



MY DISTRICT TODAY



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Community workshop on underage drinking

Compiled by: Lehlohonolo Manoto from GCIS Free State



The National Liquor Authority, a regulatory unit within the Department of Trade and Industry, South African Breweries Ltd (SAB), a registered macro beer manufacturer, and the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) tasked with communicating government messages to the population at large, held a workshop in the Phillip Smith Community Hall in Thabong, Welkom on 28 February 2012, to make the community aware of the problem of underage drinking.

The *You Decide* Campaign is linked to the Department of Trade and Industry's campaign on banning alcohol advertising in an effort to curb underage drinking, and SAB's corporate social investment.

The campaign aims to hold community workshops with parents and teachers who are entrusted to educate and guide children about the dangers of alcohol abuse. Macro manufacturers and distributors of liquor are obliged to make commitments to combat and reduce the socio-economic cost of alcohol abuse.

The underlying reasons that make teens look for unhealthy and destructive avenues of self-gratification that lead to underage drinking are associated with social assertion and peer pressure (the need to be cooler, the desire to be older or to be part of the crowd) and despondency (no sense of future). Irresponsible and binge drinking is, however, prevalent in the youth in many societies and, as a result, the industry and government have partnered to embark on this campaign to ensure that South African communities are educated on alcohol misuse and abuse.

The GCIS developed information leaflets to distribute during a door-to-door campaign

as part of an effort to encourage members of the community to attend the workshop. Loud hailing was also used to announce the workshop, attended by about 200 people. The topics ranged from "Why are teens drinking?" and "Peer pressure" to "Risky behaviour that could lead to rape."

Research findings were presented to the community. The *Teen Guide* was also shared. All the information that was shared was demonstrated with a drama, which the audience enjoyed. Among the stakeholders who attended the community workshop were the Matjhabeng community development workers who would later, in collaboration with the GCIS, communicate the message to different wards.

If you think you have a drinking problem, or you have a friend with a problem, don't ignore it and hope it was just a few rough weekends. It could happen again and it could get worse. Do something about it. Talk to someone. Involve teachers or even your church leader.

Contact *You Decide* helpline on 0800 333 377 or www.youdecide.org.za



government
communications

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

It takes communities to improve the quality of education

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In his State of the Nation Address, presented to the joint sitting of Parliament in Cape Town on 3 June 2009, the President, Mr Jacob Zuma, stated that: "Education will be a key priority for the next five years. We want our teachers, learners and parents to work together with government to turn our schools into thriving centres of excellence."

The President further stated: "We reiterate our non-negotiables. Teachers should be in school and in class, on time, teaching, with no neglect of duty and no abuse of pupils! The children should be in class, on time, learning, be respectful of their teachers and each other, and do their homework."

Following this principle, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District in the Northern Cape, held a seminar, on Tuesday 14 February 2012, to discuss the state of education in the district. The seminar with the theme *How to Improve the Matric Results in the District*, was influenced by the poor 2011 matric results in the district. It emerged that the results affected the provincial Grade 12 performance from 72,3% in 2010 down to 68,8% in 2011.

Informed by government's theme *Together We Can Do More*, GCIS mobilised the Department of Basic Education, the John Taolo Gaetsewe Development Trust, the Kuruman Rural Further Education and Training College (RFET), and school governing bodies from 28 district high schools. The key issues identified in the session were: dilapidated infrastructure; learner transport; and teacher-learner ratio. Failure by parents to play a role in the education of their children was a major concern. These factors were blamed on the non-conducive learning environment.

"It is evident that there are solutions to problems facing our schools, but the only challenge is that we work in silos," declared one of the members

of the School Managers' Forum. Representatives from the department of Basic Education delivered presentations on the state of education in the district. The RFET College shared their contribution to education in the district, and the John Taolo Gaetsewe Development Trust presented their vision for education in the district.

The Executive Mayor of John Taolo Gaetsewe, Cllr Sophia Mosikatsi, said that it is important that they work together to change the picture of education in the district. Mosikatsi, who is also a former teacher, tabled the municipality presentation on their concern regarding the dilapidated schools.

She disclosed that as the district they are in constant communication with various stakeholders who are willing to finance the programme once they are furnished with the district plan. Mosikatsi urged all the role players to join hands in making the idea a workable one. She further said that the district is planning to have an indaba on education to look at the challenges raised at the seminar.

Other participants were life-skills orientation educators from the 28 high schools, as well as communicators from the district communicator's forum representing different departments, non-governmental organisations, mining sector and other education institutions such as the Maths Centre, the RFET College and councillors.



The state of education in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District in the Northern Cape was discussed during a seminar in February 2012.

