



MYDISTRICTTODAY



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CONTACT DETAILS OF THE GCIS PROVINCIAL OFFICES

For more information about similar programmes that are run across the country, contact one of the following provincial offices:

EASTERN CAPE

Ndlelantle Pinyana
043 722 2602 or 076 142 8606
ndlelantle@gcis.gov.za

FREE STATE

Yolisa Blom
051 448 4506 or 072 130 9893
yolisa@gcis.gov.za

GAUTENG

Peter Gumede
011 331 0164 or 083 570 8080
peterg@gcis.gov.za

KWAZULU-NATAL

Ndala Mngadi
031 301 6787 or 082 877 9420
ndala@gcis.gov.za

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Volunteer lay counsellors receive training

By Monique Warden: GCIS, Western Cape

On Monday, 10 June 2024, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), in collaboration with Molo Songololo (a non-profit organisation that promotes the rights and protection of children and youth, particularly girls), and the South African Police Service (SAPS), trained Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) room volunteers in the Central Karoo as lay counsellors. The training started in Murraysburg, a small town in the Beaufort West Municipal area in the Central Karoo, and will continue quarterly for every VEP room in the district until November 2024.

The training in Murraysburg focused on capacitating community members to work in VEP rooms as lay counsellors, and contribute to the safety and support of their own communities. Lay counsellors are staff workers or

volunteers who do not have a mental health background or formal degree in counselling but provide immediate psychosocial support to people in need and in this case, working with the SAPS, refer survivors for specialised support.

Victim-friendly VEP services within police stations aim to protect victims' dignity and rights, and prevent secondary victimisation. VEP rooms provide victims with emotional and practical support, as well as information and referrals to appropriate professional services.

Such training helps to fill the gap in communities and empowers citizens to be actively involved in delivering victim-friendly services.



Facilitator from Molo Songololo engaging with lay counsellors on body language.



Some of the participants in the session with the facilitator.



Community leaders, SAPS officials and DSD volunteers.



government communications

Department: Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



LIMPOPO

Thanyani Ravhura
015 291 4689 or 082 421 3461
thanyani@gcis.gov.za

MPUMALANGA

Jerry Nkosi
013 753 2397 or 082 316 5295
Jerry@gcis.gov.za

NORTH WEST

Boitumelo Mosadi
018 381 7071 or 073 245 0906
boitumelom@gcis.gov.za

NORTHERN CAPE

Ofentse Moeti
053 832 1378/9 or 084 390 4330
Ofentse@gcis.gov.za

WESTERN CAPE

Geraldine Thopps
021 418 0533/2307 or 081 281 2200
Geraldine@gcis.gov.za

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Community dialogue raises awareness about drug abuse

By Mpho More: GCIS, Northern Cape

As South Africa commemorated Youth Month in June 2024, the Department of Social Development (DSD), in collaboration with the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Pampierstad Youth Centre, held a community dialogue with the youth of Pampierstad in the Phokwane Local Municipality on 24 June 2024.

The event aimed to raise awareness about substance abuse, which is prevalent in the area, particularly among youth. The dialogue also aimed to encourage drug addicts to seek professional help or attend rehabilitation. Coincidentally, 26 June is the United Nations' International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which aims to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society.

All stakeholders including the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) and the Northern Cape Gambling Board, shared information about the services they provide to youth.

Ms Stacey Anthony, from the DSD's Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse unit, discussed the different types of drugs and the health consequences of substance addiction. The SAPS presented on the drug-related cases they are receiving and how a criminal record might affect someone's life.

The youth had the opportunity to engage with the stakeholders about the daily challenges that lead them to use drugs or abuse alcohol. Some of the concerns cited included police failing to arrest drug dealers, a lack of recreational facilities and the high unemployment rate in their communities.

To obtain more information and help fight substance abuse, the youth were encouraged to contact the South African Depression and Anxiety Group's 24-hour substance abuse helpline on 0800 12 13 14.

During the dialogue, the DEL registered jobseekers on their database for future job opportunities and other stakeholders handed out information products to the youth.



Stakeholders and community members during the presentations.



Stakeholders engaging with community members and sharing information products.



Information-sharing session with community members in full swing.



Botlhale Namane said:
“I have learned that there are many opportunities for us youth; we just need to reach out to the relevant stakeholders. We were afforded an opportunity to raise our concerns and came up with solutions.”



Gregory Monchonyana said:
“Today government departments visited us. We are very worried about youth behaviour, especially those who use drugs. They made us aware about the dangers of substance abuse and how it can destroy our lives.”



Lesego Mabogola said:
“I have learned about different types of drugs and how they can affect our lives. I am so happy that the government is reaching us with information that can change our lives.”

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Small businesses in rural areas receive training

By Eunice Nkuna: GCIS, Limpopo

As a developing country, South Africa's population of over 62 million people is confronted with the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality, which are a source of concern for government.

From 10 to 12 June 2024, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) organised workshops and training sessions targeting small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in the rural areas. The SMMEs were exposed to different government programmes and legislation that will contribute to the growth and development of their businesses.

The main stakeholder for the workshops, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, was supported by the National Credit Regulator and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF). Community members interested in starting their own businesses received information on various applicable laws, including the Companies Act of 2008 and Consumer Protection Act of 2008. They were also advised on the different types of funding available and how to access the funds. The community-outreach campaign managed to touch the lives of many people in the rural villages of Mopani District. Three Thusong Service Centres within the Mopani District, namely Maruleng, Relela and Mokwakwaila, were visited and about 180 people benefited from the free workshops.



Winnie Ramphaka said:

"I am small-scale farmer who is grateful to government's funding, which enabled me to start farming and export products. I employ four people who support their families through their stipends."



Mokgadi Mabudi said:

"I am happy to have received information on how to grow my Credit Score and that the NEF supports any business from R250 000 to R75 million."



Thabang Kgohloane said:

"I am interested in farming but currently need a borehole. I was referred to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform for borehole funding but for the stone-crushing business the NEF can assist."



Mpho Magudulela said:

"The NEF provides business loans from R250 000 up to R75 million across a range of sectors – for start-up, expansion and equity acquisition purposes."

PRIORITY 6: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Hotline boosts fight against fraud and corruption

By Lindokuhle Chiliza: GCIS, KwaZulu-Natal

Corruption is regarded as one of the greatest impediments to the country's growth and development. As part of fighting corruption, the Greater Kokstad Local Municipality officially launched its Anti-Fraud Corruption Hotline on 25 June 2024.

Representatives from various organisations, including the Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Premier; KwaZulu-Natal Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; Auditor-General of South Africa; Special Investigating Unit; National Prosecuting Authority, Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation and other law-enforcement entities witnessed the launch at the Greater Kokstad Town Hall.

The hotline for reporting corruption in the municipality offers multiple benefits to the community such as enhanced transparency by providing residents, employees and stakeholders with a dedicated channel to report suspected cases of corruption or unethical behaviour within the municipality.

It reinforces the municipality's commitment to accountability and integrity in its operations and services. It sends a clear message that corrupt activities will be investigated promptly and offenders charged.

It also encourages citizen engagement and participation in the governance process. It empowers residents to contribute to the municipality's efforts to combat fraud and corruption as well as uphold ethical standards. Providing a confidential and secure reporting mechanism to protect whistleblowers and individuals reporting corruption from potential retaliation or intimidation fosters a safer environment for reporting.

By addressing corruption and unethical behaviour, municipalities can improve service delivery to residents. Funds and resources diverted by corruption can instead be used to enhance public services and infrastructure. The hotline demonstrates a commitment to ethical governance and responsible stewardship of public resources.

Government remains determined to maintain its zero-tolerance approach to tackling fraud and corruption in all sectors of society. To report fraud and corruption anonymously in the Greater Kokstad Municipality, call 0800 071 071.



Greater Kokstad Municipality Mayor, Cllr Lwanda Madikizela.



Greater Kokstad Municipality Deputy Mayor, Cllr Karen Walker.



Local traffic law enforcement officers attending the event.



Harry Gwala District Municipality Deputy Mayor, Cllr Nosisa Jozi.



Some of the Greater Kokstad Local Municipality Executive Committee members attending the launch.



The Greater Kokstad Choir, made up of municipal employees and councillors, performs a musical item.