

# DSD NEWS

FEBRUARY EDITION



## STATE OF OUR NATION

Building a Caring Society. Together.

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social development

Department:  
Social Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# CONTENTS

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Editor's Note   | 3     |
| From the Desk of the President                                | 4-5   |
| Budget Speech Infographic                                     | 6-7   |
| Minister's Message  | 8     |
| Message from Deputy Minister Hendrietta Ipeleng Bogopane-Zulu | 9     |
| From The Acting DG  | 10-11 |
| SASCCP Guidelines   | 12    |
| MEC Shongwe Welcomes New Head of Social Development           | 13    |
| Life on a Tightrope   | 14    |
| NDA: Saartie Baartman   | 15    |
| FS: Men against GBV   | 16    |
| WC: Treatment Centre  | 17    |
| Beauty Salon  | 18-19 |
| NC: Laptops   | 20    |
| KZN: Food Relief Community Care Centres                       | 21    |
| Tsakane School Uniform Cooperative Hard at Work               | 22-23 |
| LP: MEC Nkakareng Rakgoale Gives Back                         | 24-25 |
| GP: School Uniform Handed Out                                 | 26    |
| NC: School Uniform  | 27    |
| Minister Zulu Says Enough is Enough                           | 28    |
| NW: Victims of Floods Assisted                                | 29    |
| KZN Food Relief   | 30-31 |
| A Gogo's Plea   | 32-33 |
| EC: Gogo's Get Gifts  | 34-35 |
| EHW: Employee Health and Wellness                             | 36-37 |
| Victor Seshoka Nominated Amongst Government Greats            | 38    |
| Working Together For a Hunger and Malnutrition-Free Society   | 39    |
| DSD in Pictures   | 40-45 |

# EDITOR'S NOTE

By Lumka Oliphant

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the February edition of the DSD News where we share the information on the work of the DSD sector.

This edition comes at a time when the country budget was tabled before Parliament by the Minister of Finance, Mr Tito Mboweni.

In this edition, we give you a window on the national budget for the DSD sector. A special mention on Early Childhood Development and the Government's commitment in investing in children.

We bring you different stories of how the Provincial Departments of Social Development and its entities have been hard at work changing the lives of South Africans.

We show you how the sector has been able to deliver services and support cooperatives even as the country faces the COVID-19 pandemic. We speak to a beneficiary of the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant of R350 and how it has gone a long way in supporting those who are unemployed. To us, who are employed, R350 may look like it is nothing but it is everything to those who have no income support.

The Minister visited the Western Cape as part of her pre-SONA activities and visited older persons in Bishop Lavis where she listened to their issues.

The Minister also interacted with the National Development Agency's volunteers and handed a substantial amount of support to the Manhi Gingi Trust in Cape Town.

We hope you enjoy yet another informative edition of our sector newsletter.





## — FROM THE DESK OF — THE PRESIDENT

**STAY  
SAFE**

**PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA**

**TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS**

# DEAR FELLOW SOUTH AFRICANS

Yesterday, as Commander-In-Chief of our country's armed forces, I officiated at the annual celebration of Armed Forces Day at the Castle in Cape Town. This important event is held each year on the anniversary of the sinking of the SS Mendi in 1917, in which more than 600 black South African soldiers and 30 crew lost their lives.

**Many South Africans endured great pain and hardship, and many lost their lives, so that we could live in a democracy where all may enjoy equal rights.**

On Armed Forces Day, we remember the men and women who have lost their lives in the service of our nation. We are also reminded on this day of the responsibility that the defence force has to protect our democracy.

The Constitution asserts that the primary objective of the defence force is to defend the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution.

While the defence force is the only lawful military force in the country, the responsibility to defend our democracy and uphold our Constitution rests with each one of us.

Our democratic Constitution is the product of years of sacrifice and struggle. Many South Africans endured great pain and hardship, and many lost their lives, so that we could live in a democracy where all may enjoy equal rights.

**The values, principles and rights contained in the Constitution are neither trivial, nor abstract. They directly affect the daily lives of millions of people, preventing the arbitrary use of power, providing protection to the vulnerable, and advancing the access of all people to shelter, water, health care, education and social support.**

The Constitution is also vital to maintaining a system of checks and balances to prevent the abuse and concentration of power to the detriment of the people. The three arms of the

state – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary – each have a role to play in ensuring accountability and adherence to the rule of law.

Without these checks and balances, without each arm of the state fulfilling its responsibility, without adherence to the Constitution, our democracy is vulnerable and worthless.

We should therefore be concerned when those who occupy prominent positions in society make statements that demonstrate a disdain for the basic principles of our Constitution and the institutions established to defend our democracy.

Of particular concern are recent utterances directed at the judiciary, in which some judges are accused, without any evidence, of pursuing interests other than the cause of justice. Judges have been accused of political agendas and some have even been accused of accepting bribes.

Such claims are deeply disturbing, for at least two reasons.

Firstly, if such claims were true, it would mean that there are some within the judiciary who are failing to uphold the values and principles with which they have been entrusted.

Fortunately, our Constitution makes provision for such a possibility. The National Assembly is empowered to remove judges who are found by the Judicial Service Commission to be guilty

of gross misconduct. The Judicial Service Commission is a carefully constituted body, which includes representatives from the judiciary but also the legal profession, academia and Parliament. There are clear processes established in law to deal with allegations of misconduct against members of the judiciary.

Anyone who has evidence of any wrongdoing by any judge should make use of the avenues provided in our Constitution and in our law to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

The claims that have been made against the judiciary are disturbing for another reason.

Without the presentation of evidence to support these claims, and unless referred to the relevant authorities, all that such allegations do is to undermine the judiciary and the important function that it performs in our democracy.

Of course, South Africa is a free country, with a Constitution that guarantees freedom of expression and opinion. However, when some in positions of responsibility choose to use those freedoms to undermine our Constitutional order, they should be reminded of the possible consequences of their utterances.

One of these possible consequences is the erosion of trust in the judiciary and our Constitutional order.

As former Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo

said in an address in 2010:

*"[W]ithout public confidence in the ability of the courts to dispense justice, there can be no faith in the rule of law. Without faith in the rule of law, valuable relationships of trust within society begin to break down."*

**Our failure to implement our courts' injunctions weakens our Constitutional democracy.**

*"Citizens can no longer be assured that their rights will be respected. Businesses can no longer be assured that their contracts will be honored. Victims of crime can no longer be assured that justice will be served in court. Public confidence is therefore vital."*

*"That is why courts must not only be independent and effective; they must be seen to be independent and effective."*

**We should therefore not take attacks on the judiciary lightly. Such attacks shake the very foundations of our constitutional democracy.** Unless supported by evidence, such claims undermine confidence in our courts, and weaken our Constitutional order.

In all our actions, we need to take heed of Section 165(3) of the Constitution, which says: "No person or organ of state may interfere with the functioning of the courts."

We interfere with the functioning of our courts and weaken the rule of law when we attack the judiciary. Our failure to implement our courts' injunctions weakens our Constitutional democracy.

The soldiers who we honoured yesterday during Armed Forces Day have taken an oath to dedicate their lives to protect our democracy. Like them, we all have a responsibility to defend the Constitution upon which our democracy is founded.

We have a responsibility to the generations of our forebears, many of whom gave their lives so that we may have a democratic Constitution.

We have a responsibility to the millions of South Africans who look to the Constitution for protection and relief.

And we have a responsibility to future generations who will look to this Constitution as the foundation of a stable, peaceful and just nation.

With best regards,

*Cyril Ramaphosa*

# BUDGET SPEECH 2021

## GOOD NEWS FOR GRANTS!

**R3.5**  
billion

to improve access  
to early childhood  
development  
services.

**R6.3**  
billion

for extended  
Covid-19 Social  
Relief of Distress  
grant until the end  
of April 2021.

**R678.3**  
million

to continue rolling  
out free sanitary  
products for learners  
from low-income  
households.

**Regular social assistance grants adjusted as follows...**

**↑ R30**  
increase

**R1890**

for the old  
age, disability  
and care  
dependency  
grants

**↑ R30**  
increase

**R1910**

in the war  
veterans grant

**↑ R10**  
increase

**R460**

in the child  
support grant

**↑ R10**  
increase

**R1050**

for the foster  
care grant



**Provinces will receive R3.5 billion to  
improve access to early childhood  
development services.**





# MESSAGE FROM MINISTER **LINDIWE ZULU**

**We welcomed President Cyril Ramaphosa's extension of the Special R350 COVID-19 Grant, by a further three months.**

Dear DSD Family,

Earlier this month, in a build up to the State of the Nation Address, we visited the Mhani Gingi Entrepreneurial Network, based at the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children in Manenberg, Western Cape. The non-profit organisation (NPO) works towards economic empowerment and freedom for women and youth, as vulnerable groups in society, by providing entrepreneurial skills to enable them to create sustainable livelihoods for themselves. Together with the National Development Agency (NDA), we handed over funds to enable them to continue with their sterling efforts to uplift the local community. During my visit, I encouraged communities to create their own food gardens as the global COVID-19 pandemic threatens food security especially in vulnerable communities.

**We also undertook a monitoring and compliance visit to the two Sassa offices, in Bellville and Paarl to monitor the progress made on the implementation of the SASSA Ten-Point Service Delivery Improvement Plan. There has been a significant improvement in the queue management system with the deployment of additional staff and volunteers.**

To date, Sassa has paid more than 9, 6 million applications ? each month from May 2020 to January 2021 and has paid more than 6,5 million grants per month. The total amount spent on this grant to date has exceeded R16 billion. The Government's social assistance programme has provided the much-needed cushion in the form of socio-economic relief measures which include social grants.

The DSD Portfolio remains at the forefront of Government's response to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with specific focus on the most vulnerable- children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. The pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of these groups.

I encourage you to keep fighting the good fight for the country's most vulnerable and be grateful for your service.

Thank you and Stay Safe.

Minister Lindiwe Zulu

## DEPUTY MINISTER'S MESSAGE **HENDRIETTA BOGOPANE-ZULU**



### NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE

In 2020, I embarked on a journey of assessments of Community Care Centres in the three provinces where the buildings were erected with the financial assistance of the German state owned bank KfW.

As you know Community Care Centres are built with the financial support from KfW to the tune of over Nine Million Euros, there are 17 Community Care Centres that are at various phases of construction in three provinces, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West.

The Community Care Centres provide psychosocial care and support services and skills development to orphans and vulnerable children, including child-headed households and youth.

The purpose of these visits is to assess whether the NPOs operating in these structures were still providing services that they are meant to, to the communities in which they operate.

I have visited Community Care Centres in all the three provinces where they are built. Upon the assessment visits I saw that there are incredible ordinary South Africans who

are making real change in people's lives, driven by the passion of helping those in need. And for that they need to be commended for the incredible work they are doing.

As a Department, we need to be more empathetic of the NPOs that are carrying out their duties as they are mandated to. Officials that are deployed to coordinate these centres should assist these centres in understanding issues of compliance. It goes without saying, that registered NPOs must comply with the requirements of sections 16-23 of the NPO ACT.

The main requirements are to submit reports and inform the Directorate of any changes within the NPO, with the various NPOs visited these main requirements were not fulfilled. Instead of pointing fingers at these NPOs perhaps assisting them to understand these basic requirements would go a long way, after all they are serving South Africans in vulnerable rural communities.

I also had the pleasure of visiting **Tholulwazi Phakathi** NPO in Diepkloof, Soweto. I was first introduced to this NPO on 1 December 2020- World Aids Day hosted by the Deputy President David Mabuza, and it was on this day that I promised to visit the NPO where they are based.

Tholulwazi Phakathi NPO deals with adolescent and young adults who were born and living with HIV. They offer these youngsters psycho-social support and have adherence camps and a holiday programme. With the stigma we have been fighting to eradicate as a department, they encourage youngsters to adhere to their medication. And offer peer to peer counselling in building their self-esteem.

Incredible work is done by these young vibrant youngsters who have found creative ways to express themselves through art. Moreover, they are confident in what the future holds for them. Similar compliance issues were discovered here too. Surely, we can do more in educating Non Profit Organisations on these issues.

NPOs are instruments of change and play a crucial role in helping government fulfil its constitutional mandate.

*Mrs Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu  
Deputy Minister of Social Development*

# MESSAGE FROM ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

By Linton Mchunu

Once again, let me convey my heartfelt greetings to all officials within the Social Development portfolio. By now you may be all aware that in the recent State of the Nation Address (SoNA), President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the Special R350 COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant, has been extended for a period of three months.

This basically reaffirms the Government's commitment to improve the livelihoods and change in the lives of impoverished households through direct income generation which would go a long way as a poverty alleviation measure. You are therefore encouraged to spread the message to your fellow South Africans and their family members whom we know that they are in need of this crucial information.

It is also imperative that as officials you are familiar with developments within the Social Development Sector. That being said, on Wednesday, 17 February, the Department presented the Children's Amendment Bill (Bill) before the Portfolio Committee focusing mainly on adoptions. Although some of the clauses within the Bill still need to be refined, my take is that we should be on the same page about these clauses and what informs the amendments or deletions or insertions of certain sections.

The Department presented to the Portfolio Committee the proposed deletions and insertions of some of the adoptions' provisions focusing on amongst other things, the human and financial resource implications of the amendment of the Children's Act for the Department. The Department also mentioned to the Committee the implications for the private sector entrusted with provision of adoption services as well as implications associated with deleting provisions dealing with charging of fees for adoption services. This means that the deletion of the provision relating to fees does not bar the private sector from charging the fees but simply means that the issue of fees can best be governed by the professional bodies the professionals dealing with adoption services belong to or are members of.

This is in the context that the Children's Act is not the right instrument to deal with charging of fees by professionals for child protection services they render. It follows therefore that the private sector may still render adoption services in all areas as prescribed in the Children's Act wherein their services are required and charge fees as permitted by their professional bodies. It also implies that adoption services must not be treated differently from other services contemplated, as there is no reference to fees for any

other protection service in the Children's Act.

It is therefore in this context that the Department highlighted that Clause 122 is intended to delete section 249 of the Children's Act. The proposed deletion would thus assist with harmonising the provision of adoption services with all other services in the Children's Act.

It must furthermore be reiterated that the purpose of deletion of this section does not prevent lawyers, social workers and other professionals from charging fees for services they render during an adoption transaction because fees charged by professionals for rendering of services are dealt with by professional adoption bodies as indicated earlier. This therefore must not be construed as implying that the Department is proposing the deletion of section 249 of the Act in order to repeal adoption fees charged by adoption professionals.

The Amendment Bill further proposes that Clause 123 seeks to amend section 250 of the Children's Act by adding under subsection (1) (e) the provision for "a social worker in the employ of the Department or Provincial Department of Social Development who provides adoption services." This insertion adds to the list of persons who may provide adoption services. It empowers social development social workers to process the adoption transactions, which is a departure from the current

scenario where adoption is solely rendered by social workers in private practice and non-governmental organisations.

In addition, the Bill introduces Clause 124 to amend section 251 by inserting section 1A to provide for the prescribed manner in terms of which the Director-General may withdraw an accreditation to provide adoption services. This amendment is necessary to allow discretion of the Director-General to withdraw the accreditation of an adoption service provider, if the service provider is not compliant with the legal adoption and accreditation requirements.

**You are therefore expected to protect yourselves and those around you by consistent wearing of masks, sanitising, regular washing of hands with soap and maintaining social distance.**

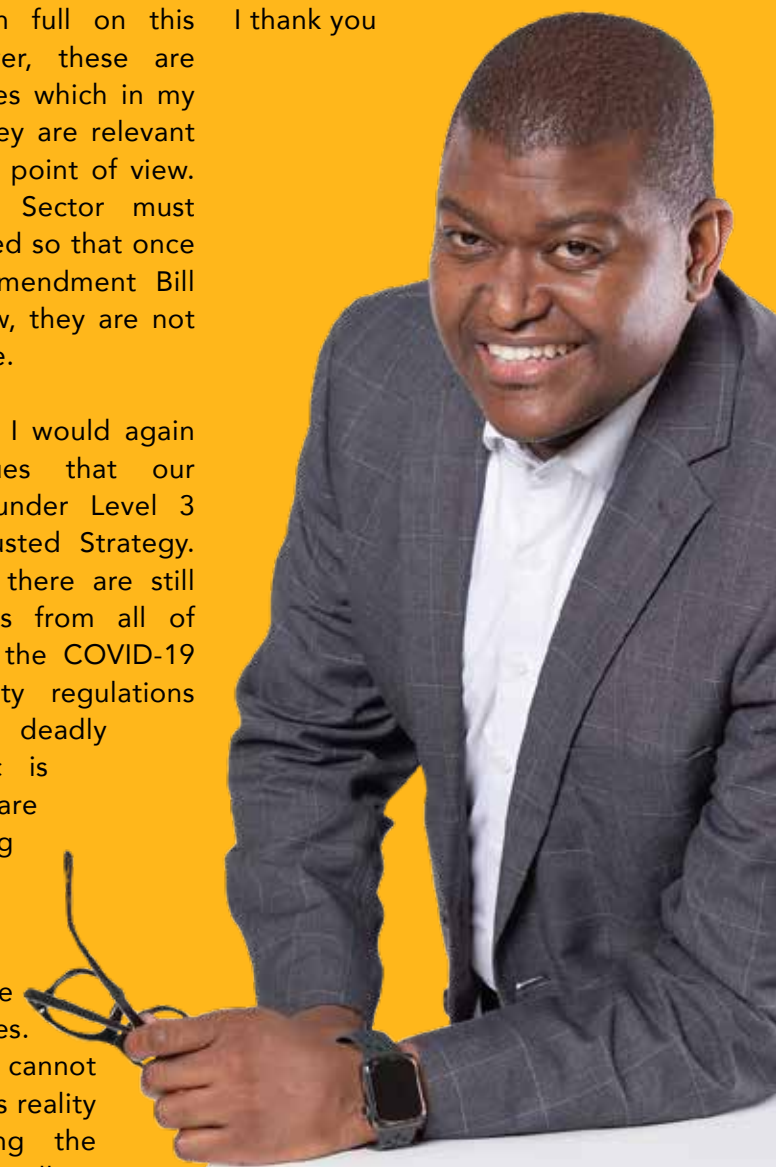
Most importantly, colleagues should be mindful of the fact that, for the sake of space, allocated on this platform, I cannot outline all affected clauses, deletions and insertions in full on this platform. However, these are some of the issues which in my view I assume they are relevant from a legislative point of view. Officials of the Sector must always be informed so that once the Children's Amendment Bill is passed into law, they are not caught by surprise.

Having said that, I would again remind colleagues that our country is still under Level 3 of the Risk Adjusted Strategy. This means that there are still high expectations from all of us to adhere to the COVID-19 health and safety regulations because this deadly global pandemic is still with us. We are still experiencing new daily Coronavirus infections and statistics of people losing their lives. As a result, we cannot shy away from this reality that even during the recent arrival and rollout of vaccines, we are not out of danger from this pandemic.

You are therefore expected to protect yourselves and those

around you by consistent wearing of masks, sanitising, regular washing of hands with soap and maintaining social distance.

I thank you





# COVID-19 - THE AFTERMATH AND THE NEW NORMAL



Registrar Langi Malamba

A few months back I reflected on the dark cloud that swooped over Mzansi and even talked about the need to work together with other essential care workers to prevent the 2nd wave from hitting us unprepared. Little did I know that the imagined reality would come a little too early and with a savagery that has never been seen nor experienced on our shores before! Social service professionals have an enormous role to play in restoring hope and sanity through unique psycho-social interventions, especially to the frontline workers in the health and/or medical settings; and those offering services to indigent recipients of relief grants e.g. where there are long queues and disregard for the COVID-19 protocols. Employers must ensure that a permissive work environment is created to maintain mental health in the workplace.

**Employers have an obligation to conduct due diligence on their employees to verify each and every practitioner's registration status.**

Together- employer and practitioner- we can move our social service professions sector forward. **Let's continue to be beacons of hope to our communities, dispel myths about COVID- 19, and shed light on the**

vaccine debates to help people on the ground to understand and appreciate the efforts of our government. WE are catalysts for CHANGE- let's spread positive energy and love in our homes and communities to quell the dark cloud of death that hovers above our heads. Continue to observe the alert level 3 protocols, act responsibly and remain safe.

On a slightly different note, practitioners must remember the importance of remaining properly licensed in line with the provisions of the SSP Act 110 of 1978, (as amended) and renew their annual subscriptions.

As practitioners may be aware, annual subscriptions are due by the 31 of March 2021. It is incumbent on practitioners to pay whether or not an invoice has been issued or received to avoid penalties and/ or deregistration. If there are outstanding fees on your profile, SACSSP finance team will duly notify you to correct the situation so that your status report is not affected. Practice cards will be issued as soon as Finance has closed the books for the end of financial year 2020/21. Please visit [www.sacssp.co.za](http://www.sacssp.co.za) for fees payable.

# MEC SHONGWE WELCOMES NEW HEAD OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MPUMALANGA

By Ngobe Comfort



**"I am glad that we have found Mr Mthweni, whose experience and qualifications are going to add value to the department. The journey of restoring confidence to the people of Mpumalanga begins with immediate effect."**

Newly appointed Head of Department of Social Development, Mr Sarel Mthweni has vowed that he is going to work around the clock to respond to the expectations of the people that rely on services rendered by the Department of Social Development and its agencies in Mpumalanga.

Speaking shortly after being introduced to the department officials by the MEC for Social Development, Blessing Thandi Shongwe, Mr Mthweni stressed the importance of working as a team and creating a conducive environment for every stakeholder that depends on services rendered by the department.

"As the Accounting Officer, my immediate task is to work with everyone to improve our financial audit outcomes, restore the confidence to those who

rely on services rendered by the department, and through hard work, collective efforts and open door policy together we will be able to turn this around.

"I am happy that I am joining a department that has capable men and women, people who understand the daunting task that the department is facing, to ensure that the vulnerable are being taken care of by social workers, social auxiliary workers and other dedicated officials within the department," said Mr Mthweni.

Mr Mthweni's sentiments were echoed by the MEC for Social Development, Blessing Thandi Shongwe, who urged officials to work with the Head of Department to ensure that the department restored confidence to the people of Mpumalanga.

"I am glad that the department has found Mr Mthweni, whose experience and qualifications are going to add value to the department. The journey of restoring confidence to the people of Mpumalanga begins with immediate effect."

"I am committed to providing the necessary support to the Accounting Officer, and I am glad that the department will achieve its mandate of helping vulnerable people, people with disabilities, children, senior citizens and youth become beneficiaries of departmental programmes," explained MEC Shongwe.

Mr Sarel Mthweni is a seasoned administrator, having served as the Accounting Officer in the Department of Human Settlement and Economic Development respectively.



# LIFE ON A TIGHTROPE

By Evans Molimi

While the country was engulfed by the Coronavirus pandemic, the South African government introduced the Social Relief of Distress special grant for the benefit of thousands of unemployed citizens who did not have any source of income to support their immediate families.

Tshepo Ledwaba relives the day he first received his first payment of the R350 social grant 9 months ago, and he is relieved it has been extended for 3 months.

Ledwaba, 30, unemployed father of two from Soshanguve township says he wishes that the government could extend the special grants until the country goes back to normality. Ledwaba said the grant helped him to buy clothes and school uniform for his two boys.

"After receiving my first grant, I made sure that I pay for clothes and uniform on lay-by. I knew very well that the grant was not permanent. It is going to be a dark period for me as we only rely on child support grants," he laments.

**"I have been surviving by changing brake pads for taxis that are operating locally. I used to take home R300 to R500 on good days. But now it's anything between R100 or R200 if I'm lucky. How am I supposed to take care of my children with that kind of money?"**

Despite the daunting journey ahead, Ledwaba is committed to ensuring that his children's needs and education come first.

Furthermore, Ledwaba says the pandemic and the lockdown regulations has dealt a blow to his brake pad replacement business.

Since the start of lockdown, Ledwaba has made R100 per day but most of the time he makes nothing, and that makes life difficult for his wife and two sons.

"It is tough for me. I have no choice. I have to wait for taxis to come and try to make a living. As you see, I only serviced two taxis, but I have to continue because I have a family to feed," said Ledwaba.

"I am not working, and I am just one of those South Africans who are affected by the pandemic and lockdown regulations. I am struggling, my brother," he said while waiting for taxis to check in for service.

# THE NDA AND MINISTER ZULU SUPPORT THE MHANI GINGI TRUST

By Lesego Ranchu

Minister Zulu, kick-started her three-day oversight visit in the Western Cape to monitor the progress and impact of National Development Agency (NDA) grants to support Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) interventions, income generation and the agency's Volunteer Programme (VP). As part of the pre-SONA oversight, Minister Zulu visited the Mhani Gingi Trust based at the Saartjie Baartman Centre in Manenberg which focuses on food security interventions among people with disabilities and abused women in the Cape Flats.

Minister Zulu handed over a cheque to the value of R337 676, 81 to

Mhani Gingi Trust which will be used to purchase soil additives (fertiliser and compost), seeds, irrigation infrastructure, three additional growing tunnels, fencing and 20 vegetable garden start up kits for abused women to start an income generating enterprise.

"The NDA's mandate is to partner with CSOs in development interventions. I am happy to be back at Mhani Gingi Trust and to see the growth that has happened. Our vision as government is to see funded programmes become sustainable and accountable for the money we have entrusted to them. The NDA has assisted with their sustainability and creating employment for abused women, however, there is room

for other stakeholders like the Department of Agriculture and others to assist the new technology innovation being used at Mhani Gingi Trust," says Minister Zulu.

Their vegetable gardens were a source of food during lockdown, as communities received food through the soup kitchens that they support. Through funding from NDA, 69 people will benefit, 27 direct and 42 indirect beneficiaries. The 20 direct beneficiaries are recruited within the Saartjie Baartman Centre and each is provided with a space saver gardening starter kit with skills training and mentoring towards an income generating enterprise after a 6-month engagement. The programme employs 7 permanent employees.

Noting the alarming increase in domestic and GBVF incidents during the lockdown, the NDA funded CSOs that provide direct prevention and support services to victims of violence. To date 23 Gender Based Violence CSOs have been funded to the tune of R2 950,000.00. The GBVF programmes are able to identify, refer and offer rehabilitation support to GBVF victims - directly from households, police stations and clinics which brings services closer to those that need protective services. Further to this, they conduct community education and advocacy in all local languages to raise awareness of support services available.

"The NDA's role in assisting CSOs is not limited to funding, we train and we link income generating projects to opportunities and markets. Our model is comprehensive, from mobilising and registration we walk organisations through the funding process and ensure their sustainability. Gwebza Cooperative has to date generated an income of R 943 000 from providing affordable, quality school gear to seven surrounding schools, made possible by NDA who linked the co-op to school uniform projects. Our portfolio approach allows for government funds to flow within poor communities and provide a sustainable income to our beneficiaries" says Mrs Thamo Mzobe, Chief Executive Officer of National Development Agency.





# SABOCHA MEN'S SEMINAR AND DIALOGUE AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

By Kelebhone Pittele

Save Botshabelo Champions (SABOCHA) is a community organisation founded by Mr Ratsoho Makhetha and individuals who have a great concern about the rise of the gangs in the area and the reign of terror which the gangs inflict on the community. Some of the members in the organisation are former gang members who have the insight of the operations and the mentality of gangs, while others are former inmates who were gang members within the prisons and have a deep understanding of prison gangs. The main aim of the event was to give a platform to men and women to find ways to come up with solutions on actions that lead to gender-based violence.

Social worker, Ms Mamiky Khanyetsi from the Department of Social Development rendered the Psycho-social support, especially for the two guest speakers who were giving testimonials about their ordeals of how they were sexually abused by the trusted men in their lives, which became a somber moment in the room. Ms Khanyetsi ensured that her clients were emotionally and psychologically ready to speak about the incidents that took place in their lives.

Mr Mokoena from Love Life facilitated the dialogue session where people shared their encounters and views on GBV - and some of the frustrations that led to it. Amongst others, they mentioned poverty, unemployment and salary differences between partners in the relationships and households.

Some suggested solutions included provision of food parcels to families and job creation. Communication was considered a critical solution. All agreed that government, families



and other relevant organisations should have regular communication so that every group understands how the others feel about an action to be taken. Me' Mothupi who is the Commissioner of Gender Equality, explained to the audience how GBV policies protect victims and presented a way forward for cases that seem stagnant with no results.

Mr Motseki from Men's forum in Botshabelo contributed by saying men need to be taught how to be men and given the necessary attention, as they need to feel capable of being role models in the society, especially for their children. The involved parties who attended the dialogue committed to have further discussions in the future.

The Free State provincial mencare programme was also piloted. It was supposed to target 5000 people/ 2500 couples in the province, but due to COVID-19 the number was reduced to 1500 per province.

People in Botshabelo will be identified by organisations such as NGKA, Seed Foundation and the like. The process began last year in Januar, when 24 master trainers were trained on the mastercare programme, and will hopefully be

complete by April 2021. 50 Social service professionals were trained as facilitators on the mencare programme.

...Men need to be taught how to be men and given the necessary attention, as they need to feel capable of being role models in the society, especially for their children.

Out of the 50, 12 were specifically trained for Botshabelo and will continue to focus in the Botshabelo area; 26 in Mangaung and 14 in Thabo Nchu were also trained. The objective is to change men's attitude towards women with regard to GBV and change their views on female economic empowerment, where women earn their own income. The programme will also focus on parenting, where fathers are encouraged to be more involved with raising their children.

# LAUNCH OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE CAMPAIGN



By Esther Lewis

The Western Cape MEC Sharna Fernandez conducted an oversight visit to the Kensington Treatment Centre (KTC)- a government-run in-patient treatment programme for women only - to mark the launch of the province's substance abuse campaign.

A key focus of the campaign is informing the public about the importance of accessing the right help for substance use disorders (SUD). A series of videos and visuals represent how when you access the right help for yourself, your loved ones can be positively affected too.

"Your addiction is not just your

own, and can have an impact on the entire family. This is why getting the right treatment now will help your loved ones in the future. The Department holds a database with all the registered Substance Abuse treatment options in the province," said MEC Fernandez.

MEC Fernandez hailed the services offered at KTC as a great example of a gender-responsive treatment option for women with substance use disorders.

Research has shown that physical and sexual trauma followed by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is more common in women with substance use disorders

seeking treatment than in men. In view of this, treatment requirements may differ between men and women.

In order to accommodate this need, in 2015, the Kensington Treatment Centre was earmarked to accommodate women only.

The campaign further notes the importance of making use of registered facilities, encouraging members of the public to check these details with the Department of Social Development to ensure service users receive quality treatment, and that they are treated with respect, and that their human rights are protected.

There are currently 101 registered service providers on the provincial database that can be broken down as follows:







# BEAUTY HUB GIVES HOPE TO UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

By Sipho Ncube

By Busi Kheswa

It has been almost a year since the outbreak of the coronavirus on our shores. It has created havoc and destroyed livelihoods. More than 40 000 people have lost their lives in South Africa and close to 2 million worldwide.

However, the Beauty Hub Academy with offices in both Pretoria and Johannesburg continues to change lives for a number of young people by providing them with training in beauty therapy, focussing on facials, body massage, makeup, nails and head dressing.

Former student at the academy, Reginald Sebesebe (28) of Mamelodi East, now owns the Attitude Head Dressing Salon. The salon employs a hair stylist and Sebesebe says this is what they can afford for now. "We hope to employ more people in the near future, to assist in alleviating poverty and unemployment".

A view shared by another graduate from the same college, Immaculate Matselela (36) from Mamelodi East. Matselela said, "Even though we are currently struggling a bit due to the

coronavirus pandemic, we are grateful to the academy for the support even post graduations. I hope they can continue to assist and skill others to do better in their future endeavours".

Hub Manager Lulu Mphela indicated that their students are expected to do in-service training before they graduate. "They frequently get to provide services for older persons to have work experience. We also provide containers which are positioned on busy intersections in different locations which are run by them (students) that are an innovation which we hope to expand soon as part of the exit-plan".

Mphela added that, "As an academy, we are thankful to the Gauteng Department of Social Development for the support and funding over the years. If it was not for the department and other funders, we wouldn't be able to change lives for the better".

She said their courses are accredited by Seda (Small Enterprise Development Agency), Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).





# YOUTH SERVICE CENTRES EQUIPPED WITH NEW LAPTOPS

By Tebogo Mokae



HOD handed over 14 laptops to Coordinators from different Youth Services Centers in the Province today at the MLab training venue, in Kimberley, at the SMME village in Galeshewe. They are part of an 18 month learnership programme in digital skills, equipping youths for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These laptops will enable them to continue training virtually, while also sharing best practice with others as they leapfrog their centres into the 4IR.

The learners are in the last phase of the training which focuses on entrepreneurship for 2 weeks,

and MLab S.A. will provide online support for the duration of the remaining months of the learnership.

In handing over the laptops to

the beneficiaries, HOD Henrietta Samson thanked the young people for raising their hands and seizing the opportunity afforded to them, as we understand how demanding their lives are.

**"In the midst of the global pandemic, you are brave enough to come acquire the necessary skills which you can now share with other young people. You are great ambassadors indeed," she added.**

# DLAMINI INSPIRES HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR KIDS

By Evans Molimi

Community member, Ms. Sindisiwe Dlamini of Nkabaminkuzi in Kwa-Zulu Natal never refused to give up on the idea of improving the future of education for children in her area.

Not wanting to feel hopeless about "education under siege" in her community, Dlamini began to think of creative measures to prevent child education from going down the drain and about what she could do to help the learners.

Through research, she managed to acquire relevant information and registered Khulekani Non-Profit Organization (NPO) to help learners stay engaged with their schoolwork.

The NPO aimed to address and respond to societal challenges and social ills within her community.

**She said seeing youth dropping out of school really troubled her because leaving school led to a high rate of crime and teenage pregnancy.**

Though her NPO, Dlamini hopes to give learners support to make it through these dark days as learners' who drop out of school today have a little chance of success later in life.

"While we try to keep healthy and stay alive during the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to work with

our government to help save learners from a life of illiteracy. If anything, these social ills should encourage us to come together as stakeholders - government, parents and civil society alike - to help our children survive peer pressure," said Dlamini.

In the years prior to the Khulekani, Dlamini helped young people to persevere through her motivational talks in local schools. Dlamini's other great challenge is Gender-Based Violence in her area and it leaves more children vulnerable and stressed.

Furthermore, Dlamini explained that due to lack of recreational activities in the area, teenagers suffer from peer pressure to engage in alcohol and drug abuse, which in turn leads to underage pregnancy and marriage, school dropout, crime and child abuse.

"What we are seeing as the pandemic unfolds, is that it deepens the existing social ills that affect our society. I now understand that had it not been for the support of the Department of Social Development and community members, I would not have been able to complete my mission to reduce a dropout in education of our future leaders," She concluded.





# TSAKANE SCHOOL UNIFORM COOPERATIVE HARD AT WORK DESPITE COVID-19 CHALLENGES

By Phetoho Maja

As schools are set to re-open for the 2021 academic year, a Cooperative based in Tsakane in Ekurhuleni is determined to meet their target of providing school uniform to learners in the area. The Dimamazi Multipurpose Cooperative is battling the odds brought on by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

78-year-old Anna Sibisi is a

member of the cooperative and says it received major support from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) and the Gauteng Department of Social Development since it was established in 2013.

The cooperative, which produces school uniform, was started by a group of unemployed women,

after realising that people spend a lot of money to buy school uniform for their children, and they also because they wanted people to learn the skill of sewing.

Eight years later, the cooperative is still up to the task of ensuring that they deliver the much-needed school uniform to pupils in the area. Speaking to Gauteng Social Development at the Faranani



Multipurpose Centre, Sibisi said the six-member cooperative continues to do the work despite challenges of not having an embroidery machine and rely on the one that

**"We really hope that the work we do for the Gauteng Department of Social Development can assist us acquire the embroidery machine so that we do not have to outsource it," said Sibisi.**

they have to subcontract all the time. Another challenge is doing business while they comply to Covid-19 regulations as set out in the government gazette.

She added that they were grateful for the opportunity awarded to them by the department to produce school uniform for three schools in Tsakane for the current academic year.

Another member of the cooperative, Sibisiwe Duze said it has been a very thought-provoking journey to work for Dimamazi Multipurpose Cooperative since she arrived in 2014. "At some point over the years we had issues acquiring customers as the project was unable to acquire funding, and we had to market ourselves at schools and also expanded our services to include traditional wear, so that we can make ends meet," added Duze.

15-year-old Mduduzi Dube from Tsakane Extension 8 Secondary School came to purchase a school T-shirt. "I always come here with my sister to purchase school uniform. The quality of material is very good, and the price is affordable," said Mduduzi.

The project is one of the elements of the Bana Pele Programme as provided by the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) to provide a basket of services to vulnerable children. The pack which is supplied to students consists of a tunic, skirt, shirt, trouser, jersey, dungarees, a pair of socks, a pair of shoes and underwear which should be in line with the uniform-type of the specific school and gender of the beneficiary.

The project is aimed at ensuring that cooperatives, mainly women sewing, and shoes cooperatives, become preferred suppliers for school uniform.



# MEC NKAKARENG RAKGOALE GIVES BACK

By Kenneth Mathivha



Limpopo MEC for Social Development, Mme. Nkakareng Rakgoale, handed over school uniform to 300 learners from various parts of the Vhembe District at a ceremonial event held at Ha-Rabali in Nzhelele. MEC Rakgoale, who was joined by the Makhado Municipality Mayor Samuel Munyai and the Vhembe District Municipality Councilor Sylvia Machete, says the gesture will go a long way in encouraging the recipients to focus on their education without being worried about an old or ill-fitting school uniform that tends to stigmatise learners.

A total of 1372 learners will receive school uniform across the Province in the coming few days, as the new academic year begins. The MEC will also touch base with the remaining four districts in ceremonial handover events.

The campaign is aimed at supporting children from needy families, promoting the culture of learning, as well as inculcating a sense of belonging and pride with learners who are living below the poverty line.

Social workers conducted assessments on identified

children who are orphaned and vulnerable in the five districts.

**The victims of the recent floods that affected the area a few weeks ago are also among the beneficiaries.**

Limpopo MEC for Social Development Nkakareng Rakgoale has called for the courts not to grant bail to perpetrators of Gender Based Violence as they continue to violate the rights of women and children.

MEC Rakgoale was speaking outside the Malamulele Magistrate's Court, where a 63-year old man was making his formal bail application.

Daniel Maswanganyi has been charged with murder after allegedly killing his wife, Tsakani Maswanganyi, last week at Mbhalati village.

Police say the victim was shot several times after an argument

ensued between the pair at their home. The MEC was in court to give support to the family of the victim and also to add her voice in calling for the court not to grant bail to the suspect, as the country is grappling with Gender Based Violence dubbed the second pandemic to the Coronavirus.

The MEC launched phase two of the distribution of food parcels at Khakhala village in the Mopani District by using the knock, drop and go approach.

The handing over of food parcels is part of the COVID-19 food distribution program targeting 37 288 families in the Province.

About 7 500 families have been identified as vulnerable in the Mopani District.

MEC Rakgoale says this is the department's effort to assist families that have been identified as vulnerable by officials.

The victims of the recent floods that affected the area a few weeks ago are also among the beneficiaries. She was joined by Hosi Khakhala and the Greater Giyani Municipality Mayor Agnes Shivambu.



# UNIFORM AND DIGNITY PACK HAND OUT AT GAUTENG SCHOOLS

By Sibusiso Chauke

Three West Rand schools received 750 school uniform and dignity packs as part of the Bana Pele programme of the Gauteng Provincial Government. The donation took place during the school readiness programme on Monday.

Members of the Executive from Gauteng Provincial Government visited numerous schools to assess the state of readiness as the new schooling year began. They also provided school uniform and dignity packs to destitute children as part of the basket of services as offered by the Gauteng Social Development Department.

The Gauteng Social Department

Development MEC, Morakane Mosupye, accompanied by community leaders, officials and parents handed out two hundred and fifty school uniform and fifty dignity packs at Itumeleng Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) School in Westonaria.

Mosupye proceeded to Phendulwazi Primary in Mohlakeng, where 300 school uniform and 60 dignity packs were handed to the beneficiaries and Bulelani Primary in Mohlakeng received 200 school uniform and 50 dignity packs.

She said, "Bana Pele programme is aimed at assisting less fortunate learners, this to ensure that they are at the same level as their peers. As the Department of Social Development, we are custodians of the Children's Act, therefore

responsible for care and protection of children, and as schools reopen, we have a responsibility to lend a hand where possible. As the academic year starts, we want our learners to concentrate on learning".

Addressing parents and learners at Itumeleng Special School, Mosupye said "Social Development department is mandated to protect children and people with disability and as such we will be adopting this school. Today we have different spheres of government and we have heard your concerns. We will take up all your issues and resolve them as soon as possible".

"We are also pleased to see that the schools are adhering to COVID-19 regulations. We encourage our learners to study hard despite the pandemic we face. Education is the key that will open doors for you in future and the government will continue to give you the necessary support," Mosupye added.



## MEC NONTOBeko VILAKAZI HANDS OVER SCHOOL UNIFORM TO VULNERABLE SCHOOLS

By Tebogo Mokae

The school visit aimed to encourage and motivate learners, educators and parents to negotiate the academic year ahead, in the Pixley Ka Isaka Seme District, amidst the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We understand as a government this exercise is especially important in that it shows how much we care, that we are indeed concerned about what is happening at our schools and that we want to see teachers,

learners, and parents succeed as a family in the advancement and improvement of our education system.

"As a caring government, we cannot afford to see children going to school barefooted and in torn clothes. We may not be able to reach all the children across the province in time, but our commitment is to ensure that no child is unable to attend school because of uniform"

MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi said.

Our simple hope is that parents should always be here with us, so that we collectively tackle this challenge of securing our children the required education, whilst also navigating this pandemic together. It should be a collective effort from the very first day, since we appreciate that we are all responsible not only for the wellbeing of our children, but for their academic success as well.

Bana Pele programme is aimed at assisting less fortunate learners, this to ensure that they are at the same level as their peers.





# MINISTER ZULU SAYS ENOUGH IS ENOUGH - NOT UNDER HER WATCH



By Lesego Ranchu

**T**he Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, conducted an oversight visit to SASSA Bellville offices, during her Pre-SONA roadshow, to monitor progress and impact of National Development Agency grants towards the Covid-19 Volunteer Programme (VP).

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted community-based food relief operations. NDA introduced the volunteer programme to assist with household food distribution, assist persons in applying for the Social Relief and Distress R350 grants and assist with queue management at SASSA offices during the hard lockdown nationwide. A total of 22 civil society organisations (CSOs) partnered with the NDA to recruit and employ 228 volunteers from communities across the province to implement a comprehensive programme that also

included awareness and preventive screening interventions to reduce the spread and number of deaths due to the pandemic.

The NDA volunteer programme was effectively utilised recently to manage the long queues at Cape Town's Bellville SASSA offices following the Minister's initial visit. There has been a huge reduction in mass gatherings and the Covid-19 safety protocols are now in place allowing for the smooth and safe flow of traffic.

**This job has allowed me to learn new skills, one has to start somewhere.**

Gwebza Multi-Purpose Primary Co-Operative is effectively the Cape Town metro volunteer programme and are stationed at SASSA offices in Bellville, Cape Town, Athlone, Eerste Rivier and Gugulethu. 'When we arrived in July last year, the situation was disorderly. This programme has restored SASSA beneficiaries' dignity, it has provided jobs and has alleviated most stress on SASSA employees who are now able to focus on their core funding while we manage the situation outside their premises to ensure correct Covid-19 measures are in practice,' says Linda Baleni of Gwebza Multi-Purpose Primary Co-Operative.

The Team Leader at SASSA Bellville, Mr Tumelo Mapheelle, says, 'We are happy to have partnered with the NDA and the effectiveness of the Volunteer Programme in place here at Bellville. The volunteers here are determined and vigilant at all times, ensuring beneficiaries are sanitised, have masks and are social distancing correctly. Previously we would have to come out and manage the lines as well, their role has freed us of this. We can now focus on the core business. On average we see about 500 people per day'.

Assigned to the Bellville SASSA offices are: father of 3 Mr Phumlani Bokveld (33); Travel & Tourism graduate Ms Aviwe Nyhila (29); mother of 3 Ms Mpho Lekhatlanye (40) and mother of 2 Ms Daniswa Jaxa (41) who are collectively happy to be part of the programme that helps them with supporting their families and gainful employment. 'This job has allowed me to learn new skills, one has to start somewhere. The knowledge from my studies has enabled me to communicate effectively with SASSA beneficiaries. I hope that this is an opportunity for permanent employment in the long run,' says Ms Nyhila.

'We face challenges every day, and dealing with people is not easy. However, the system we have devised is transparent and designed for the wellbeing of all the beneficiaries. Together, we work to move the queue as quickly and hygienically as possible,' says Ms Lekhatlanye.

SASSA beneficiary, Mrs Esme Scheepers said, 'I came to SASSA offices today and the queue marshals made me very welcome and comfortable. They even looked after my child while I was busy inside. I am very thankful'.

# DESPERATION AND DESPAIR? DSD CARES!

By James Moche and Sisi Segalo

The place is Tlokweg village outside Rustenburg. Around 40 Mmogwane family members are housed in a dilapidated mud house and a few surrounding shacks. The structures, not well erected, are located in a yard which is approximately the size of two netball fields. The 40 members include grandparents, parents, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Many members are not working, except three who do odd jobs at nearby farms. Most of the elders are living their lives elsewhere.

Given the level of poverty and disorder in the situation, the intervention of a caring entity - such as the North West Department of Social Development - was welcome. MEC Boitumelo Moilola led a group consisting of a local councillor, chieftainship representative and departmental officials, to donate food parcels worth thousands of rands to the Mmogwane household.



MEC Moilola (left), local councillor (middle) and a community member, after inspecting devastation caused by heavy rains in Tlokweg

The initial plan was to donate one food parcel, but Moilola realised that the situation was so dire that a change of plan was carried out. The family received two additional parcels. The total costs of the parcels is around R5000. They are part of Moilola's social relief of distress (SRD) programme targeting poor families and those whose lives were disrupted by recent heavy rains.



MEC Moilola (second from left) and her entourage with items donated to unemployed Thomas Tlale

One of the Tlokweg beneficiaries Mmamokete Mmogwane (32), says she is grateful that the government

assisted in alleviating her family poverty. She said she was happy but added that she would be even

happier if she could get an RDP house for her two children.

Moilola's entourage also helped other families around Tlokweg by donating food and blankets. They include the Molefes, whose house was severely damaged by heavy rainfall. The owner is a divorcee and she is unemployed.

The SRD programme took Moilola to Legonyane village outside Brits where she donated food parcels and blankets worth about R10 000 to three destitute families. Unemployed Thomas Tlale (40) whose mother died and father left, also benefited from MEC's programme. Moilola also intervened and assisted families in Matlosana near Klerksdorp, Ottosdal and Maubane outside Hammanskraal.



# COVID-19 AND THE IMPACT ON HIV AND AIDS



KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Social Development, Mrs Nonhlanhla Khoza, officiating at an Aids commemorative event in Ugu District. With her are Ugu District Municipality Mayor, Councillor Sizwe Ngcobo, Ray Nkonyeni Municipality Mayor, Councillor Cynthia Mqwebu and Ray Nkonyeni Municipality Speaker, Councillor Doctor Njoko.

By Vukani Mbhele

The Department of Social Development is tasked with ensuring the well-being of the most vulnerable in society, including people who have been infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Unfortunately, the new normal that has been visited on us as a result of Covid-19 lockdown regulations, which are now at level 3 seems to be reversing the strides the country has made in mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS.

Job losses, which have seen many breadwinners deprived of income due to Covid-19 challenges, have meant that many people who have been infected by HIV or braving AIDS-related illnesses are now not able to visit health facilities for a variety of reasons.

There have been complaints about HIV patients not being able to go to the clinic or hospital to get their regular HIV anti-retroviral treatment after leaving city centres where they usually obtained treatment. Some are said to be defaulting due to lack of transport money and others are believed to be afraid of contracting the dreaded COVID-19 in health facilities.

In some parts of the country like the Ugu District, on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast, the COVID-19 pandemic came at a time when the Department of Health was celebrating the success of its 90-90-90 Strategy. This means that 90 percent of people in that district are aware of their status, and they are on ARV treatment as well as virally suppressed.

This has been cause for celebration as it signalled victory in so far as the war against AIDS-related illnesses and the death rate were concerned. The success of the 90-90-90 strategy used to measure conformity at district level can only suggest that there is a reduction

in the number of new orphans and vulnerable children as well as youths who are left at the mercy of grandparents and relatives when their parents and caregivers become sick or die.

Commenting on the challenges that have been presented by COVID-19, KZN MEC for Social Development, Mrs Nonhlanhla Khoza said:

"Just when we were becoming comfortable that we are making progress in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS-related deaths and we were starting to celebrate longevity due to an improved life expectancy that moved from 50 years to 65 years, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world hard.

**Ours is a Department that is tasked with the responsibility to render HIV and AIDS programmes in the interest of promoting prevention and early intervention designed to support and sustain healthy families and contribute to their survival, protection and development.**

"The new normal left us disoriented and confused as we are not only counting the damage in terms of

business and job losses, but we are now also confronting the challenge of hunger and helplessness faced by many families in various disadvantaged communities.

"We seem to be going backwards now as there has been a noticeable increase of HIV infections and HIV-related illness and deaths which threaten the livelihood of a large number of children due to the absence of parental care.

"Ours is a Department that is tasked with the responsibility to render HIV and AIDS programmes in the interest of promoting prevention and early intervention designed to support and sustain healthy families and contribute to their survival, protection and development.

"The Department is taking care of children, youths and parents who can no longer make ends meet due to AIDS-related illnesses and deaths. Government is touching the lives of people who have been infected and affected by HIV and AIDS at home, child and youth care centres as well as schools, with the help of NPOs and our social workers as well as child and youth care workers who are our foot soldiers on the ground," said Mrs Khoza.

The Department is mandated to provide social welfare services which include psycho-social support, social and behaviour change programmes, and Social Relief of Distress (SRD), amongst others.

The Departmental services target people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, care and support services to families, child and youth care centres, community-based care centres for children, Social Crime Prevention and Support Services, beneficiaries of the Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) and Substance Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation and Social Relief of Distress.



# "PLEASE DON'T MOVE US AWAY FROM OUR FAMILIES"



By Nomfundo Xulu-Lentsoane

"This is only happening to us because of the colour of our skin. We need to call a spade a spade. None of the frail, elderly people in white old age care centres are being moved

to unknown territory, none!" These are the resounding, heartbreaking words of AK Matthews from the community of Bishop Lavis in the Western Cape.

With tears in his eyes, AK asks to be excused as he has to attend to his wife and daughter who are on ventilators in a nearby hospital due to COVID-19 related complications.

Before he vacates the former Counselling Social Development Centre which is now used as a Community Centre by the Universal Church of Christ New Day Ministries, the Deputy Chairperson of the Bon-Heid-Lavis Forum, says the Minister needs to be made aware of the premises being proposed by the Cape Peninsula Organisation for the Aged (CPOA) for relocation of 300 elderly people. "Right now, these premises are under construction to make sure that our parents can fit in there. Showers and toilets are being turned into bedrooms!"

The frail elderly people he refers to, live with diverse conditions including dementia and Alzheimer's. They have spent many years in frail-care welfare facilities which are situated in Bishop Lavis (Nerina Place), Bonteheuwel (Lilyhaven Place) and Heideveld (Oakhaven Place).

of the old age homes, demands more than one taxi or bus to and from.

"Due to the close proximity of where our parents and grandparents are currently placed, we are also able to walk and go help where there is assistance needed without having to worry about transport-money problems. This also makes them feel better because our communities are close-knit and we normally know each other," says Berverly Rensberg who used to render help at Nerina Place in Bishop Lavis prior to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Everything is professionally done at these homes, and our job as community members is to deliver a few services such as doing the oumas' hair and nails, or just listening to their stories. It may sound small but it makes a difference with their wellbeing," she says.

Like many other previously disadvantaged communities, townships such as Bishop Lavis, Bonteheuwel and Heideveld comprise a large population of unemployed youth and adults who depend on government grants, food security, health systems, education and overall services for their wellbeing.

"Now imagine adding the burden of a family member needing to find transport fare to be able to go and see their frail loved one in unknown territory? Imagine the fear and

anxiety the frail elderly person would already be facing when they suddenly find themselves in a place they have never been to? We need to remember that these people are already experiencing mixed emotions because of the COVID-19 changes, where they needed to live a new kind of life without visitors and other activities that kept them healthy and sane. Now add moving them to that equation. That is inhumane," says Mrs Pat Lee, a community leader and member of the Bon-Heid-Lavis Forum.

As for Pastor Wesley Moodley, the leader of the Universal Church of Christ New Day Ministries, which offers 24 community-based welfare services in Bishop Lavis and neighbouring townships, the closure of these old aged homes will not happen under their watch. "We are appealing to the Department of Social Development to help us fight this unfair treatment of our elderly, our parents, our veterans. We as a community, are willing to take care of them. We have been doing so for generations and continue to do so even during these trying times. We cannot risk their lives any further..." he says, much to the agreement of Minister Lindiwe Zulu.

"We are not talking about the youth that we can send out to go seek employment for survival here. We are talking about frail people who need all the help that they can get," she says.

**For them, these homes are not only close to their families and friends but have become comfort zones.**

The CPOA is planning to move them all into a facility in Lotus River which, although less than 20 kilometres away from either



# GIFTS FOR

## gogo

By  
Luvuyo  
Ndarane

### Fortifying centres for older persons in the Eastern Cape



A multitude of appliances, with some of them aimed at cushioning older persons against the devastation of COVID-19, were disbursed to Older Persons' Forum by Social Development MEC Siphokazi Lusithi. From air-humidifiers to freezers, the condition of older person service centres in the Buffalo City, Amathole and O.R. Tambo districts of the Eastern Cape have improved.

The gifts emanate from the 2020 International Day of Older Persons' assembly resolutions that service centres for older persons across the province should be fortified against the Coronavirus. Older persons centres, through the Eastern

Cape Older Persons Forum, identified equipment that can bolster the daily conditions of the centres.

According to the Provincial Secretary of the Older Person's Forum, each district had one centre identified to receive the kitchen appliances— but the distribution will be "given to a different centre in the next round within the district". The rotation system means that this appliances will ultimately be presented to all centres in future years.

Social Development MEC, Siphokazi Lusithi, said the appliances will help improve the welfare of older persons. "Studies have shown that

service centres have become a necessary sanctuary to help older persons embrace the idea of active ageing. It is equally important that service centres do not become places where older persons contract all sorts of ailments, including COVID-19. Therefore, this investment is a critical contribution to ensure the improvement of standards in service centres across the province," said Lusithi.

The presentation of appliances was made possible through a collaboration between the Social Development Department, Office of the Premier and EC Provincial Legislature. They include freezers, gas stoves, air-humidifiers amongst others.





# HIV/AIDS AND MENTAL HEALTH

HIV, or human immunodeficiency virus, is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV attacks the immune system by destroying CD4 positive (CD4+) T cells, a type of white blood cell that is vital to fighting off infection.

The destruction of these cells leaves people infected with HIV vulnerable to other infections, diseases, and other complications.

A person infected with HIV is diagnosed with AIDS when he or she has one or more opportunistic infections (which occur when your immune system is damaged by HIV), such as pneumonia or tuberculosis, and has a dangerously low number of CD4+ T cells (less than 200 cells per cubic millimeter of blood).



## RISK FOR MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS



If you are living with HIV, it is important for you to be aware that you have an increased risk for developing mood, anxiety, and cognitive disorders.

For example, people living with HIV are twice as likely to have depression compared to those who are not infected with HIV. These mental health conditions are treatable if managed effectively.

## SOME FORMS OF STRESS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV, INCLUDING:

- Having trouble getting the services you need
- Experiencing a loss of employment or worries about whether you will be able to perform your work as you did before
- Having to tell others you are HIV-positive
- Managing your HIV medicines
- Going through changes in your physical appearance or abilities due to HIV/AIDS
- Dealing with loss, including the loss of relationships or even death
- Facing the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS



These factors may often result in people living with HIV experiencing a loss of social support, leading to feelings of isolation and possibly mental health conditions.

It is important to know that you can better manage your overall health and well-being if you know how having HIV can affect your mental health and what resources are available to help you if you need them.

**If you feel the need to speak to someone then contact our 24/7/365 Employee Assistance Programme**  
**Toll-Free Number: 0800 017 178**  
**USSD: \*134\*44184#**





# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICIAL NOMINATED AMONGST GOVERNMENT GREATS

By Madali Chibambu



published five books and intends to release four more.

**"Being nominated for Devoted Citizen of the year, alongside Dr Zweli Mkhize and Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng was the highlight of 2020 for me," says Seshoka**

40-year-old, Victor Seshoka, Community Development Practitioner at the Gauteng Department of Social Development, Tshwane Region, has been nominated amongst the Top 7 in the Devoted Citizen of the Year Awards, where he was competing with the likes of Health Minister, Zweli Mkhize and Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng.

Seshoka won the 2019 Influential Men of the Year Awards that was held in Durban. He is married with three children. He is a passionate Community Development Practitioner, Researcher, Author, Life Coach, inspirational speaker and a Philanthropist. Seshoka has

He is also the founder of Kgalalelo Education Foundation which focuses on underprivileged learners mostly from rural areas. He says, "Through the foundation, which I founded in 2012, I have managed to reach over 20 000 learners." The foundation hosts yearly career development to expose pupils from various villages to study opportunities. They also have various programmes such as back to school campaigns where

they donate school shoes, bags and uniform to disadvantaged learners.

As a result of his philanthropic work Seshoka was nominated for the Top 7 Devoted Citizen of the Year Award. Subsequent to being nominated as a Devoted Citizen, he was invited for an interview on ECNA News Channel for being an inspiration to the nation, especially to men.

Describing 2020, Seshoka said "It was like any other year except the fact that COVID-19 has disrupted our normal lives and has forced us to adapt to different living. It has disrupted some major businesses, careers and life in general, but despite this, I have managed to complete my Masters of Philosophy in Business Leadership and Management Cum Laude with focus on NPO Monitoring systems."

His motivation to his colleagues is: "Don't wait until you are rich to change lives, start where you are to put a smile on someone's face, *Motho ke motho ka batho*".

In five years Seshoka's dream is to establish a university for the learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, build at least five libraries in the villages where they work and set up his own bursary fund.

## WORKING *together* FOR A HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION-FREE SOCIETY



By Evans Molimi

"Manifestation is a simple idea, demonstrating that what you put out into the universe is what you will want to see. We are donating food parcels to fight poverty and hunger, and to build a society that is well fed."

These are the words of Mr. Noah Won, chairperson of the We Love You Foundation, as he handed over food aid to the Department on 5 February 2021. The donation includes 1250 of 10 kg of maize meal, 2000 tin fish, 2000 baked beans and 500 face masks.

Mr. Won commented that food insecurity is a reality for many South African households, with approximately 50% of households living under the poverty line. "The spread of COVID-19 in South Africa is causing further pressure on vulnerable households. Primary caretakers of these households now have more mouths to feed, including children that previously benefited from the National School Feeding Programme."

**We are working tirelessly with Non-Profit Organisations as a department to alleviate poverty.**

**The COVID-19 pandemic forced the government to develop interventions to ensure that vulnerable households would have access to nutritious food during the state of emergency.**

"We are happy with this new partnership. As a department, we are working tirelessly to alleviate poverty through our Community Nutritious Development Centres across the country. We are

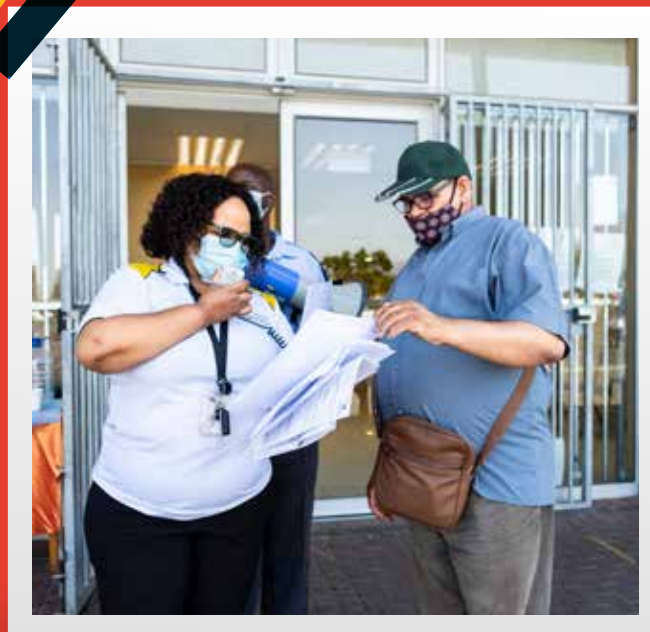
working tirelessly with Non-Profit Organisations as a department to alleviate poverty. The donations came at just the right time. More and more people are overwhelmed by this pandemic. The people we are serving rely on social grants which do not always cover household requirements," said Peter Netshipale, DDG responsible for community development when receiving the donation on behalf of the department.

Through the partnership between DSD and We Love You Foundation, more food parcels will see many households through this tough time.

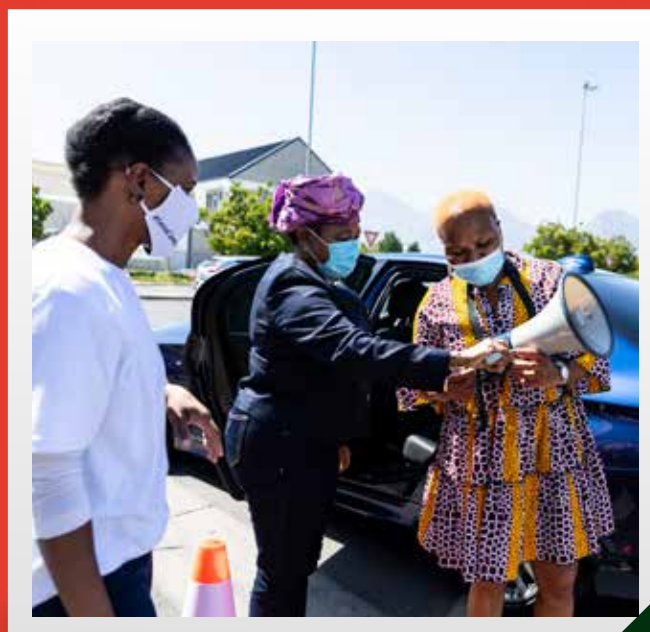
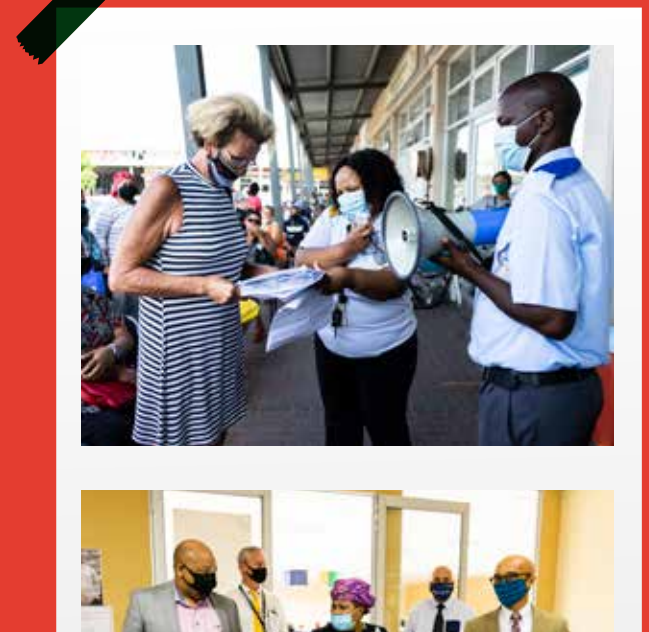
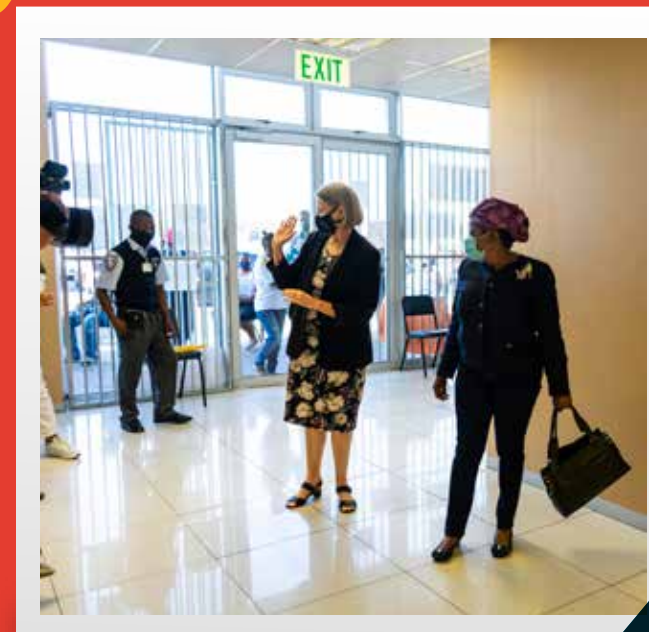
In his closing remarks, DDG Netshipale said "We are going to work closely with your foundation on food aid parcel distribution. This food will be given to the most vulnerable during the pandemic. We will ensure the relief reaches those who most need it. As a department we strive to provide more nutritional food to ensure better health outcomes".



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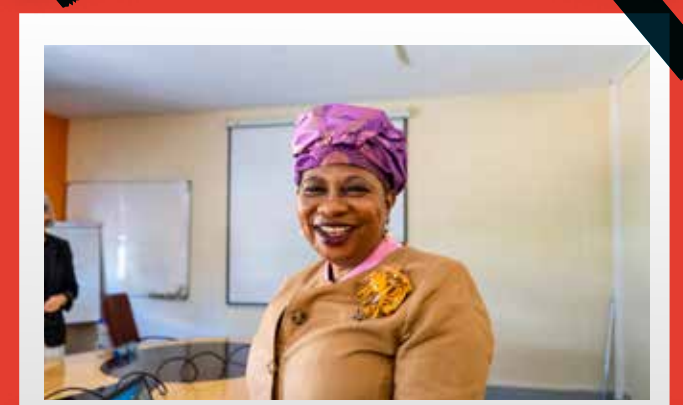




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# DSD NEWS



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