



MY DISTRICT TODAY



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OUTCOME 14: A DIVERSE, SOCIALLY COHESIVE SOCIETY WITH A COMMON NATIONAL IDENTITY

Government celebrates Africa Month with schools

By Nompilo Mchunu: GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal



Caca Primary School pupils giving a history lesson on Nigeria at the Africa Month celebrations.



Learners from Caca, Phunguphungu and Annville primary schools dressed in different African attires.



The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in the Amajuba District hosted festivities to celebrate Africa Month in Dannhauser on 20 May 2016. Caca, Annville and Phunguphungu primary schools, as well as Sizimele and Imana high schools, within the KwaMdakane area participated in the celebration that was themed: "Building a Better Africa and a Better World: For Peace and Friendship".

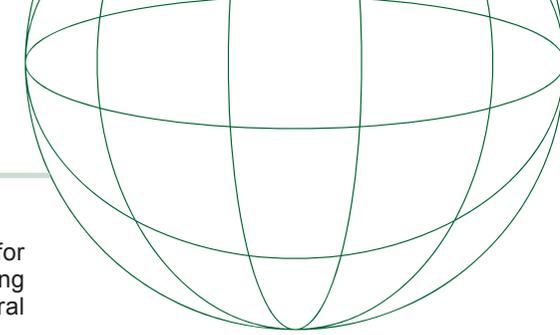
To promote African unity and tolerance for other nations, each school adopted an African country and gave a history lesson and showcased its cultural practices while fully clad in that country's traditional attire. Countries adopted by the pupils include Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and South Africa. The vibrancy of the African continent was also expressed through song, dance, poetry and fashion.

An official from the DAC, Nkosikhona Dlamini, said the purpose of celebrating Africa Month with school pupils was to encourage them to embrace their origins, culture and their differences from an early age through arts and culture and intellectual engagements. Dlamini said following the attacks against foreign nationals across the country, Africa Month is used as a platform to advocate for peace. "It is an opportunity to understand each other, foster social cohesion and our shared commitment to foster peace and greater continental unity," he stated.



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Phumi Mbuli, a Grade 2 educator at Phunguphupu Primary School, applauded the DAC for involving schools in the event. “School is a critical learning field for children and since young people are the pioneers of the future, they need to be taught early about the beauty and cultural diversity of Africa,” said Mbuli.

Luyanda Nzungana, a Grade 4 pupil from Caca Primary School, was excited about participating. “We had to do a lot of preparation and research about Nigeria. I have learned about how big and diverse Africa is and that it is a home for all those who live in it, regardless of colour and culture,” she said.

The celebrations were a build-up to the main annual commemoration of Africa Day on 25 May to be held in KwaDukuza, which aims to promote unity, peace and prosperity in the continent. To further encourage peaceful coexistence among Africans, President Jacob Zuma, supported by interfaith leaders, held a National Day of Prayer at the Kings Park Stadium in Durban on 22 May.



Annville Primary School pupils showcasing Xhosa and Tanzania attires.

Educators and learners celebrating Africa Month through song and dance.



Asanda Sibiya said:

“Africa Month is important because it exposes us to other African countries. We are able to celebrate other countries while learning about various cultures. Our school chose Lesotho because we like their language and the way they dress.”



Gugulethu Thwala said:

“This is my first time celebrating Africa Month. I have learned that all Africans like to sing and dance and they like colourful clothes. I would like to visit all the countries one day.”



Palesa Zimu said:

“Africa Month means that I can wear my traditional clothes with pride and celebrate my Siswati heritage. I think it should be celebrated every day because we get to learn about where we come from and we are encouraged to uphold our cultures.”



Gys Syster said:

“The benefits are good and we have applied for houses but we are still waiting. I use the health and wellness, pension and housing services from the department. The services help me a lot since I am unemployed.”



Jan Smith said:

“As military veterans, we want the right information and benefits. I am grateful that I use the health services and I have visited two military hospitals for treatment. My children are using the educational support for bursaries.”



Braam Charles said:

“The work that is being done to register the veterans with the department has yielded results because we now have access to information. I use the health and wellness, and educational support but the critical service we need is housing.”

OUTCOME 12: AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED PUBLIC SERVICE AND AN EMPOWERED, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP.

Deputy Minister engages with military veterans

By Boitumelo Boshupeng: GCIS, Northern Cape



Deputy Minister Maphatsoe addressing military veterans at the event.



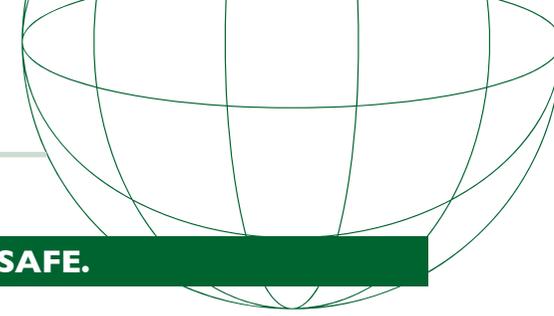
Military veterans from different associations attending the event.

The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Kebby Maphatsoe, visited Northern Cape on 9 May 2016 as part of a roadshow to engage military veterans on matters that affect them and discuss ways of support.

The engagement comes in the wake of concerns by the veterans that they do not have access to many benefits that they are entitled to.

The Deputy Minister urged military veterans from all associations to unify and form a single unit so that it becomes easier and more efficient to address their challenges. He reminded veterans that all organisations and associations have unique history but that should not hinder the efforts to work together in a mission to better one another’s lives. He also appealed to local government officials to engage military veterans to identify programmes that could be brought to provincial government’s attention.

Among issues raised were that members were not registered on the military veterans database. The military veterans also requested the department to establish an office in the furthest district of the province to improve communication.



OUTCOME 3: ALL PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA ARE AND FEEL SAFE.

Learners urged to stay away from social ills

Bongani Mazibuko: GCIS, Mpumalanga



Chaplain Cynthia Mokoena said:

“There is a moral decay in our youth, it is therefore important that we embark on campaigns such as this one to instil moral values, of respect, love for oneself and others, of discipline, of caring for others and so on. We should teach our youth good morals while they are still young.”



An official from the SAPS cautioned the young people about the negative effects of crime and in particular having a criminal record.



A social worker from the DSD educating young people about the negative effects of drugs in their lives.

An official from the SANDF sharing with young people the importance of living and practising good moral values of respect, discipline, love for oneself and caring for other people.



Different stakeholders sharing information with learners.

The areas of Fernie Syde and Diepdal are affected by the increasing use of drugs that are sold to the youth including school learners. There is also a high rate of emerging groups of gangsters and other crimes such as assaults, house breaking and armed robbery. As a way of implementing suggested interventions, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) organised various stakeholders and led the Anti-Drugs Awareness campaign targeting learners at Rev SA Nkosi, Methula and Lilanga high schools. Various stakeholders made informative presentations to caution learners about the dangers of drug abuse.

Several concerns were raised in the Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality’s war room meetings that, marijuana is trafficked from Swaziland and passed through to nearby areas of Fernie and Diepdal. It is also where it is sold mostly to young people and learners. In the war room meetings, it was indicated that there has been an increase in the number of incidents where drugs are sold to young people and learners.

Stakeholders such as the Chief Albert Municipality, South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Social Development (DSD), South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and Department of Basic Education made presentation to sensitise young people about the dangers of drugs. The GCIS led the campaign and ensured that information is distributed, while the ward committee members, community policing forum and community development workers members provided support.



William More said:

“I enjoyed seeing the children with disabilities perform, they really inspired me. They are proof that nothing is impossible and we should protect their rights.”



Pricilla Madichane said:

“I am so passionate about children; hence I have travelled to this important gathering to also pledge my commitment in upholding and protecting their rights!”



Tsholofelo Moeketsi said:

“It brings me joy to see our children so happy and protected! I have also found helpful information in the *Vuk'uzenzele* newspaper.”

OUTCOME 2: A LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS.

Minister launches Child Protection Week

By Xolani Mndaweni: GCIS, North West



Children from Nobandla Early Childhood Development Centre entertaining the crowds at Braakspruit Farm.



Minister Dlamini at the event.



Some of the dignitaries, community members and children who attended the launch.



Community members accessing various services from different stakeholders at the launch.



Some of the community members who attended the launch.



Children playing and learning new educational games at the event.

The Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, accompanied by Deputy Minister Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, officially launched the Child Protection Week at Braakspruit Farm, Klerksdorp on 29 May 2016. This year's event was commemorated under the theme: “Let Us All Protect Children to Move South Africa Forward”.

Not even the chilly weather could dampen the happy mood of the children, parents and rural communities who attended the event. The aim of the week is to raise awareness for the rights of children by mobilising all sectors of society to protect and care for children. “The issues of children should not be the concern of government alone; to change the quality of life of our children we all have to work as a force that protects the rights of children,” said Minister Dlamini.

The launch saw the farming community being exposed to a multitude of services rendered by government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The call for the protection of the rights of children was also heeded by a diverse number of stakeholders that attended the launch, amongst these were the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund, ILIFA Labantwana, Tiger Brands and Childline South Africa.

The Child Protection Week will end on 5 June, however, all people should pledge to uphold and protect the rights of children every day.