

NEWSFLASH

A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

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Correctional Services Told To Protect Rights of Working Mothers And Female Inmates



LEFT: Officials of the Department of Correctional Services in Worcester, Western Cape, briefed the CGE on the organisation's transformation policies.

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) expressed concern when Breed River Department of Correctional Services (DCS) revealed on Monday, in Worcester, during CGE's oversight visit, that its breastfeeding policy allows women only two hours a day for eight weeks to breastfeed. CGE wants the department to allow working mothers to nurse their babies for a period of

eight months. The Breed River centre's management held a briefing with CGE's Deputy Chairperson Nomasono Mazibuko and Commissioner Prabashni Subrayan- Naidoo to account for its compliance with gender-related laws and prescripts. During its presentation the department brought up record keeping and LGBTQIA+ policy as one of its challenges, accommodated and recognised upon disclosure, however, there is no formal record keeping of this, the Z83 form is still not inclusive of alternative sexuality expressions", said the management. The department also reported that there is no specific place for the LGBTQIA+ people. "Incidents of abuse amongst officials and inmates are difficult to account for because abuse is not reported in the department," they said. As a preventative measure the DSC claimed it raises awareness among officials and inmates.

According to the department, all areas within the region have access to the policy, and offenders with disabilities are provided for by the Directorate of Social Work Services. The Commission has observed that the employment of people with disabilities is quite low, with only 55 officials in total.

CGE Meets North West Institutions to Promote Gender Transformation

Commission For Gender Equality's Commissioner Bongani Ngomane visited the North- West Provincial Legislature on Tuesday to enhance ties between the two institutions. The CGE met with the Deputy Speaker as well as those in charge of gender transformation and public participation.

Furthermore, the CGE monitored Police Stations and Thuthuzela Care Centres within the Ngaka Modiri Molema District, assessed victim friendly rooms at the police stations, and ensured that the Thuthuzela Care Centres have adequate resources to care to victims of sexual violence. Mmabatho police station receives at least 50 applications for protection orders per month. "The common cause for this is usually due to intimate partner violence, especially between couples who have children or are living together" said the station's management. The CGE will work closely with other institutions to achieve gender transformation and ensure that gender is mainstreamed in policies and programmes.



CGE Calls for Closure of Illegal Initiation Schools

By: Keletso Rampeng

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) has called on the Department of Traditional Affairs and police to work together to stop illegal initiation schools. Addressing the DTA's men forum session on Wednesday, CGE Commissioner Bongani Ngomane the passing of young men in initiation is a serious concern, "We are calling on government to work together with police to bring these bad practices to an end," Ngomane said.

The session was aimed at informing and educating men on a plethora of topics that affect them and covered matters such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), educational talks on cancer's prone to men and mental health awareness. The session's theme was "DTA men in conversation". The gathering was attended by representatives from the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) and the Weskopies Psychiatric Hospital.

Commissioner Ngomane further emphasised the importance of commemorating dates that are meant to raise awareness on men's issues. "It is our responsibility as men to ensure that young boys are aware of important days such as the international day for the boy child. These kinds of days should be able to break the silence that exists between men and young boys", he said. CGE spokesperson Javu Baloyi spoke on the importance of organisations implementing gender-based violence (GBV) preventative policies, "In South Africa we have all these wonderful policies which we praise, yet the scourge of GBV continues to rise, we need to implement these policies" he said. Baloyi further raised concern about statistics of underage kids who fell pregnant and gave birth during the lock down period "In Gauteng 933 kids between the ages of 10 – 14 fell pregnant and gave birth during lockdown,"



South Africa's Continuous Struggle for Safe and Accessible Abortion.

Opinion Piece by Noma-Afrika Wakashe

The South African government introduced the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act 96 of 1996 ('the Act'), effective from February 1, 1997. The primary objective was to replace the restrictive and inaccessible provisions of the Abortion and Sterilization Act 2 of 1975, and to extend reproductive health rights and the freedom of choice by granting every woman the right to choose whether to have an early, safe, and legal termination of pregnancy according to their individual beliefs. Despite the progressive legislation, the Commission for Gender Equality continues to receive reports of women dying due to complications related to unsafe abortions.

During a recent inspection visit to a hospital in the Eastern Cape, the Commission observed that the hospital had a high rate of maternal deaths, the majority of which stem from unsafe abortions. The hospital highlighted the concern that no action is taken to hold those responsible for unsafe abortion services and facilities accountable. This is merely an example of many other maternal deaths recorded across the county. Lack of implementation of the CTOP Act by the authorities exacerbates the situation particular at the rural remote areas.

(To read the full piece, visit www.cge.org.za - under Articles)

Noma-Afrika Wakashe is a Legal Officer at the CGE



Watch Gender Space On Dumisa TV, DSTV CHANNEL 340, Thursdays at 18:00