



# MY DISTRICT TODAY



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## PRIORITY 2: EDUCATION, SKILLS AND HEALTH.

### Promoting a reading generation

*By Marianne Williams and Sikelela Zokufa: GCIS, Western Cape*

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in collaboration with Grassroots Educational Trust and the Department of Social Development hosted the first-ever reading initiative at the Eurika Library in Vredendal – North on 10 September 2019. This event aimed to create a reading culture among communities.

The 47 children aged between four and six from various playgroups were taught how to take good care of their books during a library orientation session before being captured in the world of Thomas the Fire-Engin read by the librarian Lizette Brand.

One of the teachers from the HappyFeet Playgroup, Chental Maree, said a love for storytelling should be cultivated from a young age, but this does not mean older people cannot become passionate about reading.

“We need to bring books into our home and expose our families to discover insights from books that are always sprinkled with adventure and a world of knowledge. To improve literacy, we need to invest in our children, by involving parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and not only rely on teachers because time spent fostering reading is just as important at home as in classrooms,” said Maree. The playgroups received books sponsored by the National Library of South Africa and Media 24’s NB Publishers, while all children received a South African flag.



Storytelling session during the reading initiative campaign.



GCIS and Grassroots Educare Trust officials pictured with playgroups after the storytelling session.



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On the same day, the GCIS also embarked on a journey to Kliprand outside Vredendal to launch the campaign at the Pumkinpatch Early Childhood Development Centre. Katrina Stuurman, who currently runs the centre, said her passion for books filters down to the children. This was clear when she started telling the story about Tambu. The children were captured in a world of unexpected places and animals with valuable lessons learnt. Stuurman said those kinds of initiatives restore hope and encourage them as teachers to keep on reminding their children that they can liberate themselves by reading books. These events were in support of the National Book Week, which was observed from 2 to 8 September 2019.



#### Juann Terblance said:

"It was a wonderful experience, and I think the initiative behind these books we received today is very good because our children lack when it comes to reading and grasping stories. That is why I think this is a very good initiative and I hope that in the future, it will be launched in other towns as well. Thank you very much for everything."



#### Jami-Lee Adams said:

"I have always loved books and was happy when we were invited to listen to a storytelling at the library. It was so much fun and I enjoyed learning something, together with my friends."



**Rosina Moloto said:**

“As a young woman, I will not turn a blind eye. I will report any acts of violence that I see happening in our community.”



**Rose Moloto said:**

“I am here today to make my contribution against gender-based violence and also, to show that I care about the safety of women.”

## PRIORITY 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

### Prayer against women abuse and violence

*By Tinyiko Molefe: GCIS, Gauteng*

In the wake of reports concerning women abuse, femicide and violence in the country, the Executive Mayor of Midvaal, Bongani Baloyi, in partnership with faith-based organisations (FBOs) and artists hosted a prayer session in Sicelo on 5 September 2019.

The Executive Mayor emphasised the importance of partnerships in order to maximise resources that will assist to curb attacks in the country. He said, “As government, we are able to build structures and launch programmes that will assist in the empowerment of the community. We also need the FBOs to come and deal with the spiritual issues in the country because our people are hurt spiritually. Women need to be empowered so that they can stand for themselves and provide for their families. We are also playing our part in ensuring the empowerment of women with initiatives such as Sebenza Mbokodo specifically meant to support women in business in the Midvaal area,” said Executive Mayor Baloyi.

One of the community members, Bones Modise, stressed the importance of assisting victims by reporting abuse that is happening in the community. “We need to start caring about what happens next door and assist one another to fight against gender-based violence and attacks, and also treat women with respect,” he said.



**Midvaal Executive Mayor Bongani Baloyi addressing the community.**



**Some of the community members who were in attendance.**



## PRIORITY 4: SPATIAL INTEGRATION, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

### Launch of National Arbor Month

*By Dibandlela Nkume: GCIS, Eastern Cape*

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries in partnership with Total South Africa launched the National Arbor Month in Port Elizabeth on 1 September 2019. For the past two years, the campaign has been running for a month rather than a week, which had been the case in the past. The campaign is observed under the theme: "Forests and Sustainable Cities".

The main focus of the National Arbor Month campaign is to highlight the ever growing need for greening our country and to create opportunities for environmental, social and economic development.

On the day of the launch, the Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Maggie Sotyu, visited three different sites in and around Port Elizabeth where she planted and handed over more than 500 trees to community members as part of encouraging them to enhance green living and nature conservation.

The first site visited was a park in Motherwell, Cotshana Street where she was accompanied by local leadership which included the MMC for Environment in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, Councillor Yolisa Pali. The next stop was Avenue A Park in one of the oldest townships of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, New-Brighton where she planted more trees and encouraged communities to treasure them. The Deputy Minister then visited Bazi Park, in KwaZakhele and had an engagement with community members on the importance of nature, specifically trees as they form part of the ecosystem.

The same evening, Deputy Minister Sotyu hosted the Arbor City Awards at Feather Market Centre where she awarded different municipalities in different categories including one for improved city that went to the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality.



Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu addressing the community of Motherwell during the National Arbor Month launch.



Deputy Minister Maggie Sotyu and local leaders planting trees at Avenue A Park.



Community members of KwaZakhele who attended the Arbor Month launch at Bazi Park.

## PRIORITY 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

### Men commit to end violence

By Doctor Marebane: GCIS, Limpopo

The Capricorn District Municipality partnered with a non-profit organisation called Father A Nation (FAN), to implement a 100 Men Camp at Lapalala Wilderness Resort at Vaalwater from 23 to 25 August 2019.

The aim of the camp was to equip and empower men to become champions in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). This was done through various mind-challenging activities, which required participants to exercise their thoughts and physical strength to solve those challenging activities.

A total of 108 men from the four local municipalities in the district, representing their respective civil society organisations, which included, faith-based, traditional leaders, traditional health practitioners, youth, disability, and government departments, participated.

All participants were inspired at the experience including the knowledge they have acquired during the session. In keeping with the pledge signed by the more than 300 men on 17 August 2017, Capricorn District Municipality remains committed to deal decisively with all forms of GBV, hence the partnership with the FAN and a commitment to continue to partner with any organisation committed to the fight against GBV as it remains a threat to families, young girls and boys, and also remains a major contributor to the spread of HIV and AIDS.

The participants were also taught about the Six Virtues of Champion Men, which are:

- Champion men use their strength well and for the good of others.
- Champion men tilt their fields, they take responsibility for their lives.
- Champion men define themselves by character. A champion man does not define himself by his image, possessions or conquest.
- Champion men build a band of brothers by embracing brotherhood.
- Champion men mentor the next generation.
- Champion men make the world a better place to live in.

The Director of FAN, Craig Wilkinson, committed their willingness to support another Men's Camp in the next year. One of the participants, Clement Makolo, said he learnt that anger and abuse are matters of choice. He also thanked FAN for bringing men together to engage.



Grass Lekokoana said:

"I have learnt that a man is like a puzzle that needs a good strategy to disentangle."



Khomotjo Komape said:

"As a young person, it was good to be here but what is important for me is the way forward."



Men who attended the two-day camp.



A member of the Father of the Nation engaging with men.