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Commission for Gender Equality

NEWSFLASH

A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

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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.

Northern Cape VEP Forum strengthens commitment to ending GBVF and teenage pregnancy

The Northern Cape Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) Forum has reaffirmed its commitment to intensifying collaborative efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and teenage pregnancy in the province.

The commitment was made during the forum's quarterly meeting, held on 6 November 2026 at the Northern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development offices.

The forum brings together key government stakeholders, including the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD), the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA).
During the meeting, Public Education Officer Keneilwe Mokalane presented feedback on the investigation hearing into teenage pregnancy. She also distributed hard copies of the investigation report to stakeholders in attendance to ensure that all participating departments had access to its findings.

Discussions reaffirmed the importance of strengthening inter-departmental cooperation and ensuring that relevant stakeholders fulfil their legislative responsibilities in protecting women and children.

The forum committed to continued collaboration to promote compliance with the Children's Act and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act. Particular emphasis was placed on the completion of Form 22, as well as strengthening public awareness initiatives on teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence and femicide.

Through these collective efforts, the Northern Cape VEP Forum aims to strengthen prevention, improve accountability and promote a safer environment for women and children across the province.



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CGE Limpopo Engages Mothers on Child Welfare, Maintenance and Family Rights During Family Health Day

By Malebo Ntjana



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Limpopo Provincial Office, participated in a Family Health Day aimed at engaging mothers of children aged between 0 and 3 years on challenges affecting their families and the well-being of their children.

The initiative provided a platform for mothers to share the challenges they encounter in raising their children, while also allowing various stakeholders to outline their respective mandates.
During the engagement, the CGE outlined its constitutional mandate and highlighted its role as a catalyst for promoting gender equality, protecting human rights and advancing equality within families and communities. The Commission further explained its role in addressing matters relating to maintenance and the challenges that often arise when parents separate or experience difficulties in their relationships.

Presenting on behalf of the Commission, Public Education and Information (PEI) Officer, Mr Lesley Mogale, cautioned parents against weaponising children in failed relationships. He emphasised that the best interests of the child must remain paramount in all circumstances, regardless of the nature of the relationship between the parents.

Mr Mogale further warned against using financial power or cultural beliefs as instruments to deny fathers access to their children. He stressed that children should not become bargaining tools in disputes between parents and that both mothers and fathers have responsibilities towards the welfare and upbringing of their children.

The Commission also touched on marriage regimes, highlighting the importance of understanding the legal implications of different types of marriages and how these arrangements affect the rights and responsibilities of spouses, particularly in relation to property and financial matters. Through its participation in the Family Health Day, the CGE continues to create awareness about gender equality, promote responsible parenting and encourage constructive engagement between parents and stakeholders. The Commission reaffirmed the importance of putting children's interests first while ensuring that the rights of all parties are respected and protected.
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CGE strengthens traditional leadership's role in child protection and access to justice

By Sandile Useni

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Mpumalanga Provincial Office, conducted an outreach session at the Mjindini Traditional Council in Barberton. The objective of the session was to strengthen the capacity of traditional leaders and their staff members on child protection and the role of traditional courts in South Africa.

The session focused on the duty to report child abuse and neglect in terms of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, as well as an overview of the Traditional Courts Act 9 of 2022. It placed significant emphasis was placed on Section 110 of the Children's Act, which identifies traditional leaders and certain professionals, including members of traditional leadership structures, as persons legally obliged to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The engagement highlighted the important role that traditional leadership play in





identifying, preventing and responding to violations of children's rights, particularly within rural and traditional communities. Participants welcomed the initiative, noting that it recognises and reinforces the important role of traditional leadership in promoting human rights, protecting vulnerable members of society and strengthening access to justice at community level.

The attendees also emphasised the importance of meaningful public consultation when government develops and passes legislation. They expressed the view that communities and traditional institutions should be adequately consulted to ensure that laws are responsive to the needs, values, beliefs and lived realities of the people they are intended to serve.

CGE joins forces with civil society to combat gangsterism, GBVF and violence in schools



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) collaborated with The Fortunate Foundation, a civil society organisation, in launching the School Anti-Gangsterism Programme in the John Taolo Gaetsewe (JTG) District Municipality. The initiative seeks to strengthen community efforts in addressing gangsterism, bullying, gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), as well as substance abuse among learners and young people.

The launch, held in Wrenchville, Kuruman, brought together various stakeholders from government departments, civil society organisations, community structures and members of the public, demonstrating a collective commitment to creating safer schools and communities.

Among the organisations and stakeholders in attendance were the Soul City Institute for Social Change, the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Women in Mining, Substance Use Disorder Intervention (SUDI), leaders of Traditional Health Practitioners, the GBV Desk in the Office of the Executive Mayor of JTG District Municipality, Oasis Socializing Netball Club and the broader community .Addressing the gathering, CGE Provincial Manager, Mr Solly Ngoveni, emphasised the importance of communities working together to confront the growing challenges of GBVF, bullying and gangsterism. He highlighted that addressing substance abuse must be among the initial interventions in tackling these social challenges, given its potential role in contributing to violence, criminal activities and other forms of social instability.

Mr Ngoveni assured participants that meaningful progress could only be achieved through collective responsibility, active community participation and sustained collaboration among all relevant stakeholders. He stressed that the fight against GBVF, bullying and gangsterism should not be left to law enforcement agencies or government departments alone, but requires the involvement of parents, educators, traditional leaders, civil society organisations, young people and the community at large.

The launch provided an important platform for stakeholders to unite behind a common objective of protecting learners, promoting positive behaviour and addressing the social factors that expose children and young people to violence, substance abuse and criminal activities.

The involvement of the various organisations demonstrated the importance of an integrated approach in responding to challenges affecting schools and communities. Through partnerships, awareness campaigns, early intervention and community-based support, stakeholders can work towards preventing violence and creating environments where learners feel safe, protected and supported.

The School Anti-Gangsterism Programme is an important step towards mobilising communities to take ownership of the safety and well-being of their children. It also reinforces the need to address the underlying causes of violence, including substance abuse, while promoting respect, equality, accountability and peaceful conflict resolution.

CGE's participation in the initiative reaffirms its commitment to promoting gender equality and advancing the protection of human rights, particularly in addressing GBVF and other forms of violence that undermine the dignity, safety and development of individuals and communities.

The launch concluded with a shared call to action for stronger partnerships and continued community involvement to ensure that schools become safe spaces for learning. Communities need to ensure that young people are protected from the dangers of gangsterism, bullying, substance abuse and gender-based violence. Together, through collective action and community commitment, safer schools and violence-free communities are possible.

> *Together, through collective action and community commitment, safer schools and violence-free communities are possible.*



CGE Eastern Cape Provincial Office participates in community-institutional roundtable discussion on building inclusive communities beyond University



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Eastern Cape Provincial Office, represented by the Provincial Manager, Mr Nceba Mrwebo, participated in a community–institutional roundtable discussion convened by the NRF SARChI Chair in Sexualities, Genders and Queer Studies, in collaboration with the Keiskamma Trust Community.

The roundtable discussion focused on building inclusive communities beyond the university and provided a platform for institutions and community-based organisations to explore potential areas of collaboration in addressing stigma and discrimination. Further objectives of the engagement included discussions on LGBTQIA+ inclusion, sex workers' rights, gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) prevention, psychosocial support, and referral pathways. Additionally, the engagement sought to identify practical areas of collaboration and develop possible joint interventions for implementation in 2027.

During the engagement, the CGE welcomed the initiative and expressed its interest in strengthening collaboration with academic institutions and community-based organisations. Mr Mrwebo highlighted the Commission's ongoing work in advancing gender transformation within institutions of higher learning, including systematic investigations undertaken since 2013, as well as research on the prevalence and extent of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning.

The CGE further emphasised the importance of adopting an inclusive approach to gender transformation, which requires the meaningful engagement of all genders, including men and boys. The Commission expressed its interest in initiatives that challenge toxic masculinities and promote positive constructions of masculinity as part of broader efforts to prevent GBVF and advance gender equality.

Stakeholders who made valuable contributions to the discussion included Sexual Health Empowerment (SHE), the University of Fort Hare GBV Unit, and GBVF ambassadors, among others. Discussions highlighted that universities are microcosms of broader society and therefore cannot address discrimination, stigma and gender-based violence in isolation. There is a need for stronger partnerships between institutions of higher learning, civil society organisations and surrounding communities to ensure that interventions extend beyond university campuses.

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The engagement also highlighted the stigma and discrimination experienced by sex workers, including those who are students at institutions of higher learning. Participants underscored the importance of amplifying voices calling for the decriminalisation of sex work and promoting the protection of the human rights and dignity of sex workers. The Keiskamma Trust Community also shared its position and advocacy work in support of the decriminalisation of sex work, which provided an opportunity for participants to engage further on the human rights implications of criminalisation and social exclusion.

The roundtable further emphasised the need for institutions to adopt multifaceted and coordinated approaches to addressing GBVF both within and outside university campuses. Such approaches should include prevention programmes, awareness initiatives, psychosocial support, effective referral mechanisms and the empowerment of students to recognise, report and respond to gender-based violence.

The engagement concluded with a shared recognition of the importance of strengthening community–institutional partnerships and identifying practical collaborative interventions for 2027. It also highlighted institutional accountability and noted that sustainable gender transformation requires more than policy commitments and institutional declarations. It requires demonstratable accountability through tangible actions and measurable outcomes. The CGE Eastern Cape welcomed the opportunity to contribute to these discussions and expressed its commitment to exploring areas of collaboration within its constitutional mandate of promoting respect for gender equality and protecting, developing and attaining gender equality in South Africa.

CGE advances gender mainstreaming and workplace accountability in the mining sector

By Malebo Ntjana



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Limpopo Provincial Office, conducted a gender mainstreaming session with Bokoni Platinum Mines as part of its ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and strengthen institutional accountability in the workplace and mining communities.

The engagement focused on the mandate and functions of the Commission, key gender concepts, sexual harassment in the workplace, and the importance of integrating gender perspectives into organisational policies, programmes and practices.

The session further highlighted the gender-related challenges confronting mining communities, particularly gender-based violence (GBV), and the need for concerted efforts by mining companies and other stakeholders to address the social and structural factors that perpetuate gender inequalities.

The engagement highlighted the policy imperatives required for effective sexual harassment policies in the workplace. Here, the Commission emphasised the importance of adopting a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, supported by clear reporting procedures, appropriate investigation processes, accountability measures and mechanisms to protect victims and survivors.

The importance of gender-sensitive budgeting was also underscored. Participants were sensitised on the need to ensure that organisational budgets respond to the different needs of women and men, while allocating adequate resources towards gender equality initiatives and interventions aimed at addressing existing inequalities.

The engagement provided an opportunity to strengthen understanding of gender mainstreaming as an institutional responsibility rather than an isolated activity. It highlighted the importance of translating gender equality commitments into practical interventions, policies, programmes and resource allocation.

The CGE reiterates its commitment to working with the mining sector and other stakeholders to advance gender equality, eliminate discrimination, address gender-based violence and promote safe, inclusive and gender-responsive workplaces and communities.

Recognising Obstetric Violence as Gender-Based Violence



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) met with civil society representatives on 9 November 2026 for an engagement on the recognition of obstetric violence (OV) as gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa. The meeting sought to create a safe platform for both parties to discuss persisting challenges that women continue to experience due to OV and explore how awareness campaigns can be conducted for the issue to receive urgent attention.

Participating women were all afforded an opportunity to share their lived experiences, ranging from medical neglect and procedures performed on them without their informed consent. A common thread shared by the women was the denied access to their medical files.

Dr. Jess Rucell of the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC) presented on the formal recognition of OV. She addressed the importance of its formal recognition, noting that there is the lack of understanding of this particular violence.

CGE's Legal Services Head of Department Tsietsi Shuping delivered a presentation that acknowledged the submission by the Hopeville Foundation titled "Recognition of Obstetric Violence as Gender-Based Violence in South Africa: Survivor Experience and Recommendations for Reform." He stated that the submission will be considered alongside CGE's findings and recommendations. The existing work has already identified systemic weaknesses in healthcare access, quality, dignity and accountability — the submission brings these concerns into sharper focus through the lens of obstetric violence.

The presentation concluded by categorising that the task is therefore to consider how the Commission's existing evidence, recommendations and oversight mandate can contribute to a more integrated response, stating that, "Ultimately, the consideration is whether the existing institutional response is sufficient to prevent harm, protect reproductive autonomy, ensure accountability and give effect to substantive gender equality".

The Commission meets with the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities on the Implementation of Pillar 3 of the NSP-GBVF





On 13 November 2026, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) met with Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga of the Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Ministry. The engagement aimed to discuss systemic challenges affecting the implementation of Pillar 3 (Justice, Safety and Protection) of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF).

Opening the meeting, Acting Chairperson Mfundo Nomvungu stated that the country has the most progressive legal frameworks for gender equality in the world. However, they acknowledge that having a plan is not the same as implementing it, underscoring that the engagement seeks to move from reporting activities to measuring impact.

Legal Services Head of Department, Tsietsi Shuping delivered a presentation entitled "Systemic justice-system policy limitations and required executive interventions". The presentation highlighted CGE's work, presenting summaries, key findings and recommendations from investigative hearings conducted during the 2024/25 financial year to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of Pillar 3.

The Minister's presentation acknowledged CGE's work and constitutional mandate. She submitted that the government has significantly elevated the fight against GBVF through a series of interventions. She also acknowledged some systemic weaknesses, stating that both the NSP-GBVF and the GBVF Disaster Management Plans remain unfunded mandates.

In conclusion, the Minister stated that the government has carefully considered the findings raised by the CGE and will continue working with all stakeholders to address identified gaps and improve service delivery outcomes for survivors.

Following deliberations, the Chief Operations Officer, Patricia Ledwaba-Mametja closed the session. She stressed that ultimately, success must be measured by the difference made in the lives of survivors.

OPINION PIECE

By Frank Malata and Naledi Selebano



Single Female-Headed Households Face Persistent Challenges in Rural South Africa

The situation of single female-headed households in rural South Africa reflects the intersection of gender inequality, spatial marginalisation, poverty, and historical dispossession. While female-headed households are common across the country, those residing in rural areas, particularly in former homeland regions, continue to experience disproportionate levels of deprivation and socio-economic vulnerability. According to Statistics South Africa, women head approximately 43% of South African households, with female-headed households significantly more likely than male-headed households to experience poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and dependence on social assistance. Women in rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, and Mpumalanga remain particularly disadvantaged due to limited economic opportunities and inadequate access to productive resources.

Read more here:
https://cge.org.za/single-female-headed-households-face-persistent-challenges-in-rural-south-africa/