

REPORT

ON ADVOCACY FOR ANTI GBV SAFE SPACES IN NORTH WEST TVET COLLEGES



for the 2023/24 financial year



Commission for Gender Equality

Copyright: © 2024 Commission for Gender Equality.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, photocopied, or transmitted in any form, no part thereof be distributed for profit making purposes, without prior written permission of the Commission for Gender Equality.

Publisher: Commission for Gender Equality.

Design, Layout & Printing: Shereno Printers cc

Title of Publication: Report on advocacy for anti-GBV safe spaces in North-West TVET Colleges during the 2023/24 financial year.

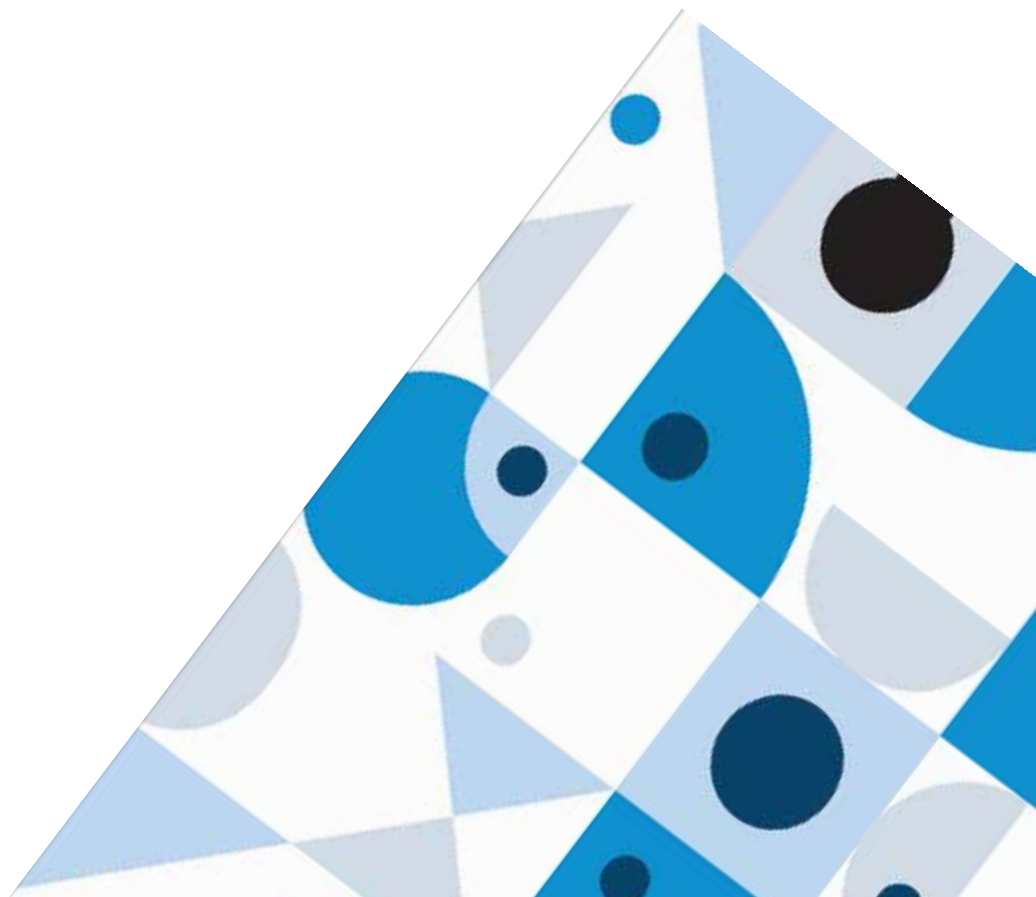


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairperson' Foreword.....	1
Introduction	3
Background	5
Frameworks and international instruments to end GBV	8
Campaign objectives.....	9
College engagements approach	10
Gender mainstreaming awareness	13
Stakeholder engagements.....	14
Gender and development workshops.....	15
Public education and information outreach	16
Taletso TVET College	18
CGE's observations.....	18
CGE's recommendations	19
Orbit TVET College	20
CGE's observations.....	20
CGE's recommendations	21
Vuselela TVET College	22
CGE's observations.....	22
CGE's recommendations	23
Conclusion	24
Acknowledgements	25
Initiative leaders	25
Media publicity	26

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD



*“ TVET Colleges
should not be left
alone in the fight
against Gender-
Based Violence
and Femicide ”*

**Chairperson: Adv Nthabiseng
Sepanya-Mogale**

Commission for Gender Equality

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is one of the institutions established in terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). In terms of section 187 of the Constitution, the mandate of the CGE is to contribute to strengthening and deepening constitutional democracy in South Africa through the promotion, protection, development, and attainment of gender equality.

The CGE has a mandate to promote and protect gender equality in government, civil society, and the private sector. Part of its mandate is to monitor the implementation of legislation and international and regional instruments signed, or acceded to, and or ratified by South Africa, that impact directly or indirectly on gender equality.

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is an independent, constitutionally mandated organization that pioneers and catalyses gender development and transformation. The CGE is delighted to lead this monumental project, which is a brainchild of the Forum for Institutions Supporting Democracy (FISD). In one of the FISD's progressive engagements in 2022, a decision was taken to embark on an initiative aimed at promoting campus safety for students and fighting gender-based violence (GBV) in institutions of higher learning. The emphasis was put on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

As a Chapter 9 institution mandated to promote and protect gender equality in South Africa, the CGE accepted the task of leading the implementation of this project at selected TVET colleges. In terms of Section 187 of the Constitution, the mandate of the CGE is to contribute to strengthening and deepening constitutional democracy in South Africa through the promotion, protection, development, and attainment

of gender equality. The FSD's intention to contribute to building safe campuses was supported by its decision to set aside a small budget to initiate an advocacy project on GBV.

We identified the North West Province as our specific focus for this campaign. The CGE, through the leadership of Commissioner Bongani Ngomane and supported by our office in the province, visited three TVET colleges and engaged with their students, staff members, and senior management teams to solicit their views on safety measures in their spaces. Our engagements paid special attention to sexual harassment of female students and workers on campuses, the safety of residences, and policies and procedures in handling incidents related to sexual violations and physical violence. Our public education and information department conducted engagement sessions to empower students and managers with information on how to prevent GBV on their respective campuses.

It is important to recognise that TVET colleges should not be left alone in the fight against GBV and femicide. They should receive all the support and interventions that can help them become places of safety for students. As CGE, we have been monitoring GBV prevalence at TVET colleges and universities for more than five years and has produced reports on our findings and recommendations. We are calling on the Department of Higher Education and Training to play its role as per its commitments to continually monitor the levels of GBV in higher education institutions. The scourge of GBV and femicide will only be reduced and eventually eliminated if all role players in society can put their efforts together.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the good work done by the CGE's North West Provincial office, public education and information department, and the communications unit for their sterling groundwork from the campaign to the compilation of this report.



INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) is a serious scourge that affects all communities and all sectors of society. It is a pandemic that is of concern that affects the safety and well-being of the Post School Education and Training (PSET) communities. In the higher education sector, the CGE investigative reports are concerned with the lack of a proper understanding of gender dynamics accompanied by a slow pace of transformation within institutions of higher learning. This concern is indicative of low levels of compliance with relevant laws aimed at ensuring that the PSET sector has policies that have a zero-tolerance approach to gender discrimination, violence and harassment of students, particularly female students and employees. It underscores a need for policies that are uniform across the sector, with clear reporting and referral guidelines. Again, these highlight a need for policies that promote inclusion and diversity for the safety of students of all genders and sexual orientations.

Gender-based violence (GBV) are harmful behaviours or acts committed against someone because of their gender and it can take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence.

The prevalence of GBVF in TVET colleges is a major concern that calls for a nuanced approach to greater prevention and awareness, accountability and monitoring of the safety of students on campuses. The CGE reports show that harmful incidents of GBV and femicide and unsafe gender-based conduct (such as violence and gender-blind policies) are a challenge that exacerbates unsafe learning environments for students.

The Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy (FISD) which comprises of the Auditor General of South Africa, South African Human Rights Commission, the Independent Electoral Commission, the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, Office of the Public Service Commission, and the Independent Electoral Commission, through its legislated powers, realised a need to address the issue of protecting and ensuring that TVET colleges are capacitated and empowered to address the prevalence of GBVF in the North West province through an intervention.

Due to the gendered nature of GBVF, the FSD took a resolution to allocate this task to the CGE as a human rights body with the mandate to protect, promote, and advance gender equality. An allocation of R160,258.00 was directed to this intervention. The CGE decided to channel the anti-GBVF intervention to the three TVET Colleges of North West province, where a baseline investigative report on the state of transformation exists. In order to promote gender equality, the CGE Act 39 of 1996 gives CGE powers to develop, conduct, or manage information and education programs to foster public understanding on matters pertaining to the promotion of gender equality and the role of the CGE. Part of this mandate gives CGE powers to monitor the implementation of legislation and international and regional instruments signed and ratified by South Africa that directly or indirectly impact gender equality.

Despite the 2020 published Department of Higher Education and Training Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System (PSET), the spate of GBVF continues to increase. The incidences of GBV in the PSET continue to undermine the respect, protection, promotion, and fulfilment of human rights as enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996. The DHET policy framework acknowledges the need for a multi-sectoral response to curb, monitor, and address GBVF. The FSD intervention has recognised the value of a more concerted awareness and advocacy required to empower institutions of higher learning and students with GBVF awareness, and education programs. This intervention centred its approach on capacitating students, student representatives, college workers, and management with safe space creation knowledge for the protection of all sexual orientations, all genders, female students, and workers of all three TVET colleges.

The intervention was carried out between July 2023 and March 2024, at Taletso, Orbit, and Vuselela TVET colleges. The intervention aimed at ensuring that duty bearers and role players whose responsibility is to ensure that students can learn in a safe and inclusive environment are empowered and capacitated.

This intervention was achieved by embarking on individual campus campaigns through collaborating with other sectoral stakeholders, whereby inter-institutional stakeholders were sensitised and engaged about gender norms that foster cooperative behaviours and attitudes. The campaign sensitized female students and school management to identify hegemonic or mesogenic workplace and school cultures that are likely to tolerate aggressive behaviours, thus creating an environment where violence should not thrive. Moreover, the campaign sensitised the college stakeholders about frameworks that must be in place to reduce gender vulnerabilities and violence, thus creating safety oversight indicators of on-and-off-campus spaces.

“An independent, constitutionally mandated organisation that pioneers and catalyses gender development and transformation.”



BACKGROUND

In 2023, the Department of Higher Education and Training reported about a study that was conducted by Higher Health, an agency tasked with developing and implementing health, wellness, GBV, mental health, and other programmes in the higher education sector. The report shows that 62% of students, 60% of service staff and 71% of academic staff felt unsafe on campus. According to the report they consider themselves to be at high risk of being affected by GBV. Systemic gender imbalances generally disempower females, stifle their voices, and prevent their stories from being told.¹

According to data, South Africa is becoming an increasingly unsafe place for women. The Crime Against Women in South Africa Report by Statistics SA (2018) shows that femicide (the murder of women based on their gender) is five times higher than the global average in comparison to male murders.² This high murder rate means that women are five times more likely to be killed due to GBV committed by men.

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa provides for human rights of equality, human dignity, freedom and security of the person, freedom from being subjected to servitude, forced labour, and the right to fair labour practices.

Section 9(3) of The Bill of Rights states that the State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth. Section 10 of the Bill of Rights states that

everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. Section 12 (1) makes a provision for the protection and security of persons, and 12 (c) makes provisions for everyone to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources.

1 Enaifoghe, A. O. (2019). Gender based violence and the global gendered viewpoint approaches to building a peaceful South Africa. *Journal of Social and Development Sciences*, 10(2 (S)), 15-25.

2 StatsSA, (2018). Crime against Women in South Africa, An in-depth analysis of the Victims of Crime Survey data, p. 7

In TVET colleges, where students are often in vulnerable positions due to factors such as age, socio-economic status, and power dynamics, highlight an acute need for creating safe spaces for women in school campuses. GBVF in South African education continues to be one of the most serious human rights violations and, as such, requires continuous attention. Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga, and Bradshaw, for example, conducted a rape study among female students in 2002 and discovered that more than a quarter of students were at risk of being raped at or near their Institutions of Higher Learning.³ Shefer, Clowes, and Vergnani conducted a transactional sex study at a South African university in 2012 and found that it was common for female students to engage in sexual relationships with older males (so-called "sugar daddies") to help pay their study fees, or simply to boost their social status.⁴

Dr Jarred H Martin, University of Pretoria, December 2023, looks at the long-term psychological effects of GBV that reverberate far beyond the immediate victims, permeating the cultural fabric and shaping the mental landscapes of both men and women.⁵

Academic and non-academic literature shows the effects of GBV on students, which include stigma, low academic performance, mental and psychological trauma as well as high dropouts.

According to Fisher et al. (2000:65; Gonzales et al.), "81% of on-campus sexual assaults and 84% of off-campus sexual assaults go unreported, implying that the problem is far more pervasive than the statistics suggest. University students who have been victims of GBV have distinct reasons for not reporting their incidents, such as fear of being identified as a rape victim, peer pressure, a lack of faith in the criminal justice system, and fear for their lives".⁶

Therefore, it is essential to address GBVF in TVET colleges to promote safety and equality. By offering secure learning and working environments, colleges can prevent the spread of GBVF and increase public confidence towards the safety of their campuses. The college management must look at the nuances of GBVF such as the delays of financial student financial aid disbursements, and strengthen policies that urgently address GBVF by removing and dismantling harmful stereotypes, norms, and tolerance of behaviours that perpetuate GBVF.

3 Jewkes, R., Levin, J., & Penn-Kekana, L. (2002). Risk factors for domestic violence: findings from a South African cross-sectional study. *Social science & medicine*, 55(9), 1603-1617.

4 von Meullen, N., & van der Waldf, G., (2022). Promoting Gender-based Violence Awareness in Higher Education Institutions, 3(3), p. 127

5 Martin J. (2023). The effects of GBV are entrenched in SA's cultural fabric' – UP psychology lecturer. https://www.up.ac.za/psychology/news/post_3204132-the-effects-of-gbv-are-entrenched-in-sas-cultural-fabric-up-psychology-lecturer, accessed 29 March 2024.

6 von Meullen, N. et al. P. 128





FRAMEWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS TO END GBV

South Africa is a signatory of several conventions that give the country obligations to adopt appropriate legislation and other measures to prohibit all discrimination against women and establish legal protection for the equal rights of women. The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education calls for a violence-free learning environment as an essential part of a quality education. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women Signatories must take positive measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish any incidents of GBV, which are condemned as a form of discrimination that violates the human rights of girls and women (General Recommendation 28 – Paragraph 2).

The Dakar Framework for Action outlines key strategies for meeting the EFA goals, including preventing violence and conflict and creating a safe learning environment. The Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+20), where the 189 UN Member States adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, took up the global call to end all forms of violence against women and girls by highlighting violence as one of their 12 crucial areas of concern. The Incheon Declaration commits countries, including South Africa, to supporting gender-sensitive

JOYCE KHUTSOANE
CGE North-West Provincial Manager

policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 includes a target to build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender-sensitive, as well as provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Goal 5 includes various targets on gender equality and empowering women and girls, ending discrimination, and eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres. Goal 16 includes a target to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.



CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

Through this public education advocacy initiative, the intervention sought to formalise various structures and raise awareness of the importance of institutions' adoption of gender mainstreaming as a policy framework to address transformation gaps, gender and development, and the broader goal of education equity:

- Empower TVET college leadership structures with the knowledge to identify transformation policy gaps and measures to ensure learner safety on campuses.
 - Advocate for TVET management structures, students, and student representatives to understand the value of inclusive transformation on campuses as enshrined by various national frameworks and international instruments.
 - Partner with TVET colleges, the Department of Higher Education and Training, Higher Health, South African Police Services, and other relevant stakeholders to build capacity and response mechanisms for GBVF.
-
- Help TVET colleges formalise their policies, processes, and systems for identifying safety gaps and addressing GBV on campuses and external residences.
 - Encourage leadership of TVET colleges to be intentional in adhering to the transformation objectives of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF.
 - Track implementation of CGE transformation recommendations on key observations made at TVET colleges in the past.
 - Engage stakeholder experts' insights on measures and resources required to deal with GBVF prevention and after-care services at TVET colleges.
 - Sensitise the institutions about taking accountability in the implementation of the CGE Report on Gender Transformation for TVETs.
 - Sensitise various structures of the institutions about the prevention of social and cultural gender norms and attitudes that cause and perpetuate GBV.
 - Advocate and capacitate the structures about the importance of eliminating vulnerabilities and risks experienced by women in colleges and for women off campus.

COLLEGE ENGAGEMENTS APPROACH



The following institutions formed part of the campaign:

TVET Name	Town	Date	Nature of Engagement	Stakeholders
Taletso, Vuselela Colleges	Microsoft Teams	31 July 2023	Meeting with the TVET Colleges representatives to introduce the initiative	• Deputy Principal • Student Support Service Coordinator • Student Support Service Officer • Vuselela Office of the Campus Manager • CGE NW Office
Taletso TVET College	Central office, Mafikeng	10 August 2023	Stakeholder Engagement with Taletso TVET College management on gender mainstreaming focusing on GBV policy making	• Public Protector • College Management • Student Support Services • Administrative Staff • CGE NW Commissioner • Provincial and national officials

TVET Name	Town	Date	Nature of Engagement	Stakeholders
Taletso TVET College	Lichtenburg	14 August 2023	GBV awareness sessions with Taletso TVET College students	• Student Representatives • Student Support Services • College Students • Deputy Principal • CGE officials
Taletso TVET College	Lehurutshe	18 August 2023	Gender and development workshop with SRC members from the various campuses of Taletso TVET College	• Public Protector • Student Support Representatives • CGE provincial officials
Taletso TVET College	Mafikeng	22 August 2023	GBV awareness sessions with Taletso TVET College students	• National Prosecuting Authority • Civil society organisations • Department of Social Development • Mafikeng Thuthuzela Care Centre • Department of Justice and Constitutional Development • Provincial Men's Sector • Provincial Women's Sector • CGE officials
Orbit TVET College	Brits	29 August 2023	Stakeholder Engagement with Orbit College management on gender mainstreaming focusing on GBV policy making	• Public Protector • Campus Manager • Human Resource Manager • Administrative Personnel • Campus Lecturers • Higher Health • Brits Campus Social Worker • CGE officials
Orbit TVET College	Brits	30 August 2023	GBV awareness sessions with Orbit TVET college students	• Public Protector • South African Police Service • Department of Social Development • CGE Provincial Commissioner • CGE officials

TVET Name	Town	Date	Nature of Engagement	Stakeholders
Vuselela TVET College	Klerksdorp	20 November 2023	Stakeholder engagement with Vuselela TVET College technical trainers on gender mainstreaming focusing on GBV policy making	• Higher Health • College Gender Focal Person Official • CGE officials
Vuselela TVET College	Taung Campus	05 March 2024	GBV awareness session with Vuselela TVET College students	• Life Orientation Lecturers • Student Support Service Officers • CGE officials
Vuselela TVET College	Jourberton Campus	06 March 2024	GBV awareness session with Vuselela TVET College students	• Life Orientation Lecturers • Student Support Service Officers • CGE officials
Vuselela TVET College	Potchefstroom	07 March 2024	Gender and development workshop with Student Peer Educators from Vuselela TVET College	• Shout It Now • Community Media Trust (CMT) • Higher Health • Life Orientation Lecturers • Student Support Service Officers • CGE officials
Vuselela TVET College	Klerksdorp Campus	18 March 2024	Stakeholder engagement with Vuselela College administrative employees on gender mainstreaming focusing on GBV policy making	• Vuselela Administrative Employees • CGE officials

The approach used for engaging all three TVET colleges was that of physical engagements whereby the CGE created an open diagnostic opportunity for all the internal stakeholders to engage deeply about policy issues confronting each college. This open methodology was done to deepen an open understanding and identify where the safety gaps are so that stakeholders across their respective roles can identify exactly where change is needed for creating safe spaces. The following Indicators were taken.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING AWARENESS

This approach involved raising awareness about the importance of mainstreaming institutional policies as a framework for protecting gender equality and fostering diversity, equality, and inclusion as a solution to many workplace injustices that need redress and prevention.

The institution's internal structures were sensitised about how this framework could be an answer to many nuances that will not only affect the female workforce but potentially could impact the state of safety for their students alike. Amongst the awareness instruments raised were the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA), which state that “parties must ensure that they promote equality of women through the formulation and implementation of national plans of action in line with the allocation of adequate human and financial resources through developing and establishing valid indicators of the status of, and progress in the realisation of human rights of women”.

“An independent, constitutionally mandated organisation that pioneers and catalyses gender development and transformation.

”



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS

Collaboratively, the educational institutions, South African Police Service, Higher Health, Public Protector, and civil society organisations collaborated with CGE, each educating various structures about practical prevention and care mechanisms for safe space creation, a more inclusive learning environment, and support and care for GBV survivors.

The following internal stakeholders were engaged as they are crucial in developing comprehensive policies and programmes that promote gender equality, respect, and safety for all students.

- College administrators
- Faculty students
- Government agencies (Higher Health and SETA)
- NGOs (Shout It Now, Community Media Trust, Ambassadors 4 Change, Angels of Tomorrow, and Life Line).

Stakeholder engagements were also held to create a sector-wide platform for policy dialogue and collaboration, allowing for the exchange of ideas and best practices in addressing GBV. These engagements targeted the colleges' management, employees, and support staff.



GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Gender and development (GAD) workshops were also held and are a significant tool in addressing GBV in the colleges. These workshops targeted the Student Support Services (SSS) and the Student Representative Council (SRC) to encourage them to roll out similar programmes on their campuses in future. The workshops equipped these internal stakeholders with skills to identify gender complaints and refer them to relevant stakeholders.

The GAD workshops also raised awareness about the gender equality phenomenon as a human right that must be respected, raised awareness about harmful gender norms that ought to be guarded against, and empowered GBV practitioners and development practitioners of the institutions to act against GBV.

By providing GAD education and training, the aim is to ensure that Institutions have capacitated practitioners who, on behalf of the students and institution, can spot, report, and prevent attitudes, nuances, and behaviours that perpetuate violence.

The practitioners were capacitated so that they could also provide GBV victims with support, resources, and access to services. These workshops were established to create safe spaces and platforms for students to discuss sensitive issues related to gender and sexuality, fostering a culture of respect and tolerance within the college community.



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION OUTREACH

CGE targeted the student community to educate them about GBV, taking the approach of prevention and care whilst engaging students with mechanisms that can be used to create a suitable safe space on and off campus. By raising awareness about GBV and promoting gender equality in the wider community, college students were empowered to challenge harmful stereotypes and attitudes that contribute to violence.

Students were capacitated about various prevention policies and campus-based social cohesion redress mechanisms to identify and respond to the root causes of and issues that perpetuate GBV, including patriarchal manifestations, toxic masculinity, alcohol and drug consumption, the unfamiliar social environment with fewer constraints and greater opportunities for experimentation, previous victimisation, and social norms that cause social instability.

Students were sensitised about the gender norms and cultural practices that create social instability, increase in sexual violence, homophobic bullying, harassment, and other various GBV incidences amongst students. According to a SaferSpaces (2010) thematic paper that addresses the complex nature of GBV at higher education institutions in South Africa, "Sexual violence occurs on a continuum and various manifestations of GBV, such as sexual harassment, highlight underlying pathological norms, attitudes, and behaviours of individuals, as well as the broader society. Such norms, attitudes, and behaviours are often accepted, normalised, and even exacerbated in the institutional environment". It is often said that when these are not

addressed, they become institutional factors and social norms against which students should be sensitised.

Students were sensitised about the intersectionalities between their residential location and their movements and the need for student input to influence campus-related design. Students' safety should influence the design of campus spaces, given that GBV happens on and off campus. Their student representatives were also capacitated on the importance of meaningfully participating in joining forces to develop effective policies and structures to prevent and respond to GBV in their institutions. The outreaches also presented students with an opportunity to advocate for clear reporting mechanisms for addressing GBV victims' and survivors' vulnerabilities. By engaging the public in discussions about GBV, colleges can promote a culture of zero tolerance for violence and discrimination, thus creating a safer environment for all students.



TALETSO TVET COLLEGE

CGE's observations

- There are no information or wellness centres on Taletso TVET College campuses.
- The college has no trained personnel to handle GBVF cases.
- There is a lack of awareness campaigns on campuses.
- There is a lack of psychosocial support for victims of GBV.
- The college is unable to determine the prevalence of GBV on its campuses because students do not report such incidents, as reported.
- The college does not render victim-friendly services to support GBV victims.
- The college reported incidents in which students were attacked on their way to and from its Lichtenburg campus.
- There is a lack of knowledge regarding the concept of GBV and sexual harassment within the college.
- There is a need to educate students about gender-sensitive terminology and moral regeneration.
- There are minimal GBV-focused education and information programs on campuses. On rare occasions when these are done, the college relies on external stakeholders to conduct them.
- The college has a lack of youth-friendly services.
- Students do not report GBV cases, and the college has no wellness clinics on its Campuses to support GBV victims.
- Students are not reporting GBV incidents to their lecturers and other supporting staff, citing the fear of victimisation and confidentiality.
- There is a lack of women representation in senior management positions.

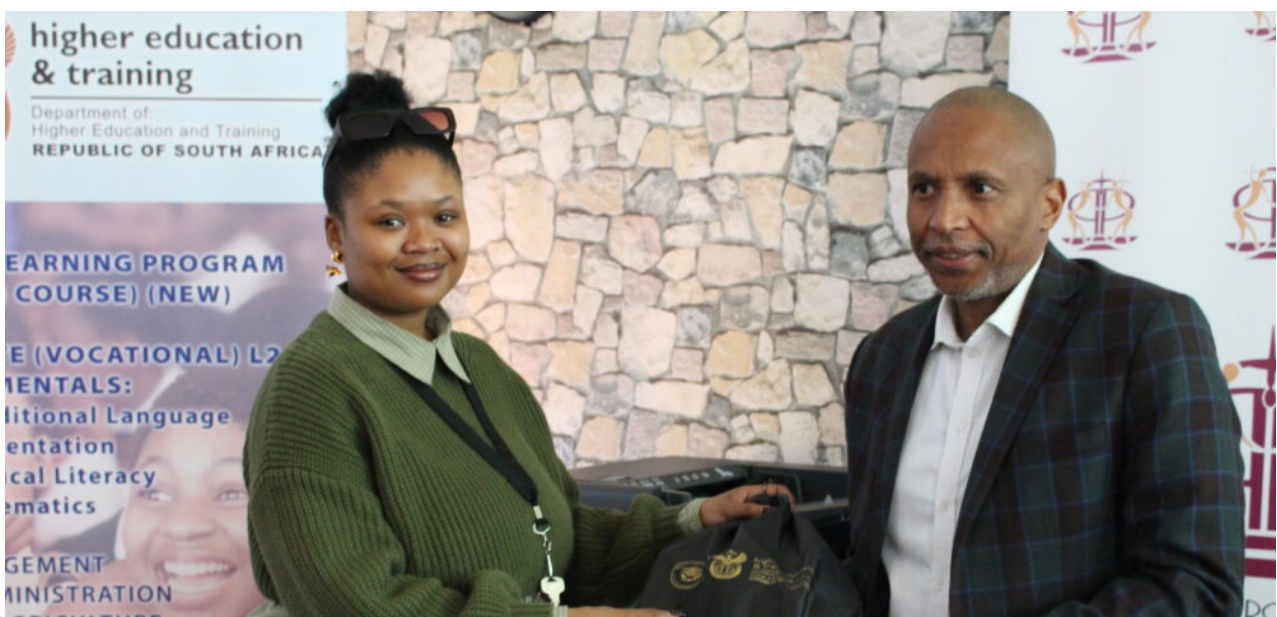
CGE's recommendations

- The Department of Higher Education and Training and the college must identify ways in which technology can be used to educate and advance the fight against GBVF, such as mobile applications that can be used to report GBV incidents.
- The college must establish wellness services for students' access to enable intervention and debriefing service provision.
- The college must establish an adequately skilled information centre or gender youth desk services that will serve as a source of information and liaison between students and the campus for all gender-related issues.
- It must expand its outreach and awareness programs targeting students and educate them on gender rights and support services.
- The college must ensure that there is security and access control at all its campus gates.
- The Student Support Officers, Student Representative Council Members, the gender-focal persons and all levels of college employees must be capacitated on gender and development norms.
- The college must establish a peer educators' forum with community-based organisations, such as the Community Policing Forum, to strengthen safety around campuses and coordinate efforts that change perceptions and behaviours around gender roles.
- The college must have a systematic suggestion/complaint process managed through a system that guarantees the protection of the victim's information and identity. This system must be able to track the GBVF interventions and their effectiveness across the campuses.
- It must integrate and mainstream interventions and integrate gender-responsive approaches throughout its programs and policies.
- The college must develop specific guidelines and standards for preventing and addressing campus gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and discrimination.

ORBIT TVET COLLEGE

CGE's observations

- There is a need for capacity-building workshops for students and gender mainstreaming to transform the college policies and its framework on how it should look at issues of GBVF and transformation.
- The Brits campus college has a social worker who is responsible for psychosocial interventions for the institution.
- The college has trained student support officers and fifteen peer educators meant to provide psychosocial support to students.
- Despite these provisions, students indicated that there is a high rate of alcohol and substance use on campuses. As a result, there is a high rate of unreported cases of GBV, and students indicated that they are scared to report such incidents due to a lack of confidentiality and fear of stigmatisation.
- The college has no wellness center for an in-depth referral of GBV campus victims.
- There is a lack of information programs that are supposed to raise awareness about GBV on campuses.
- The LGBTQIA+ persons in the college indicated that they feel valued and respected, and the College promotes diversity and inclusivity.
- Women are represented in management positions, and the college has a sexual harassment policy.
- The college conducts gender-responsive programs and women empowerment initiatives.
- The college has a good relationship with the South African Police Service and Department of Social Development and has students who are working as peer educators for awareness campaigns.



CGE's recommendations

- Despite the number of progressive mechanisms meant to curb GBV at Orbit College, the need for a concerted approach to handling issues systematically still exists. CGE recommends that;
- The Department of Higher Education and Training and the college must identify ways in which technology can be used to educate and advance the fight against GBVF, such as mobile applications that can be used to report GBV incidents.
- The college must integrate and mainstream interventions and integrate gender-responsive approaches throughout its programs and policies.
- The college must establish an adequately skilled information center or gender youth desk services that will serve as a source of information and liaison between students and the campus for all gender-related services.
- The college must have a systematic suggestion/complaint process managed through an independent system that guarantees the protection of the victim's information and identity. This system must be able to track the GBVF interventions and their effectiveness across the campuses.
- The Student Support Officers, Student Representative Council Members, the gender-focal persons, and all levels of college employees must be capacitated on gender and development norms.
- The college must establish a peer education forum with community-based organisations such as the Community Policing Forum, to strengthen safety around campuses and coordinate efforts that change perceptions and behaviors around gender roles.
- The college should encourage the SRC and Peer Educators to collaborate or merge when attending GBV interventions to ensure the richness and impact of debates and interventions.
- The college should adopt gender mainstreaming as a framework that will propel them to focus on fostering transformation as a means to drive systemic changes to the workplace and its campuses.

“An independent, constitutionally mandated organisation that pioneers and catalyses gender development and transformation.”

VUSELELA TVET COLLEGE

CGE's observations

- The college management seems to be lagging in leading transformation and safety initiatives for the college.
- This leadership laxness exposes students and college residents to many social nuisances as observed and reported by students.
- This leadership gap is evidenced by the absence of reporting structures and the lack of ownership of these transformation and awareness interventions by the college management and leadership structures.
- There is a high rate of alcohol and substance abuse on and off campus by student communities.
- There is a high rate of unreported cases of GBV, as students are scared to report due to a lack of confidentiality and fear of stigmatisation and victimisation.
- The college has no wellness center and has no trained personnel for psychosocial support for victims of GBV.
- The college has no deliberate education and awareness programs for sensitising and combating GBV for its populations.
- The LGBTQIA+ persons in the college indicated that they feel valued and respected as they have not experienced discrimination based on their gender and sexual orientation.
- No demonstrated evidence shows that the college has implemented plans to create safe spaces for women and students as per the Policy Framework To Address Gender-Based Violence In The Post-School Education and Training System.



CGE's recommendations

The college interventions highlighted a need for the college to urgently look at mechanisms that should curb GBV in pursuit of accountability whilst ensuring that student safety is prioritised and protected.

Therefore, CGE recommends the following;

- The Department of Higher Education and Training, and the college must identify ways in which technology can be used to educate and advance the fight against GBVF, such as mobile applications that can be used to report GBV incidents.
- The college must establish wellness services for students, prioritise safety interventions and provide debriefing services.
- The college must establish an adequately skilled information center or gender youth desk services that will serve as a source of information and liaison between students and the campus for all gender-related issues.
- It must have a deliberate plan for implementing outreach and awareness programs for students to educate them about gender norms.
- The Student Support Officers, Student Representative Council Members, the gender focal persons, and all levels of college employees must be capacitated on gender and development norms.
- The college must ensure that there is security and access control in its campus gates.
- The college must establish a peer educators forum with community-based organisations, such as the Community Policing Forum, and the Liquor Board for anti-alcohol and harm reduction awareness programs to strengthen safety around campuses, thus coordinating efforts that change perceptions and behaviours.
- It must have a systematic suggestion/complaint process managed through a system that guarantees the protection of the victim's information and identity. This system must be able to track the GBVF interventions and their effectiveness across the campuses.
- It must integrate and mainstream interventions and integrate gender-responsive approaches throughout its programs and policies.
- The college must develop specific guidelines and standards for preventing and addressing campus gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and discrimination.
- The college must adopt gender mainstreaming as a framework that will propel them to focus on fostering transformation as a means to drive systemic changes to the workplace and its campuses

CONCLUSION

The importance of creating safe spaces in TVET colleges for women cannot be overstated. TVET colleges must provide a supportive and inclusive environment where survivors can access resources, receive counselling, and seek justice, as a means to address the pervasive issue of GBVF.

It is essential for CGE to continue protecting and advocating for policies and programs that prioritise the safety and well-being of students in Institutions of Higher Learning. With this, the PSET can work towards ensuring greater accountability and ensure that students can pursue their education without fear of violence or discrimination by neither embedded cultural values, their peers, partners, older men, and institutional systems.

Colleges must address the issue of alcohol consumption and drunkenness on their campuses. Drunkenness and negative behaviors are a hindrance to personal and other pupils' safety.

Taletso, Orbit, and Vuselela colleges must champion responsive transformation programs that challenge harmful behavioural and societal norms to prevent and curb violence on campuses.

The Department of Higher Education and Training, with the colleges must address the "cause for delayed student financial aid disbursements" as this is "viewed" to be another factor that exposes female students to transactional sex and victimisation by older men.

These colleges must bolster multi-stakeholder collaboration to strengthen partnerships with government departments, non-governmental organizations, and international bodies that coordinate efforts in addressing GBVF.

Moreover, Taletso, Orbit, and Vuselela colleges and the Department Of Education & Higher Learning must promote grassroots education initiatives such as embedding gender studies in its modules to empower all students with a human rights approach that upholds the protection of human dignity, diversity, and inclusion.

Without these deliberate systems, colleges will not achieve social inclusion if they do not have a strengthened transformation policy, and adequately place gender-focal persons to mainstream programming.

They will not progress into adequately creating an inclusive and safe campus environment if they do not have comprehensive transformation reforms and systems such as gender mainstreaming. These are legislative policy interventions they must foster to eliminate oppression and harassment.

Taletso, Orbit, and Vuselela colleges and DHET must advocate for resources and proper placement of gender-focal persons to enhance GBVF prevention and response programs.

Lastly, the Department of Higher Education & Learning must standardise the application of PSET GVBF prevention policies for its higher learning institutions. These should have a zero-tolerance approach to violence and harassment, with clear and coherent reporting procedures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An amount of R128 573, 30 from the allocation was spent on logistical costs for all three colleges, as well as the design and printing of the report. CGE would like to thank the FSD for identifying this need and thus sponsoring funds for the initiative to come to fruition.

CGE also expresses its gratitude to all other stakeholders who participated in the anti-GBVF initiative throughout the TVET colleges.

Lastly, we would also like to thank the CGE staff members who ensured that CGE conceptualizes and facilitates the initiatives for this FSD initiative. Without them, this initiative would not have been possible;

- Philisiwe Gabela: Head of Department Public Education and Information
- Rabbuh Raletsemo: Deputy Director Public Education and Information
- Joyce Khutsoane: North West Provincial Manager
- Tsholofelo Sabole: Public Education and Information Officer, North West Province



Commission for Gender Equality

MEDIA PUBLICITY

Orbit TVET College



CGE Education Officer in NW, Tsholofelo Sabole speaking to students of Orbit TVET College on the importance of creating safer spaces for all gender on campuses.



Orbit TVET College HR personnel, Mr Gilbert Mafojane informing the CGE delegation about different policies the College has in place to ensure protection of all students.



CGE Provincial Manager in NW, Joyce Khutsoane and PEI Deputy Director Mr Rubbuh Raletse engaged with the management of Orbit TVET College on creating safer spaces for all genders on campuses



CGE Provincial Manager in NW, Joyce Khutsoane educating the College management of the mandate of the CGE.



CGE's PEI Deputy Director, Rabbuh Raletsemo educating students of Orbit TVET College on issues of GBV, Sexual Harassment, the LGBTQIA community and creating safer spaces for all genders on campuses.



Orbit TVET College students participating in a Q&A session with CGE at the college's Brits campus.



Orbit TVET College students listening to CGE education officer on gender issues affecting students and how safer spaces need to be created on campuses.



Orbit TVET College Birts campus manager, Teboho Tlhopile, CGE Commissioner Bongani Ngomani and CGE NW Provincial Manager Joyce Khutsone, pictured exchanging gifts.

Taletso TVET College



CGE Commissioner Bongani Ngomane addressing the management of Taletso TVET College in Mahikeng.



Taletso TVET College officials engaging with CGE delegates on issues of mainstreaming gender and women representation in their policies and programmes.



CGE Public Education Officer, Tsholofelo Sabole pictured with SRC members of Taletso TVET College after Gender and Development Workshop.

Vuselela TVET College



Vuselela TVET College students listening to CGE Education Officer, Tsholofelo Sabole.



Vuselela TVET College students picture with CGE's education officer, Tsholofelo Sabole and Legal Officer, Kelebogile Aplane.

PROJECT FUNDED & COMMISSIONED BY:

**Forum For Institutions Supporting Democracy,
which is made of:**

- South African Human Rights Commission.
- Office of the Public Protector.
- Commission for Religious and Linguistic Rights.
- Independent Electoral Commission.
- Commission for Gender Equality.
- Auditor General of South Africa.

CGE CONTACTS

Email

info@cge.org.za

Website

www.cge.org.za

X/Twitter

@cge_za

Head Office

Tel: 011 403 7182

Address:

2 Kotze Street,
Constitution Hill,
Braamfontein, 2017.

Eastern Cape

Tel: 043 722 3489

Address:

3 – 33 Phillip Frame Road
Waverly Park
East London 5200.

Free State

Tel: 051 430 9348

Address:

49 Charlotte Maxeke
Street, 2nd Floor Fedsure
Building, Bloemfontein
9300.

Gauteng

Tel: 012 492 5971

Address:

267 Lillian Ngoyi Street
Praetor Forum Building
Pretoria CBD.

KwaZulu-Natal

Tel: 031 305 2105

Address:

40 Dr A. B. Xuma Street
12th Floor, Suite 1219
Durban 4001.

Legislative Mandate

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is one of the institutions established in terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). In terms of section 187 of the Constitution, the mandate of the CGE is to contribute to strengthening and deepening constitutional democracy in South Africa through the promotion, protection, development, and attainment of gender equality.

The powers and functions of the CGE are further outlined in the CGE Act 39 of 1996 as amended ("CGE Act"), which include monitoring and evaluating the policies and practices of government, the private sector and other organisations to ensure that they promote and protect gender equality; public education and information; reviewing existing and upcoming legislation from a gender perspective; investigating inequality; commissioning research and making recommendations to Parliament or other authorities; investigating complaints on any gender-related issue and monitoring and reporting on South Africa's compliance with international conventions.

Section 187(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa reads: "Commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality". The Commission is a catalyst organisation for the development and attainment of gender equality. Section 187(2) grants the Commission "the power as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby and advise and report on issues concerning gender equality". The Commission for Gender Equality Act 39 of 1996 (as amended), has been promulgated to give effect to S187 (3) of the constitution to guide the establishment of the commission. The Act provides for the composition, powers, functions and functioning of the Commission on Gender Equality; and to provide for matters connected therewith. Section 11 outlines the powers and functions as follows: The Commission:

- (a) Shall monitor and evaluate policies and practices of
- (b) Shall develop, conduct, or manage:
- (c) Shall evaluate:
- (d) May recommend to Parliament or any other legislature the adoption of new legislation which would promote gender equality and the status of women;
- (e) Shall investigate any gender-related issues of its own accord or on receipt of a complaint, and shall endeavour to:
- (f) Shall as far as is practicable maintain close liaison with institutions, bodies or authorities with similar objectives to the Commission, to foster common policies and practices and to promote co-operation in relation to the handling of complaints in cases of overlapping jurisdiction or other appropriate instances.
- (g) Shall liaise and interact with any organisation which actively promotes gender equality and other sectors of civil society to further the object of the Commission.
- (h) Shall monitor the compliance with international conventions, international covenants, and international charters, acceded to or ratified by the Republic, relating to the object of the Commission.
- (i) Shall prepare and submit reports to Parliament pertaining to any such convention, covenant or charter relating to the object of the Commission.
- (j) May conduct research or cause research to be conducted to further the object of the Commission.
- (k) May consider such recommendations, suggestions and requests concerning the promotion of gender equality as it may receive from any source.

Limpopo

Tel: 015 291 3070

Address:

Cnr. Grobler &
Schoeman Str, 1st Floor,
106 Library Gardens
Square, Polokwane 0700.

Northern Cape

Tel: 053 832 0477

Address:

143 Du Toitspan Road
Kimberley
8300.

North West

Tel: 018 381 1505

Address:

38 Molopo Road
Mafikeng
2745.