

The Weekly

NTOMBELA PRIORITISES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

March 22, 2013



Protecting the vulnerable ... The MEC for social development, Sisi Ntombela says the department will focus on the poor

The MEC for Social Development, Sisi Ntombela, has allocated R636- million to social welfare services aimed at providing social cover to women, children as well as the elderly and vulnerable groups such as the disabled and the poor.

The department has been allocated close to R1-billion for the 2013/2014 financial year.

There are 148 219 children between the ages of zero to four in the province. The department has provided social services to 17 000 orphans and vulnerable children through community based HIV and Aids care programme. These children are also linked to drop in centres where they receive afternoon meals and help with their school work.

The department has also made it possible for 95 000 children to access early childhood education through the 920 crèches it funds. There are 43, 960 children in these centres subsidised by the department. The number is expected to increase to 105 000 children during this financial year.

“The department has trained 1310 practitioners and matrons in Grade R curriculum over the last three years. During this financial year we trained 360. As we improved their skill base we also improved their conditions of service by increasing their stipend from R700 to R1 200 per month”.

Ntombela said some of the infrastructural state of crèches was “appalling”. To correct this, the department has set aside R8, 8-million to build six crèches. Mobile trucks worth R677 000 with a library on board were also bought to service rural areas. There are 330 children benefitting from services offered in these trucks.

People with disability were also accommodated in this budget and in February R3-million was used to build a multi-purpose service centre in Frankfort and a Day Care Centre in Ficksburg. The department will

The Weekly

train care-givers to work at the day care centre. This will be done in partnership with the department of health and established non-governmental organisations specialising in different areas of disabilities. Due to prevalent abuse, rape and killing of women and children in certain areas of the province, victim empowerment centres will also be built in all districts. They will serve as a platform to educate young men on how to treat women.

The department will also employ an additional 36 newly qualified social workers. Two learnerships programmes for Auxiliary Social Workers (SAW) and Child Youth Care Workers will be implemented. Close to R6-million has been budgeted to employ social workers and R2. 8-million for learnerships.

Ntombela said the department will also confront the problem of substance abuse among young people, which often lead them to be involved in crime and violence, head-on.

“The department will revive and lead the provincial and district chapters of the drug master plan to ensure delivery of integrated prevention and development programmes. These coordinating forums will have service plans and coordination agreements. The development of coordination plans and agreements must be finalised and signed by end April 2013,” said Ntombela.

The department have funded 43 organisations to run prevention, advocacy and education programmes. To ensure that young people find meaningful things to do with their lives, the department has set aside R2-million to renovate and restore Makoane Youth Empowerment Centre in QwaQwa. The department also funded 13 youth clubs for development of life skills.

Thirty young people, who are former beneficiaries of foster care grants, will be trained to become artisans at a cost of R2-million. Food and clothing banks will also be established in QwaQwa to the tune of R1-million. Communities in Springfontein and Welkom will become beneficiaries of a nutrition and development center that will be constructed during this financial year. These projects will be launched on October 16 which is the international food day.

“These centres will not only dish out food but will provide services such as nutrition education, parenting, household management and inter-generation programmes. This programme will be linked to the Expanded Public Works Programme through which project members and support staff will be trained to render professional services,” explained Ntombela.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]