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"During this Youth Month, I want to encourage fellow young people to advocate for inclusiveness in their quest to access economic opportunities and education. The youth should exercise their agency through gender equality, and respect for other human beings. Place value on education, engage in economic activities and develop a personal culture of zero tolerance towards Gender-Based Violence and Femicide" – **Koketso Sekhu, CGE's Education Officer.**

"As a young person myself, I think Youth Month is a time to remember the youth of 1976 who stood up against apartheid and fought for freedom and equal rights for all. If it wasn't for them, I don't think we would be an equal society as we are today, we wouldn't be having a mixed Nation in the workplace, schools, and communities" – **Lungelo Mesh, CGE's Communications Intern.**

Addressing Challenges At Home-Based Care Centres in Mpumalanga



The Mpumalanga office of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) met with management committees from the Masoyi Home-Based Care Centre, Greater Rape Intervention Programme and National Youth Development Agency, to address challenges and issues raised during the recent oversight visit by the Portfolio Committee on Women, Children and People with Disabilities. "GRIP took a decision to assist with various programmes by providing skills transference and mentorship to the Home-Based Care",

said Moltah Mavuso, CGE Provincial Manager in Mpumalanga. "We are also thankful to the NYDA as they have pledged to bring a team of facilitators who will assist the centre to conduct a strategic planning so that they can start with the reengineering of the organisation's objectives", she

added. The Masoyi Home-Based Care Management was very thankful to the CGE, GRIP and NYDA for their intervention as the centre was about to be shut down from the work it does such as keeping orphans and vulnerable children to the home, providing life skills, and doing gardening.

Above: CGE Provincial Manager with representatives from the NYDA and Masoyi Home-Based Care Centre.

CGE Responds to Concerns On Access To Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Mahikeng

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in the North West met provincial stakeholders to discuss sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in Mahikeng in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District. The engagement, attended by civil society organisations and the department of health, was initiated after the CGE was informed that many women in the area are unable to access healthcare services. This became evident on 25 May 2023 at Bophelong hospital, Mafikeng when it was reported that newborn babies were placed in cardboard boxes due

to a shortage of cribs and incubators. "Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights are enshrined in section 27 of the Constitution which provides that, everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care", said Tsholofelo Sabole, CGE's Public Education Officer in the province. In her address, Sabole further said "everyone in South Africa has a right of access to health services and the freedom to make free and responsible decisions and choices about their own body".



Non-Registration of Customary Marriages: A Nightmare For Women in S.A

Opinion Piece by Lesego Mogomotsi

The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998 in South Africa regulates customary marriages and its objectives are to inter alia:

- To make provision for the recognition of customary marriages,
- To specify the requirements for a valid customary marriage,
- To regulate the registration of customary marriages,
- To provide for the equal status and capacity of spouses in customary marriages,
- To regulate the proprietary consequences of customary marriages and the capacity of spouses of such marriages.

It is required that customary marriages must be registered with the Department of Home Affairs within three months from the date the marriage was concluded. Registering a customary marriage in South Africa is important for several reasons, such as claiming pension monies, inheritance, ascertaining property rights. It is undisputed that non-registration of a customary law does not affect the validity of the customary marriages.

The Commission for Gender Equality has however observed in recent years that most complainants often do not have evidence to prove the existence of their customary marriage. This is often caused by irretrievably breakdown of relationships between the complainants and the in-laws, especially if the customary spouse passes on. Often, the in-laws submit that they do not know the customary wife. This results in most women spending a lot of funds in order to prove the existence of a customary marriage. This prejudices a lot of women especially those without means. Faced with household responsibilities and the loss of a spouse, adding financial burden to the prove an existence of a customary marriage can become a nightmare for most women. It is therefore important to register customary marriages earlier, in order to avoid lengthy litigation before courts should the marriage dissolve due to divorce or death, in the future. The Minister of Home Affairs has therefore extended the registration period to 30 June 2024 to cater for those whose marriages that were not registered within three months. For a full article, visit www.cge.org.za.

Lesego Mogomotsi is a Legal Administrator at the CGE