



MYDISTRICTTODAY



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PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

GCIS collaborates with communities to tackle substance abuse

By Reki Skosana; GCIS, Mpumalanga

On 20 and 21 November 2024, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in partnership with the Dr JS Moroka and Thembisile Hani local municipalities, the departments of Social Development and Health, South African Social Security Agency, Moral Regeneration Movement, Kwaggafontein Taxi Association, South African Police Service, Nkangala Inpatient Treatment Centre, South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Lovelife, local drug action committees and civil-society organisations, conducted a dialogue aimed at raising awareness on substance abuse and gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). Towards the festive season, most communities experience a rise in GBVF and criminal incidents because of high alcohol intake and substance abuse.

Addressing the community of Vaalbank, the Chairperson of Mpumalanga Substance Abuse, Mr Marcus Masemola said, "We will not rest until we alleviate the scourge of substance abuse in the communities, just like the youth of 1976 when they fought against apartheid."

At the event, the GCIS shared information on food safety to raise awareness around food poisoning. Members of the community were advised to be vigilant when buying food, check the expiry date on items and buy food from registered businesses.

Different exhibition stalls were available to distribute information and conduct one-on-one consultations. During the consultations, three drug users requested to be taken for drug rehabilitation, and they were immediately accepted at the Nkangala Inpatient Treatment Centre. At the centre, they will attend a programme for 12 months and thereafter an aftercare programme to monitor their progress.

Community members commended the stakeholders for the sessions and information material.



Members of communities attending the dialogues on substance abuse, GBVF and food safety in Kwaggafontein and Vaalbank.



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Mr Vusi Sibanyoni:

"It is good for all the service providers to visit our communities and assist us as substance abusers. If I were to be given an opportunity to go to a rehabilitation centre, I would do so now. I no longer want to abuse these substances."



Ms Constance Masango:

"I am a parent to one of the children who abuses substances; we all attended this session to hand them over so that they can be taken for rehabilitation. We were not sure where to access these kind of services, however, we appreciate what government has done for us. We are grateful for this opportunity and trust that it will yield positive results when they come back."



Mr Mduduzi Masombuka:

"What happened today was good because some of us need to be rehabilitated from using drugs, we are very much grateful."



Mr Aby Ntuli:

"I am hopeful that we will get help and go to rehabilitation centres today."

PRIORITY 3: EDUCATION, SKILLS AND HEALTH.

Deputy President Mashatile leads World AIDS Day commemoration

By Khoboso Lebenya and Lindokuhle Nxazonke; GCIS, Eastern Cape

The Deputy President of South Africa, Mr Paul Mashatile in his capacity as the Chairperson of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), led the official commemoration of World AIDS Day at the Sisa Dukashe Stadium, Mdantsane township in East London.

World AIDS Day is commemorated annually on 1 December across the globe, in solidarity with millions of people living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and to raise awareness about the status of the pandemic, with a view to encourage prevention, treatment and care. This year's theme; "Equal Rights, Equal Care", is a call for equal, equitable and dignified access to healthcare for all South Africans regardless of their economic status, gender, race or sexuality.

Activities on the day included the signing of the "Better Man 4 Tomorrow Men's Campaign" pledge and a petition from the non-governmental organisation, Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

In his keynote address, Mr Mashatile stated that it was an appropriate time to reflect on the progress made by government and social partners to achieve a collective vision of an AIDS-free world. "We need to stand in solidarity with the millions of people living with HIV in our country and around the world," he said. There are about 8,5 million people living with HIV in South Africa, while tuberculosis remains the leading cause of death, claiming around 56 000 lives a year.

Deputy President Mashatile was joined by a representative of the United States Government, Consul General Allison Areias; Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi and his deputy, Dr Joe Phaahla; the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Mr Oscar Mabuyane; the Member of Executive Council for Health in the Eastern Cape, Ms Ntandokazi Capa; SANAC Co-Chairperson, Mr Solly Nduku and various other stakeholders, ministers, mayors and councillors.



Mr Mashatile was joined by Dr Motsoaledi and Premier Mabuyane during the signing of a petition from the TAC.



Members of the public accessing integrated health services at the Sisa Dukashe Stadium.



Eastern Cape communities attending the 2024 World AIDS Day event.

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

IRC embarks on food safety campaign

By Boipelo Sefoka; GCIS, Gauteng

On Monday, 25 November 2024, and Wednesday, 27 November 2024, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) through its Information Resource Centre (IRC), embarked on a food safety campaign in Mamelodi, Soshanguve and Mabopane. The campaign aimed to educate residents, local food vendors and households on improving food safety practices, reducing food-borne illnesses and promoting awareness on the importance of hygiene and the safe handling of food.

Food safety information materials for street vendors and food stalls are essential to ensure the safety and well-being of both food handlers and consumers. Community responses to food safety are more effective when training and education respects local food traditions and practices. Food safety messages should be culturally appropriate to ensure buy-in from the community.

In some informal markets, food vendors form peer groups to share knowledge and best practices for food safety. Vendors who are more knowledgeable may guide others, creating a system of mutual support. This can be an effective way to spread food safety awareness in the absence of formal enforcement.

At the Thusong Service Centre in Mamelodi, the community received government information on food safety, 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign and Eskom meter registrations. Effective communication, collaboration and enforcement by the GCIS and community organisations are crucial to ensuring that food safety practices are embraced by both vendors and consumers.



The community of Mamelodi receiving information material about food safety.



Officials from the GCIS handing out information material on food safety at Mabopane Square.



A street vendor reading information on food safety.



GCIS officials at Mamelodi East taxi rank handing out information material.



Officials packaging information to distribute at food stalls and street vendors in Mabopane.

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFER COMMUNITIES.

Public Service Commission visits Tulbagh community

By Peter Titus; GCIS, Western Cape

On 8 March 2023, the Public Service Commission (PSC) hosted the Citizens' Forum in partnership with the Government Communication and Information System, Witzenberg Local Municipality, the Department of Local Government's Integrated Service Delivery unit, as well as the departments of Labour (DEL), Home Affairs, Western Cape Education Department (WCED), Health (DoH), South African Social Security Agency and the South African Police Service.

The Citizens' Forum aims to, among other things, evaluate service delivery in the area, improve participation in the planning and implementation of service delivery programmes, and make recommendations on how to improve service delivery. Key fundamental constitutional and human rights issues were identified during an initial visit to the community. These include poor sanitation, lack of access to medical care services, applications for identity documents and birth certificates, grants, high crime rate and drug abuse among the youth.

The PSC held a follow-up site inspection on 21 November 2024, and requested the identified government departments to provide feedback on commitments made to address the initial service delivery issues raised in March 2023.

Mr Mornay Pretorius, PSC Provincial Director, said that hope matters, but "we need to serve our communities with the necessary diligence and zeal and in accordance with the principles of Batho Pele." Regarding the identified services, the DoH's Dr Elton Titus said that the appointment of more healthcare workers at the Tulbagh Clinic had been approved to serve the local community.

A key issue highlighted by Pastor Gavin Buttress, who represented civil society and school governing bodies, was that the WCED must ensure that Mathematics and Science teachers were appointed at the newly built secondary school as the Tulbagh community has the potential to produce doctors and engineers. Since unemployment is one of the biggest threats in Tulbagh, job creation and entrepreneurship would be discussed with the DEL, the business sector and the Local Economic Development unit of the municipality. As part of the oversight responsibility of the PSC, Western Cape Resident Commissioner, Advocate Ashley Searle, committed to constantly follow up on service delivery progress.



Ms Abigail Robertson, Acting Director at the Department of Local Government:

"The Service Delivery Integration unit has committed to ensuring community mobilisation and communities taking ownership for their own development."



Mr Pretorius from the PSC facilitating discussions between various stakeholders and community members.



District Director at the WCED, Mr Noel Petersen, committed to focusing on the request to provide Maths and Science teachers for the schools in Tulbagh.



Adv Searle highlighted that the PSC would ensure that the services promised to intended communities reached them timeously.



PSC officials with colleagues from national and local government, civil society and government agencies at the forum.