

POPULATION UNIT HOST DIALOGUE ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The Free State Department of Social Development in collaboration with their national counterparts hosted a dialogue on Sexual and Reproductive Health as well as Rights at Lejweleputswa (Welkom) and Thabo Mofutsanyane (Phuthaditjhaba) districts; the dialogues which were presented in a form of Seminars, were held on February 11 – 12, 2013 and on February 14 – 15, 2013 respectively. The purpose of these seminars was to educate and train young persons on issues affecting their sexual and reproductive health as well as rights in order to minimize indulgence in risky behaviors and to empower them with regard to considerations in decision making as far as these matters are concerned. Participants were selected from various youth formations that exist within the districts.



Presentations and discussions were mainly based on Gender Equality, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health and to some lesser extent on participating democracy through Integrated Development Plans (IDP's). According to the presentations it became evident that even though the government and civil society are steadily winning the war on various social ills, there remains a lot of work to be done – this view is supported by shocking statistics that was presented by different facilitators.

One of the youth who attended the seminar, Ms Dimakatso Mokoena from Kutlwanong (Child and Youth Future Arm Organisation) said the seminar was very educational and that she will

make sure that the information is passed on to the youth from her organisation. At Phuthaditjhaba, youth with disabilities demonstrated that living with disability can no longer be an impairment that excludes them from actively participating in youth developmental matters.

It became evident in one of the discussion sessions that it is imperative for young people to actively participate in matters relating to their development, particularly in the development of local IDP's. The Department of Social Development is presently engaged in various research programmes which amongst others include the Research on Teenage Pregnancy in order to develop an understanding on the causative factors, extent and patterns. The Seminars were a huge success and the Population Development Unit would like to sincerely thank colleagues from the national department, district offices, various sister departments and municipalities for their invaluable support.