

Vision:



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

Mission:



To lead, promote, protect, monitor, and evaluate gender equality through research, managing public education, policy development, legislative initiatives, and litigation.

Placing Gender Equality at the Centre of Government Planning

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) KwaZulu-Natal Office participated in the Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework (GRPBMEAF) Implementation Workshop, hosted by the Office of the Premier in Durban on 23 June 2026. The engagement formed part of ongoing efforts to strengthen gender-responsive governance by ensuring that gender equality is considered throughout government planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The Provincial Public Education Officer Tracey Gumede delivered a presentation on gender mainstreaming, demonstrating how decisions made at

the planning stage influence whether policies, budgets, and programmes can respond to the different realities and experiences of the people they serve. She explained that when gender is overlooked during planning, inequalities can become embedded within institutional practice. As she noted, "Institutions can unintentionally reproduce inequalities when gender is not consciously considered throughout decision-making processes".

The message was reflected throughout the engagement, as the Deputy Director General, Martie Milne, called on institutions to move from discussion to implementation, stating that "If you do not plan for it, do not expect it to be done", highlighting that priorities which

are absent from planning are unlikely to be realised in practice. Complementing this message, Acting Chief Director from the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Phumlani Tembe, stressed that, "It's not a one-man show, it requires everyone's commitment to reach the desired transformation". He further noted that, "If we fail to plan for inclusion, there is very little hope that this will be reflected in planning, policies, and practice."

The Commission also provided an overview of its constitutional mandate to promote, protect, monitor and evaluate the attainment of gender equality through public education, advocacy, research, policy engagement and monitoring.



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Editors:

Javu Baloyi
Patricia Ledwaba-Mametja

Contributors:

Tracey Gumede
Nceba Mrwebo
Mihlemlhle Zwane
Galaletsang Lephogole
Boitumelo Zwane
Malebo Ntjana
Lesego Zungu
Tsholofelo Sabole
Naledi Selebano
Mikateko Shipalana
Lethabo Leshaba

CGE and Chapter 9 Institutions Engage Umzimkhulu Community on the Practice of Ukuthwala

By Mihlemihle Zwane



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Office, in collaboration with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Public Protector South Africa, the CRL Rights Commission, and civil society organisations, conducted a Gender and Development (GAD) community engagement in Umzimkhulu Local Municipality focusing on the practice of ukuthwala.

The engagement sought to create a platform for meaningful dialogue

on the intersection between culture, gender equality, and human rights. SAHRC emphasised that while culture is protected under the Constitution, no cultural practice may infringe upon the constitutional rights and freedoms of any individual.

The CGE unpacked how gender roles and inequalities are socially constructed and how these often create conditions that enable harmful practices to persist. Discussions highlighted the impact of ukuthwala on girls and young women,

including interrupted education, limited opportunities, increased vulnerability to violence, and the erosion of their ability to make informed choices about their futures. The Commission also outlined its constitutional mandate and intervention mechanisms available to support victims of gender rights violations.

The CRL Rights Commission reinforced the importance of distinguishing between culture and human rights violations, emphasising that culture should preserve dignity, promote social cohesion, and never be used to justify practices that harm individuals or undermine their constitutional rights.

The engagement concluded with a collective call to action for communities, traditional leaders, civil society, and government institutions to work together in protecting women and children, promoting gender equality, and ensuring that cultural practices are exercised in a manner that respects human dignity and upholds the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

CGE North West Youth Empowerment Session in Coligny

By Galaletsang Lephogole

In commemoration of Youth Month, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in the North West Province conducted an information dissemination session on 18 June 2026 in Coligny, focusing on youth empowerment for gender equality, leadership, and socio-economic development. The session brought together young people, stakeholders, civil society organisations, and community members, creating a platform for engagement and dialogue. "Youth empowerment is a critical strategy in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) and is essential for advancing gender equality, social justice, and sustainable development. By equipping young people with knowledge, skills, and opportunities, communities are better positioned to address the root causes of inequality and violence, while nurturing a generation

that can actively contribute to positive social change," said Education Officer, Tsholofelo Sabole.

The session aimed to educate young people about leadership development and the importance of participating in decision-making processes, encouraging them to take active roles in shaping their communities. Participants were empowered to recognise their voices as important tools for influencing change and promoting social justice. Discussions also touched on key social challenges affecting young people, with an emphasis on awareness, prevention, and the importance of accessing support services and referral mechanisms, ensuring they know where to seek help when faced with social or personal challenges.

Overall, the session reinforced the importance of investing in young people as a means to reduce GBV and build a more equal and just society, while strengthening youth participation and advancing gender equality within communities.



CGE Hosts Gender and Development Training-of-Trainers Workshop in Mangaung

By Boitumelo Zwane

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) Free State Office hosted a Gender and Development Training-of-Trainers Workshop in Bloemfontein for the Mangaung Advice Office. This session brought together community stakeholders, activists, and community leaders to strengthen their knowledge of gender equality, human rights, child protection, and social justice issues. The programme aimed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge needed to become effective trainers and advocates within their communities. Education Officer Boitumelo Zwane and Legal Officer Thembu Ngoma introduced participants to the mandate of the CGE and provided an overview of its legal functions and role in promoting, protecting, and monitoring gender

equality in South Africa. Participants examined key gender concepts and reflected on societal attitudes and norms that influence gender relations and deepened their understanding of gender roles, stereotypes, and the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in community development.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development capacitated participants on equality and unfair discrimination. They presented on the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) and explained the role of Equality Courts in addressing discrimination and promoting equal access to justice. Participants were encouraged to make use of these

legal mechanisms when advocating for vulnerable individuals and communities.



Stakeholders gathered for the session in the Free State's Office boardroom

CGE Hosts Webinar on Women's Political Representation Ahead of the Local Government Elections

By Lesego Zungu

On 24 June 2026, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) hosted a Women's Political Representation Webinar, bringing together researchers, civil society organisations, electoral experts, and disability rights advocates to reflect on the state of women's political participation and representation in South Africa ahead of the upcoming local government elections.

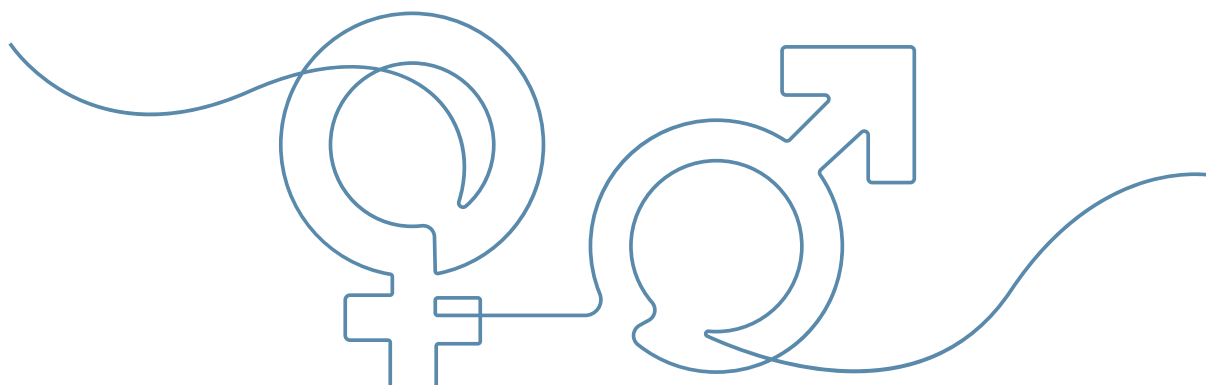
The webinar examined trends in women's political representation since 1994, highlighting both the progress made and the challenges that continue to hinder women's meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making structures. Discussions highlighted concerns about

the decline in women's representation in certain political positions, uneven representation in leadership roles, and the barriers women continue to face in political spaces, including intimidation, discrimination, and exclusion from influential decision-making processes.

Presentations further emphasised the importance of inclusive representation, noting that meaningful democracy can only be achieved when all people, regardless of gender or disability, are able to participate fully in political and governance processes. Particular attention was given to the experiences of women with disabilities, who continue to face accessibility barriers that limit their participation in elections and public life.

Recommendations from the webinar included strengthening efforts to promote women's political representation, improving accessibility within electoral processes, actively supporting the participation of persons with disabilities, and ensuring that inclusion is embedded in leadership and decision-making structures.

In her reflections, Commissioner HRH Eurika Mogane emphasised that "the rise of women does not mean the fall of men." She stressed the importance of ensuring that discussions on women's political representation translate into meaningful action and tangible progress as the country moves closer to the election season.



Report On Stakeholder Engagement on the Children's Act, Mandatory Duty to Report, And Form 22

By Tsholofelo Sabole



Commissioner Mulalo Nemataheni during the delivery of the way forward

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), North West Provincial Office, convened a stakeholder engagement on 24 June 2026 focusing on the Children's Act, the mandatory duty to report abuse, and the correct completion and submission of Form 22. The engagement brought together key stakeholders to strengthen stakeholder understanding of legislative obligations relating to the protection of vulnerable groups.

Provincial Education Officer, Tsholofelo Sabole, outlined the purpose of the engagement, which was to improve

knowledge on reporting mechanisms and enhance coordinated responses to gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and other forms of abuse. The engagement also aimed to empower stakeholders with practical knowledge on Form 22 and its critical role in urgent child protection interventions. DSD led a detailed presentation on the purpose, importance, and proper completion of Form 22, as well as related processes. Officials emphasised that Form 22 serves as an urgent intervention mechanism requiring immediate action from social workers once it has been submitted, as well as escalation mechanisms in instances where there is failure or delay by local offices to act on reported cases.

The NPA focused on the legal obligation of mandatory reporting, highlighting how it is a criminal offence for certain groups, including professionals, traditional leaders, and NPOs, to fail to report abuse or neglect involving vulnerable groups when they witness or become aware of it. The NPA emphasised that reports must be made to relevant authorities such as SAPS and

DSD to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and victims receive protection.

Commissioner Mulalo Nemataheni provided the way forward, emphasising the importance of strengthened collaboration among stakeholders. She encouraged all sectors to work collectively to improve referral systems, enhance accountability, and ensure swift interventions in abuse cases. She further highlighted that stronger partnerships are essential in reducing the high prevalence of GBVF and abuse against vulnerable groups across the province.

The Provincial traditional leaderships made a call for increased awareness campaigns in deep rural communities. They stressed that rural areas often lack access to critical information on GBVF, reporting channels, and available support services. They further highlighted the need to sensitize traditional leadership on Form 22 and related child protection matters to strengthen community-based responses.

Promoting Safer Digital Environments Through Youth Engagement

By Naledi Selebano

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) Gauteng Provincial Office, in partnership with the City of Joburg Region C GBV Forum, hosted a Gender and Development Workshop in Fleurhof, Roodepoort.

The workshop focused on equipping young people with the knowledge and skills required to safely and responsibly navigate online spaces, while promoting awareness of digital risks and gender-based online harm.

The Provincial Manager Naledi Selebano reaffirmed the CGE's constitutional

mandate and underscored the importance of addressing digital abuse as part of advancing gender equality in the digital era.

Education Officer Koketso Sekhu delivered a presentation, providing practical tools and strategies to prevent and respond to online harassment.

A specialised SAPS detective further contributed by highlighting the realities of digital crime, including child exploitation, and outlining available legal mechanisms to support victims and ensure accountability. This initiative

reflects a continued commitment to empowering communities, strengthening awareness, and fostering safer digital environments for all.



Provincial Manager and Education Officer addressing participants during the engagement

CGE Holds Session on LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in the Workplace

By Tsholofelo Sabole

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) North West office held a session on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the workplace on 26 June 2026 in the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District Municipality where CGE unpacked the constitutional and legislative protections that safeguard the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons in South Africa, highlighting the importance of creating workplaces that uphold dignity, respect, and equality for all employees.

The session brought together multiple various stakeholders and aimed to create awareness and strengthen understanding of workplace inclusion, equality, and diversity, while addressing the challenges that LGBTQIA+ persons continue to experience in different work environments. It provided a platform for open discussions on discrimination, stigma, workplace bullying, and barriers to equal opportunities.

The session emphasised the role of organised labour in advocating for stronger workplace policies, challenging discriminatory practices, and ensuring that LGBTQIA+ workers are protected and fairly represented. Contributions from Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa, Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, and various NPOs working directly with the LGBTQIA+ community enriched the discussions by sharing practical experiences, dispute resolution mechanisms, and the realities faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals within workplaces and communities.

The session concluded with a collective call to action for workplaces to move beyond policy compliance towards cultivating cultures of acceptance, belonging, and respect.



Education Officer Tsholofelo Sabole at the engagement

Stakeholders Call for Stronger Child Protection Measures to Address School-Related Gender-Based Violence

By Malebo Ntjana



Commissioner Adv. Thando Gumedde (centre) with stakeholders and CGE officials at the engagement

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) Limpopo hosted a stakeholder engagement at its offices, following last year's discussions on School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) on 29 June 2026. Legal Officer, Thembi Madalane presented findings from the School-Related Gender-Based Violence Investigative Report. This was followed by stakeholder discussions on

SRGBV-related issues and measures to strengthen the protection of children in educational settings.

Several key recommendations emerged from the engagement, including reviewing and strengthening the provincial child protection framework to address existing gaps; enhancing vetting systems and closing legislative

loopholes related to screening and compliance; and strengthening mandatory reporting mechanisms alongside effective consequence management for non-compliance. Stakeholders further recommended the introduction of continuous awareness and education initiatives on gender equality and gender-based violence throughout the education system, from early childhood development to tertiary level, as well as reviewing educational content to eliminate harmful and toxic gender norms.

Emphasis was placed on promoting stronger collaboration among government departments and stakeholders, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; ensuring the meaningful participation of children and young people in interventions that affect them; and improving reporting, monitoring, and evaluation systems through digitisation.

Youth Outreach on Gender Equality and GBVF in Makuleke Village

By Malebo Ntjana



On 23 June 2026, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) Limpopo office conducted an outreach initiative in Makuleke Village, Vhembe District which targeted youth participants aged 18 to 35.

The CGE engaged participants on its mandate, its work in fulfilling it, and how it can assist communities in accessing justice on gender-related matters. The Commission highlighted that gender-based violence and femicide continues to rise within the district, emphasising the need for increased awareness and educational initiatives.

The Commission further shared findings from the April 2026 domestic violence

statistics, which indicate that Vhembe District experienced an increase in cases, with common assault remaining the leading crime category. The statistics further revealed that women and individuals between the ages of 18 and 39 continue to be the most affected groups.

Participants were also taken through discussions on teenage pregnancy, facilitated by Soul City. Furthermore, discussions were held on the issue of consent, with the CGE providing guidance on consent citing the *S v Coko* case to enhance participants' understanding of the legal and social implications surrounding consent.

CGE Hosts Policy Dialogue on Men's Mental Health to Advance Gender-Responsive Policy and Practice

By Lesego Zungu

On 29 June 2026, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) Gauteng Provincial Office hosted a Policy Dialogue on "Men's Mental Health in South Africa: Closing the Gender Gap in Policy and Practice." The engagement brought together representatives from government, civil society, academia and community organisations to explore policy and practical interventions aimed at improving men's mental health and wellbeing.

Opening the engagement, CGE's Public Education Officer, Koketso Sekhu, said the dialogue was intentionally designed to create a space where evidence, policy and lived experience intersect. She noted that while South Africa has policy frameworks addressing mental health, there remains a significant gap in responding to the unique mental health challenges experienced by men, who are often less likely to seek help despite the growing burden of mental illness.

In her welcome and purpose of the dialogue, CGE's Deputy Chairperson

Prabashni Subrayan-Naidoo, emphasised that achieving gender equality requires an understanding of the lived realities of all people. "When we speak about gender equality, we must recognise that achieving equality requires us to understand the lived realities of all people," she said.

Presentations explored the state of men's mental health in South Africa, with particular attention given to suicide prevention, barriers to help-seeking and the impact of harmful gender norms. Discussions highlighted that men account for the majority of suicide deaths in South Africa and remain significantly less likely to seek professional mental health support. Societal expectations that portray men as emotionally strong, self-reliant and primary providers often discourage vulnerability, contributing to emotional suppression, untreated depression, substance misuse and an increased risk of suicide. The programme also examined the role of traditional and social media in shaping masculine identity.

The dialogue also provided a platform for lived experiences, highlighting the mental health challenges faced by queer persons and male students in higher education. Discussions underscored the impact of stigma, discrimination, rejection and societal expectations on mental wellbeing, while emphasising the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces and improving access to mental health support services.

"When we speak about gender equality, we must recognise that achieving equality requires us to understand the lived realities of all people,"

CGE engages DHET on its Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training

By Mikateko Shipalana

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) engaged the Department of Higher Education and Higher Health, its implementing arm, on critical policy, legislative, and accountability issues concerning the advancement of gender equality in higher education and the implementation of the Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) System, 2020 ('the policy framework'). This strategic engagement convened on 17 June 2026 informed by concerns identified during engagements and investigations relating to the implementation, interpretation, and operationalisation of the policy framework within the PSET sector, as well as the policy development recommendations made CGE's reports titled "A Research Report on Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions 2024" and "Gender Transformation Imperatives for Higher Education Institutions 2024/25."

Head of Legal Department, Tsietsi Shuping provided an overview of the strategic engagement and historical context from the investigation. The objectives of the investigation, as presented by Shuping were to strengthen institutional accountability, improve survivor-centred responses, enhance monitoring and oversight mechanisms, promote consistent

implementation of the GBV Framework, and identify opportunities for policy and legislative reform.

Deliberations centred around key recommendations and posed pertinent questions to address this issue. CGE's CEO, Dr Dennis Matotoka raised the lack of risk assessments, stressing that this places the employer (higher learning institutions) in precarious positions, whether through civil damages or a worst-case scenario where somebody passes on. He cited a few cases that have landed in CGE's systems, one being where a staff member was found guilty, but only received suspension with pay

and later returned to work, with no risk assessment conducted to evaluate the safety and well-being of their colleagues and other learners. "Honourable Minister, we view sexual harassment as a failure towards the achievement of equity in the workplace. It is a barrier, so we must not look at it in isolation to the achievement of equity within the workplace as far as different occupational levels are concerned", he said.

The DHET and Higher Health delegates were led by Minister Buti Manamela and Chairperson Adv. Nthabiseng Sepanayna-Mogale led the CGE delegation.



Stakeholders gathered at the Head Office for the engagement.

CGE Chairperson participates at the Expert Symposium in Stellenbosch

Chairperson Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale formed part of the panel at the Expert Symposium on Gender-Specific Legislation for South Africa as an Expert respondent. Convened by the Centre for Social Justice, Stellenbosch University in partnership with the Catalytic Committee of the International Women's Forum South Africa and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, the two-days engagements gathered leading experts, legal researchers, policymakers, civil society actors and key stakeholders on the ongoing development of a proposed White paper on Gender-Specific Legislation and broader discussions concerning transformative

legal reform in South Africa. Sepanya-Mogale highlighted the CGE's obligation to assess the compliance of the state with international treaties in line with section 11 (h) of the CGE Act. She further highlighted the reports that the CGE has released in line with this obligation such as the State's Compliance with CEDAW, compliance with the Maputo protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action. The Chairperson encouraged civil society and human rights institutes to provide these alternatives reports during periodic reporting of States so that a clear picture is painted of the current state of gender transformation and gender rights is painted.



Chairperson Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale addressing the expert symposium



Chairperson Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale (front row first from left) at symposium with expert stakeholders.

Promoting Men's Mental Health as Part of an Inclusive Gender Equality Agenda

By Lethabo Leshaba

Gender equality cannot be fully realised without recognising the well-being and human dignity of both women and men. While the advancement of women's rights remains a critical human rights and development priority, an inclusive gender equality agenda must also address the unique challenges affecting men, particularly in relation to mental health and emotional well-being.

Societal expectations that men should remain strong, self-reliant, and emotionally reserved continue to discourage many from seeking help when faced with psychological distress. As a result, men are disproportionately affected by suicide, substance abuse, and untreated mental health conditions, often suffering in silence due to stigma and limited access to appropriate support.

A truly equitable society is one where every individual, regardless of gender, has the opportunity to thrive.

Addressing these challenges is not about competing with or diminishing the gains made in advancing women's rights. Rather, it is about recognising that gender equality is most effective when it responds to the needs of everyone. This requires gender-responsive policies, accessible mental health services, stronger support systems, and sustained efforts to challenge harmful stereotypes that prevent men from seeking care. A truly equitable society is one where every individual, regardless of gender, has the opportunity to thrive. By adopting a balanced and inclusive approach, we can strengthen families, build healthier communities, and advance a vision of gender equality that leaves no one behind.

