



MY DISTRICT TODAY

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Outcome 3: All people in South Africa are and feel safe

No tolerance for women and children abuse

Sbonelo Cebekulu, GCIS KwaZulu-Natal

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children is a United Nations campaign, which takes place annually from 25 November (International Day of No Violence Against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Since 1999, the South African Government has ensured that the campaign includes issues relating to violence against children. The 16 Days of Activism Campaign focuses primarily on generating an increased awareness of the negative impact of violence on women and children, as well as society as a whole.

In an attempt to fight abuse against women and children an awareness campaign was held in Charlestown, Ward 1 of Newcastle Local Municipality, on 21 November. NGOs and government departments united against any of abuse against women and children.

The campaign was held under the theme: "Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and children". A large number of men attended the event, which is a sign that men fully support the campaign. Some men took the platform to pledge their support in the fight against abuse.

"It is so embarrassing to read in the news that the head of the family, a man, is abusing his wife and children. This is something we are not proud of and we are prepared to fight it. We want peace in all families," said Mr Mndebele of Charlestown.

The Department of Health also used this session to warn communities about HIV and AIDS and to emphasise the importance of knowing your status. Women were told to

guard against cheating husbands who demanded unsafe sex. "If anybody forces you into unsafe sex, you must be report it to the police, even if it's your husband," said Sonto Hadebe from the Department of Health.

Lesbians and gays were not left out. Local NGOs asked the communities to accept them because they were also human beings and they should not be abused because of their sexual orientation.



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Outcome 2: A long and healthy life for all South Africans

Youth walk against HIV and AIDS

Tinyiko Molefe, GCIS Gauteng

World AIDS Day on 1 December brings together people from around the world to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and to demonstrate international solidarity in the face of the pandemic. The day is an opportunity for public and private partners to spread awareness about the status of the pandemic and to encourage progress in HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care in high prevalence countries and around the world.

Between 2011 and 2015, the theme for World AIDS Days will be "Getting to zero. Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths". The World AIDS Day campaign focuses on "Zero AIDS-related deaths", which signifies a push towards greater access to treatment for all and a call for governments to act now.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), an increasing number of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are being infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. As a result, the Ikhambi Lesizwe Youth Organisation, in partnership with the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), hosted a 10-km walk

on 25 November. The walk started from Naledi Shopping Center to Vosloorus Stadium in Johannesburg. The purpose of the walk was to educate and raise awareness of the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

Puleng Ntuleng, one of the youth who attended the event, said: "The most imperative issue for young people is to change their attitude and perceptions towards HIV and AIDS. Change your thoughts so that the world around you changes." Other young people who attended, agreed and emphasised that there should be open discussions about HIV and AIDS to give them practical information about prevention and treatment.

Because young people face the social impact of HIV and AIDS, there is a need for them to be at the centre of preventative actions, said Mazwi Sedibe. "I participated in the walk to support the fight against the epidemic and to encourage my peers to do the same."



The first group that finished the walk against HIV and AIDS.



Ebenezer Khumalo was the first to finish the walk.



Outcome 5: A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path

No to disability, yes to brighter future!

Odas Ngobeni , GCIS Limpopo

In response to the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation of 3 December as International Day of Persons with Disabilities, South Africa joined the family of nations by observing this day and spreading awareness of disability issues. In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly appealed to member states to devote this day to reflect on issues faced by persons with disabilities to advance the equalisation of opportunities.

In South Africa, the period 3 November to 3 December has been declared Disability Rights Awareness Month. The aim is to:

- highlight challenges experienced by persons with disabilities in exercising their rights as equal citizens
- raise awareness of enabling mechanisms and opportunities that reduce these challenges and enable persons with disabilities to participate as equal citizens in mainstream society
- promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities as recommended by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- reflect on progress made in the implementation of policies, programmes and legislation that seek to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities

- reach consensus on priorities for action during 2013/14.

14-year-old, Evonia Ngobeni has become one of the shining stars at Letaba Special School outside Tzaneen in Limpopo.

She arrived at the school in October 2005. "I was nervous when I arrived here, but I was repeatedly told that I shouldn't be because all these people are the same as me. This has become my second home, and I'm really sad to leave. I have since realised that we have much more in common here than just our physical disability," said Evonia.

Evonia decided that she would never allow her physical disability to define her future. She will therefore represent her school at the national finals of the wheelchair tennis competition in East London in December, after which she will head home to spend time with her parents at Relela village, outside Letaba.

She has been awarded a bursary that will cover her tuition, boarding and travelling at her soon-to-be new second home – S J van der Merwe School in Lebowakgomo.

Evonia is determined to work hard to realize her dream of becoming a social worker. "My passion

is helping people. I think I will do that well when I'm a social worker," she says.

Her teacher, Doreen Mokgolobotho, says they are sad to see Evonia along with 19 other learners leave at the end of the school year. "We have been teachers, parents, social workers to these kids. Every one of them has a sad story to tell, but despite their hardships, they persevered.

"They were forced into independence at a tender age to come here and live with strangers and only two helpers, but it has made them stronger. They are all very ambitious and hard-working. They have never used their disabilities as an excuse. We wish them all the best."



Evonia Ngobeni with her teacher, Doreen Mokgolobotho at Letaba Special School outside Tzaneen in Limpopo.



Outcome 3: All people in South Africa are and feel safe

Men united against gender-based violence

Tabita Ngqunge: GCIS Eastern Cape

Schooling has become a lot more exciting for learners in the nine schools at Nkowankowa Township, thanks to the IMPACT - Life through Sport Programme.

The programme is an initiative by Africa Socio-economic Development Services, the consultants for the multi-million rand project in the township. The project, funded through the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant from National Treasury, includes the upgrading of cemeteries and parks, as well as the construction of a sport complex, a tarred ring road and street lights in section C.

The programme has created temporary jobs for 22 youths. "This is our way of giving back to the community. We have recruited and trained 22 young people between the ages of 20 and 27 to be intern coaches, and we have bought sport equipment for the schools. We wanted to give more than just infrastructure to this community," says James Excell, the project leader.

The trainee coaches assist educators in the nine schools, offering physical education to learners during their Life Orientation sessions as

prescribed in the curriculum. "We are using the prescribed curriculum and physical education is one element of the programme. We are introducing an after-school sport league, which is the second aspect of the programme.

"We have partnered with the South African Football Association (SAFA), Netball South Africa, and Cricket South Africa. The intern coaches have already been to a course in introductory cricket, and an introductory level coaching course by SAFA. We are now organising a Level 1 coaching course," says Excell.

Noting that the feedback from the Department of Basic Education had been very positive, he said, "This programme offers an incentive to learners to come to school and fosters a sense of healthy living."

Sesana Mkhathi, the principal at Masungulo Primary School agrees. "Since the introduction of this programme, we have noticed a decline in non-attendance by learners, and improved discipline.

"We work very well with the team. They add value to our work and it's quite exciting for

everyone. They assist us in fundraising for the school by organising fun games. As educators, we appreciate their presence here and we wish it could be a permanent programme."

Signet Manganyi, a trainee coach based at Masungulo says, "It's fulfilling to work with these kids. We have really learned a lot through this programme."

Manganyi, who is also a former amateur boxer and rugby player, says the programme has inspired him to pursue a career in coaching. "It has always been my dream to be involved in coaching and sport management, and this programme is a perfect platform for me to launch my career," says the 22-year-old.



A grade 6 learner from Masungulo in a long jump under the watchful eye of classmates and the trainee coach, Thulani Rikhotso.



Trainee coaches with Grade 6 learners at Masungulo Primary School in ward 21 of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

