet, CTSB Chief Executive Officer.

Cape Town Society for the Blind is a Cape Town based NGO established in 1929 to address the needs of blind and visually impaired persons. The organisation has grown from humble beginnings to a fully-fledged campus housing a training facility, workshops, a showroom and a small coffee shop. Courses range from computer classes and braille to cane weaving. Their vision is to ensure that blind and visually impaired persons contribute to society and are independent.

This partnership is a direct intervention outcome by the Deputy Minister of Social Development, Ms Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, after engagements with the Cape Town Society of the Blind.

The vision is to ensure that blind and visually impaired persons contribute to society and are independent.



PRIORITISING NEEDS OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

BY: ESTHER LEWIS



Protecting and promoting the rights of women with disabilities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has taken centre stage in the Western Cape.

The Western Cape Disability Desk hosted a webinar on 30 September to bring together DPOs, government officials across departments, experts on disability inclusive practices, and civil society to share knowledge about how to address the disability-gender barriers, and ultimately ensure the effective disability mainstreaming.

"We must ensure that persons with disabilities are part of the discussion and decisions that impact on their lives, not merely a footnote. Inclusion means

participation," said Disability Desk Manager, Ms Nomvuyo Mabusela.

By affording persons with disabilities and ultimately service users a platform to discuss their needs together with strategies and solutions to respond to them, the entire sector is better equipped to align the theory of interventions with the lived experiences of women with disabilities.

"We need to focus on solutions and interventions that best meet the needs of women with disabilities on the ground," said Ms Mabusela.

Western Cape Social Development MEC, Ms Sharna Fernandez, said that it became apparent across all programmes

(both the provincial Department of Social Development and Government as a whole) that the specific outcomes and goals we are striving to achieve, simply cannot be accomplished without addressing the needs, concerns, and priorities of women with disabilities.

"We are mindful that inclusivity needs to be at the centre of all the work being undertaken by Government. In saying this, we are working to create further awareness about women with disabilities, including physical, sensory, intellectual, or psycho-social impairments, in all of our work, similarly to the way that we approach gender, race, and LGBTQIA+ identities," said MEC Fernandez.

dream house WITH MISSION TO BENEFIT VISUALLY IMPAIRED

BY: EVANS MOLIMI

In response to compliance with the alert level 1 COVID-19 regulation to ensure compliance with prevention and control measures to curb the spread of corona virus, the Deputy Minister of Social Development Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu conducted compliance assessment visits at Dream House Workshop in Silverton.

The assessment visits by the Deputy Minister was part of monitoring compliance with all appropriate legislative requirements for the workshop because they employ persons with disabilities.

The reason for the assessment visit was to ensure the safety of workers since the Department of Social Development is the guardian of persons living with disabilities. Father of two girls, Molefe Senyane, living with albinism said the assessment visit by the Social Development Deputy Minister is important to them as it shows that the government really cares for their safety at work.

"The COVID-19 assessment visit is more important to us. I have always said to my colleagues that we need to adhere to the regulations at the

workplace and at home. it is all our responsibility to complying with COVID-19 regulations. This is for our own safety and well-being," Senyane said. He further stated that the COVID-19 lockdown has hit hard on their pockets and it was a really difficult and challenging time for the employees.

"It is really a distressing time. We are the disadvantaged members of the community due to our disabilities. We rely on social grants to put food on the table. The Dream House has created financial stability for those of us living with disabilities.

My vision is to see more companies like Dream House who are able to empower more people living with disabilities," he said. Dream House is a section 21 company with a reputation of employing persons with disabilities.

Seventy percent of all employees are persons living with disabilities with the majority of them being visually impaired.

The company's core business is packaging, vacuum forming, assembling, manufacturing, and exporting stick fertilizers to the international market.



The Limpopo Province has recently experienced a wave of attacks on women and children as well as various cases of femicide.

Social workers of the Department of Social Development in Limpopo, rendered psychosocial support to the families and other parties affected by the trauma.

A number the relatives and friends of women killed either by unknown attackers or by their own partners, were also visited by MEC Nkakareng Rakgoale in order to highlight the plight of women and to assure the families that government cares.

She was also present in court when the perpetrators of GBVF were applying for bail, with a stern message that these criminals should not be released on bail.

MEC Rakgoale's visits included attending the bail application of a local councilor accused of raping a minor and the family of a woman whose husband burned himself and his children alive in their house in Mopani District, as well as two cases wherein women were murdered.



CALLS FOR COMMUNITIES TO WORK WITH GOVERNMENT IS SECURING STATE ASSETS

BY: VUKANI MBHELE

It is becoming urgent that communities should work with the government to address the problem of crime in KwaZulu-Natal which is beginning to affect service delivery.

This follows a series of hijackings of government vehicles, particularly in KwaDambuza, and Pietermaritzburg, in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands.

The incidents have led to the Department having to close down its offices, while a permanent solution is found. Over the weekend, a social worker injured his arm and rushed to hospital. This week another social worker was hijacked on Edendale road while en route to work in Umkhanyakude District.

Reacting to the hijacking, KwaZulu-Natal Social Development MEC, Mrs Nonhlanhla Khoza said:

"We have been losing a lot of state vehicles, with our employees assaulted and even shot. These acts of criminals have a negative bearing on the work we do as a Department on a daily basis. While the circumstances surrounding these

incidents differ, our employees are being followed at all times."

The surge in levels of criminality will hit the vulnerable and the poor, who are major beneficiaries of the Department's services the hardest. Khoza said the Department could

It is imperative to see our communities also playing their role in exposing these criminals.

no longer continue to risk the lives of its employees. The Departmental employees are being victimised by crime across the province, said Khoza.

"We have seen the trends of hijackings of our vehicles across

the districts and our employees are being targeted when responding to the plight of the people. We are lucky that we have not lost lives in these incidents. The extent of these brutal hijackings of Departmental vehicles demoralises our employees," she said.

"The syndicate hijacking state vehicles sets us backwards in ensuring that services reach the people we serve on time.

"It is imperative to see our communities also playing their role in exposing these criminals. The hijackers are people that are known in our communities, hence we strongly believe that they should share information with the law enforcement agencies so that these criminals can be brought to book," she said.

MEC Khoza said she will be having a bilateral with her counterpart, Transport, Community Safety and Liaison MEC - Mr Bheki Ntuli and police management to get updates on cases reported.

BEREAVED FAMILIES FINDS SUPPORT





UPDATE ON THE ABSORPTION OF SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOSTER CARE RULING

BY: STAFF REPORTER

Findings by the Department of Social Development note that the increase in cases of social ills in the country have led to a higher demand for social services. This inevitably means that more social workers need to be employed.

Recent statistics state that there are currently **9 284** unemployed social work graduates - some of whom were beneficiaries of the Department of Social Development scholarship programme and others who are self-funded.

The National Development Plan calls for the employment of **55 000** social-service professionals by 2030. Last month, the Portfolio Committee called for the swift implementation of the 2018 Cabinet decision on the absorption of social work graduates into the Social Development system.

Provinces will continue to develop and implement province-specific plans based on the provincial

needs guided by the national recommended ratio of one social worker per population and with rural and urban considerations being taken into cognisance.

Provinces are mandated to reprioritise the employment of social workers within the current allocations.

The Department has engaged sister departments in this regard and will continue to do so. The intersectoral structure will also be strengthened to serve as a platform for continued monitoring of progress in this regard.

The Department further briefed the Portfolio Committee on the progress made in finalising foster care cases as stipulated by the North Gauteng High Court Order which was issued on 26 November 2019.

The court order requires Minister Lindiwe Zulu to request Parliament to expedite the process of tabling

amendments to the Children's Act whilst interim measures are put in place for the management of outstanding foster care cases. The interim solution will ensure that no child is left outside the social assistance system - especially from the foster child grant. All foster care orders to be valid until 26 November 2020.

The Minister of Social Development has made significant progress in complying with the North Gauteng High Court Order in terms of introducing before Parliament amended legislation to produce a comprehensive legal solution in respect of the foster care system.

The Minister tabled the Children's Amendment and Social Assistance Bills in Parliament. The Children's Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament on 31 August 2020 while the Social Assistance Bill was adopted by the NCOP on 14 October 2020.

GTAC: CHANGE AGENTS

As part of the launch of the Department of Social Development Programme and Organisational Culture, Design and Review Process facilitated by GTAC, Change Champions were appointed from each branch to assist with addressing any queries or to escalate these queries to the Projects Steerco. Suggestion boxes were placed within strategic locations in order for staff to share their views on any aspect of the project, questions or any concerns.

The Change Champions are:

Ms Hlubikazi Mntuyedwa	Mr Matlhomola Mmolai	Mr Bathembu Futshane	Ms Christina Mamatlepa	Mr Poso Makhado	Ms Patricia Mokwala
Mr Siduduzo Ngcobo	Ms Kemedi Kgaphola	Mr Fikile Faltein	Dr Tebogo Mabe	Mr Sizwe Nana	Ms Zaza Tlathledi

We will be profiling two agents in each edition of DSD News in order for staff to be familiar with the colleagues.

SIDUDUZO



Siduduzo Ngcobo is the Branch Coordinator for Strategy and Organisational Transformation at the National Department of Social Development.

This family man describes himself as being keen on taking up a challenge. "I am a very ethical person who is driven by morals and honesty.

My purpose in life is to bring positive change in the lives of those who are less fortunate. As a Change Agent, I see myself contributing to the new ways of doing things in the Department. This includes bringing to life a culture of evidence-based planning, a culture of accountability and a culture of effective communication."

Contact: 0664809592 / siduduzon@dsd.gov.za

PATRICIA



Patricia Mokwala is an Assistant Director: Sustainable Livelihoods under the Chief Directorate Community Development. Patricia describes herself as a strong and fearless woman, a wife and a mother.

"I am passionate about development especially when the community is involved. For me Community Development is a calling. My purpose is to fulfill my dreams in life by continuing to work hard while I am making a difference in other people's

lives. I believe in #ProjectChange! and I am committed to its objectives. I think that in order to achieve the objectives of government, we, as a department, have to work together to serve the citizens of South Africa better. These changes will impact on all of us. If you are feeling uncertain about the future for you and your family and would like to ask any questions, I can support you during this time of rapid change."

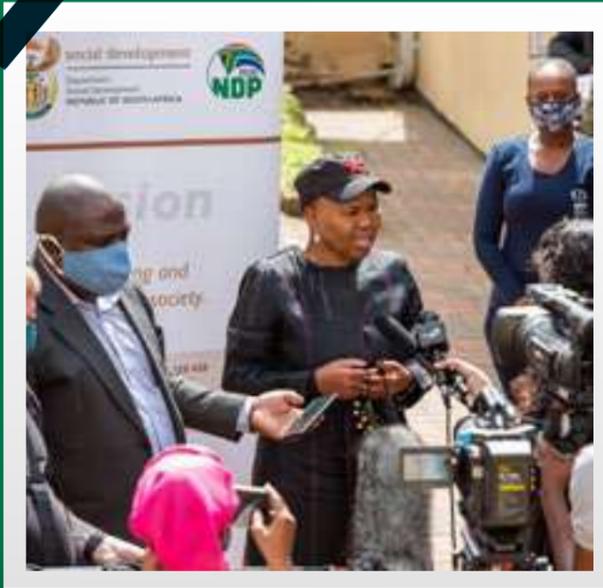
Contact: 082 2174020 / patricamo@dsd.gov.za

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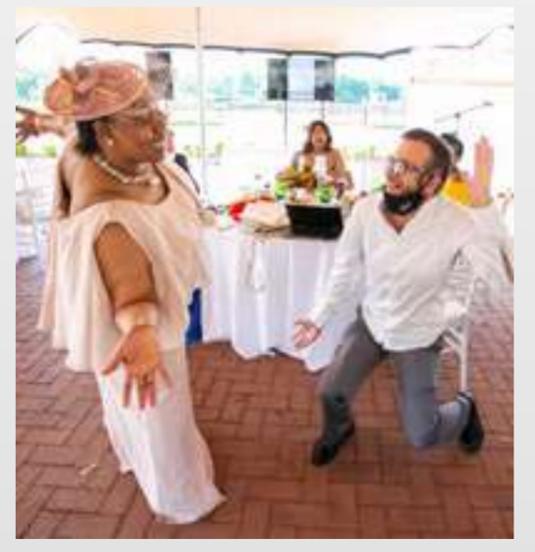
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INTERVENTIONS BREATHING HOPE AND LIFE BACK IN THE “VILLAGE OF DEATH”

BY: LUVUYO NDARANA

Over ten years ago, little was known about Tholeni Village, except that it was another sparse settlement on the outskirts of the once industrial town of Butterworth, in the Eastern Cape.

It took the savagery of an obscured serial killer that the tiny village made headlines across the world. The killer preyed on vulnerable women and children – targeting homes where there was no man. It was a tragedy that shook the very core foundations of village life. Now, the Social Development Department, together with various stakeholders, is working tirelessly in the reconstruction of Tholeni. It is certainly a tall order.

The gravity of the killings was burdensome and became a psychological scar that lasted for years thereafter. Heavily affected were families who survived by escaping from the clutches of

the monster. The Department implemented several initiatives to return the village to tranquility, freedom and hope.

Initial interventions were based on psycho-social support to the depressed families and villagers. This was followed by a giant memorial stone erected at the main entrance to the village in remembrance of the fallen.

The reconstruction work continued with the establishment of the Phumalanga Community Nutrition Development Centre (CNDC) in 2016. The centres are an integrated response to immediate hunger, food insecurity, skills development and job creation.

Phumalanga has created employment for four women, administered by Nolucky Mandondo. Every midday the centre

provides food to 120 beneficiaries from Monday to Friday.

On a recent visit to the Phumalanga CNDC, beneficiaries were all lined up in anticipation of a scrumptious lunch – while also observing COVID-19 restrictions. Witness Mandondo who is 80-years-old, is the deputy chairperson of the center. He says the big strides made by the Social Development Department in reversing immediate hunger have been phenomenal. Even though some cannot make it to the CNDC everyday and have to be sent foodpacks at homes, there is a big difference made by this center.

The structure of the Phumalanga CNDC, donated by the Social Development Department, is a durable prefabricated edifice. The employed chefs receive a R3000 stipend.

The brute violence that was once an ever present feature at Tholeni had left irreparable damage. This prompted the establishment of Tholeni – with the reinforcement from the Department. Tholeni WDCH started operating in 2012 as a victim community center. It provides support to the victims of gender-based violence, rape, drug addiction and other social ills. During the serial killer’s reign of terror, village women would congregate at nightfall in the tiny structure that is the White Door Centre of Hope forming a miniature defence army against any attack.

There is always a systematic correlation between a recovery of a bruised society and improvement of their living conditions. Patently, the interventions of the Social Development Department and its partners at Tholeni have gone a long way in transforming the village into a model settlement with the hope of ultimately creating a Village of Hope.

