



Follow the CGE on Instagram: @cgelive

A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

08 September 2023

EDITION 93

Follow the CGE's YouTube Channel: @CommissionForGenderEquality

## CGE Applauds FSDSD For Establishment Of A Shelter For GBV Survivors

Picture: Boitumelo Zwane, CGE Free State Acting Provincial Manager.



By: Boitumelo Zwane

The MEC for Social Development in the Free State launched a shelter for victims of crime and violence in Koffiefontein, Xhariep District, Free State last week. This comes after the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) conducted a systematic investigation into the state of shelter in South Africa in the financial year 2018/19 following several complaints from victims of GBV. During the investigation the CGE found that the number of shelters in the Free State was insufficient, the Free State Department of Social Development (FSDSD) then made a pledge to establish a shelter in the Xhariep District. Since the recommendations made in 2018/19 by the CGE, the FSDSD has established other

shelters in Fezile Dabi District and in Thabo Mofutsanyana. The CGE commended the FSDSD for its effort in the establishment of the shelter in Koffiefontein "As the CGE we wish the shelter all the best as they render services to vulnerable and survivors of GBV. As duty bearers they must ensure to serve wholeheartedly, with diligence and restoring the dignity of those they serve", said Boitumelo Zwane, CGE's Acting Provincial Manager in Free State. Zwane was delivering a message of support at the shelter opening. "Furthermore, the department must ensure that shelters are not only places of safety, but they must empower survivors with skills that will sustain them when they leave the shelter" she said.

## IEC Calls For CGE Support In Monitoring Forced Marriages



By: Nceba Mrwebo

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in collaboration with Independent Election Commission of South Africa (IEC) hosted a Rural Women's Dialogue on traditional practices at Matatiele Local Municipality under Alfred Nzo District Municipality, Eastern Cape.

IEC requested the CGE to do a follow up session on this year's event as last year's Rural Women's Dialogue had several issues that were raised by women including early child and forced marriages. The IEC believed that such matters can be better handled by institutions such as the CGE. During the engagement the participants urged the CGE to engage with traditional leaders on issues such as

female circumcision, as they were not comfortable discussing such issues in public. CGE Commissioner Leonashia Leigh-Ann Van Der Merwe addressed the attendees on harmful traditional practices and how they violate gender rights. "The CGE is concerned about early child force marriage as well as arranged marriages and the practice of female circumcision as it violates gender rights, said Commissioner Van Der Merwe. "One of the worst forms of traditional practices is female genital mutilation (FGM) as it infringes upon women's sexual and reproductive health rights. It takes away women's bodily autonomy and agency by removing the choices they make about their bodies", said Commissioner Van Der Merwe.

## CGE Reaches Out To Rural Community

By: Khaya Nkontso

Cumakala community members in Idutywa, Eastern Cape were empowered by the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and other Chapter 9 Institutions last week during an awareness session. The Institutions visited the village to share their mandates and empower the community on strategies to claim and enjoy fundamental rights.

The community mentioned that they are currently experiencing poor service delivery such as access to clean water and the roads are not well maintained. "The absence of water has a negative impact on women as they have to fetch it from dams and rivers in order to drink, cook and do other household chaos, this is very unsafe, and we are concerned as chapter 9 institutions", said Khaya Nkontso, Public Education Officer at the CGE. The Institutions have concluded that they will compile a report and bring the service delivery backlogs to the attention of the municipality and other entities that must assist.



## Smart Farming, How Far Have We Come and What Can Be Expected?

By: Keletso Rampeng

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) hosted the Annual Symposium for Women in Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August in Pretoria. Commissioner Prabashni Subrayan Naidoo of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) formed part of the panel discussing the topic 'Innovation and Technology- Smart Farming' where she shared on the need to address gender bias in technology, placing emphasis on 'How far the country has gone and what can be expected?'

agricultural information to farmers." Naidoo further touched on the state of women in agriculture, "Women make up around 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing nations and in most Eastern and Southern African nations, women make up almost half of the agricultural labour. Despite women's dominance and contribution to agribusiness the productivity divide between men and women farmers persists across Africa."

"In a developing country like South Africa, with most of our agricultural activities occurring in rural parts of the country, the technology divide is a significant concern. The main barrier is a lack of digital technology skills amongst academics and farm workers themselves as well as a lack of powered infrastructure for spreading

The commissioner further emphasized that biotechnology can be used as a technique to diversify and enlarge food and other industrial product based in a speedier manner. In her concluding remarks, Commissioner Naidoo emphasised the need for adaptability with the new skills set in order for the agriculture industry to thrive.