



## CGE Concerned About Growing Child Marriages



Picture: [www.voanews.com](http://www.voanews.com)

By Lungelo Mesh

Commission For Gender Equality's (CGE) Provincial Manager in KwaZulu-Natal, Ms Zanele Ncwane, has raised concerns about the high levels of child marriages, gender-based violence, child abuse and neglect in some rural parts of Umzimkhulu in the province. The Commission's KwaZulu-Natal office started doing gender education work in the community in 2019 after an NGO informed it about a 15-year-old girl who was married off to an older man by her family. This scourge continues to be on the rise.

"The issue of early marriages is difficult because families are always aware of it, but they are keeping it as a secret amongst themselves, when we follow up on these issues, we are always told that it is part of family traditions. The issue of poverty makes it worse" Ncwane said. According to Statistics South Africa, more than 200 children were married off in 2021, with 188 of them being brides and 19 grooms. Ncwane said the Commission continues to engage with traditional leaders and communities in the province.

## Sustaining Women's Development for a Better Tomorrow



TOP: People who participated in the discussions on the importance of women's development. LEFT: CGE's Keketso Sekhu delivering a keynote address.

By Lungelo Mesh

The Commission for Gender Equality in Gauteng was part of a round table discussion on the economic development of women, held at the Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Vosloorus. Under the theme: "Consolidation and Sustaining Women's Development for a Better Tomorrow, Women Economic Inclusion and Empowerment", the gathering also discussed ways to address and prevent gender-based violence and femicide.

"Promoting gender equality is crucial to foster a just and inclusive society. The Commission for Gender Equality plays a vital role in this by addressing systemic biases, advocating for women's rights, and ensuring equitable opportunities for all genders", said Keketso Sekhu, CGE's Public Education Officer.

Attendants were also addressed by different speakers on the importance of raising awareness about the prevalence and impact of GBV, support and advocate for survivors of GBV, sustained promotion of gender equality and ways to challenge harmful gender stereotypes in communities.

"We must appreciate that when we empower women economically, it will benefit society in a big way" said Cllr Nthabiseng Tshivhenga, who is the Speaker of Council in the City of Ekurhuleni. Sekhu added that the realisation of gender equality has many positive outcomes in society, "Achieving gender equality benefits individuals, economies, and communities by enhancing social harmony, reducing discrimination, and harnessing the full potential of diverse perspectives" she said.

## Encouraging Young Girls And Women To Share Skills and Information



CGE Commissioner Lindiwe Ntuli-Tloubatla showing support to girls at the GFS event.

"Information must be shared widely because it is power and the currency for democracy", these were the words of encouragement from the Commission For Gender Equality (CGE), Commissioner Lindiwe Ntuli -Tloubatla during an engagement with International World Anglican Church Girl Friendly Society (GFS). The CGE participated in the GFS engagement last week in Gauteng.

The GFS is an empowerment and development program with a noble intention of preparing the girl child for the future on socio-dynamics. Ntuli- Tloubatla shared the constitutional mandate of the Commission, reports and the work done by the CGE. "The CGE is committed in its constitutional mandate which is to promote, protect and respect for gender equality.

As we soldier on in support, development and empowerment of the girls who are members of GFS let us be mindful of producing assertive young women who will be educated enough to tackle socio- economic challenges within the body of Christ and community at large", said Ntuli- Tloubatla. She further said women must continue to share skills and produce many versions of themselves in every positive action they take.



### Accelerating Socio-Economic Opportunities for Women's Empowerment

#WomensMonth2023 #WomensDay2023