



NEWSFLASH



A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

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CGE Limpopo Works with SAPS on Girl Abduction Complaint



The Commission for Gender Equality in Limpopo received a complaint on the 25th of August about a pastor who allegedly stays with under-aged girls that he claims to be praying for. The complainant alleged that the parents to some of the children did not know their whereabouts as many of them had dropped out of school.

Following consultations with the complainant, the CGE engaged social workers at Ga-Maraba to address the challenges experienced by girl children in the area. The social workers confirmed that some of the children were taken to psychologists. The CGE involved the police station in Ga-Mashashane. "The station commander personally went to the house of the pastor to search the premises, but no

children were found at the time," said Dennis Matotoka of the Legal Unit. Police suspect that the pastor received a tip-off prior to their arrival and cleared his house. "However, the police were able to link the pastor to a pending rape case" Matotoka added. The CGE is monitoring progress in the rape case while also supporting the police in the ongoing investigation regarding the girl children.

"The current wave of GBV in Limpopo warrants swift action from all key role players to curb the scourge. As such the conduct of the SAPS station commander in the area to immediately conduct a search at the suspect's premises, is commendable and should set an example to the rest of the police on how to handle GBV cases" Matotoka said.

How common are GBV cases in the FS?

Noting the statistics provided by the SAPS in a recent Provincial GBV Indaba, the Free State province is not spared or free from this pandemic, with victims stretching across various age groups. The SAPS statistics further suggests that GBV related incidents are mainly recorded during the weekend whilst the location and perpetrators are mostly known to the victim. Certain areas within the province were identified as hotspots, one of which is Bloemspruit, which called for more action and collaboration between stakeholders to address GBV in the area.

What other challenges have you observed in the FS?

We have observed that there are concerns around the Justice system not responding adequately to crimes committed against the LGBTQIA+ persons. There are also complaints about the difficulty in finding legal practitioners in the province who specialise in Human Rights and more specifically, LGBTQAI+ rights. Another challenge is high unemployment resulting in young women entering the sex work sector. It was further observed that most female sex workers are survivors of childhood abuse resulting in them not completing school, thus currently living in poverty.



Q&A with Samantha Britz
Free State Provincial Manager

What kind of work do you do with stakeholders?

As the provincial office we actively collaborate with stakeholders with the aim of rolling out community-based programmes such as access to justice interventions, gender related workshops on Sexual Offences, Customary Marriages, Domestic Violence etc. We serve on various provincial forums for Victim Empowerment, LGBTQI+, Sexual Offences & Femicide, Trafficking in Persons, Justice Crime Prevention & Security Technical Cluster, etc. This supports and compliments our monitoring function.

How has the lockdown impacted on your work?

The lock down has impacted on physical engagements with communities. These engagements allowed members of the community to actively participate in discussions, ask questions and raise their concerns. The community is deprived of this opportunity and as a result we were limited to making use of community radio platforms with the hope of reaching communities in rural areas. The impact of this is not really known as it cannot be established how many people were reached during each session. Although the current regulations allow for physical engagements with restricted numbers, there are still challenges in terms of securing venues complying with safety regulations. At times, the rise in numbers of covid cases in the province leads to postponements or cancellations of programs due to venues being subjected to decontamination processes.

Hearing the voices of CGE women on the meaning of Women's Month



"I am the woman I am because I was raised by a Queen who equipped me with necessary tools to handle life. Skills that would come in handy after an abusive first marriage. Those very skills enabled me to walk away and raise three children by myself and without any financial assistance. I lost my Queen more than a decade ago but to this day, I still practice what she taught me. Today it's hard to speak about life and identity without mentioning Covid 19. The pandemic has added to women's responsibilities. However, I am so grateful to be an employee of the CGE but more specifically, the Western Cape office. I am so grateful to report to a manager that believes in looking at an employee holistically. Sixolile Ngcobo takes into account all 24 hours of my life when making any decision. I am blessed to have always been surrounded by strong women and salute each and every one of them. To all the women out there, Breathe, Plan and STORM my Queens!" - *Nazlie Williams, Western Cape Office.*



"As a woman I draw my inspiration from other women. I am in awe everytime I see a woman on the street, even on the coldest winter day, selling goods to provide for her children.

These forward- thinking women work hard to encourage the next generation to work hard, because nothing has ever been given to a woman. Women's month is not just about August 9, 1956. It is a reminder that women are strong beings who strive to better" - *Jacqueline April, PEI*