



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Address by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, at the Launch of the (CSE) Radio Lessons held at Hitekani Primary School, Soweto**

8 February 2022

Programme Director, Ms. C. Nogoduka

Deputy Minister for Basic Education, Dr Reginah Mhaule, MP

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Principal, Teachers and Learners

SGB Chairperson and Members

It's an honour and privilege to address the launch of 'Life on Madlala Street', a radio drama series adapted from the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) lessons.

This series is adapted from the 80 Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) scripted lessons, which are already part of the Life Skills and Life Orientation curriculum.

I am genuinely excited that we are witnessing the launch of the CSE Radio Lessons today in "our lifetime" as a country.

I thank our partners, including USAID Southern Africa, social partners and other civil society organisations, for helping us conceptualise, fund and launch this programme.

In the main, this radio drama series seeks to liberate the girl child and women from the iron grip of patriarchy.

As we know by design, private and personal spaces were designed to further the ideology of patriarchy and male chauvinism.

Patriarchy coined the catchphrase about the women's place being in the kitchen, or does it say bedroom?

Today, we reaffirm that the place of any women in society is where they want to be.

Today, patriarchy is generally accepted as the primary source of violence such as rape, battering, and murder against women in contemporary society.

We must refuse to keep patriarchy on manicured lawns through our own sweat, blood and tears as women.

Our singular objective shall remain to smash the patriarchy and free the potential of each woman and girl child.

In the words of the late Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro: “The day must come when we have a Party of men and women, and a leadership of men and women, and a State of men and women, and a Government of men and women.”

I too dream of a day in not so distant future where everyone embraces the fact that women’s rights are human rights.

That women are human beings before their gender.

Thus, like all human beings, women have an inalienable right to inherent human dignity.

Interestingly, the launch of this ground-breaking radio drama series comes days before we mark 2022 Pregnancy Awareness Week and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)/Condom Week.

As we know, South Africa battles high levels of HIV, early and unintended pregnancies amongst adolescent girls and gender-based violence.

At present, we provide scripted lessons on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and health services to learners, such as access to sexual and reproductive health services (secondary schools).

However, in primary schools, we focus on raising awareness of social justice principles and addressing vulnerabilities such as abuse reporting and support for children from gender-based violence infested homes.

We also focus on preventing learner pregnancy, alcohol and drug use and now also COVID-19 --- all these are considered risk factors to women's health and fertile grounds for gender-based violence.

Recent studies have shown a marked decline in condom usage amongst the sexually active youth population, while HIV infections amongst adolescent girls increases.

To say nothing of the menace of early and unintended pregnancies amongst school-going girls.

Therefore, our response is multi-faceted to systematically address the identified social ills, including anti-gender-based violence messaging in the curriculum and assessment and learning and teaching support materials.

We also focus on teacher training, co-curricular enrichment programmes, and care and support services, including advocacy as we do today to push back against gender-based violence, early and unintended pregnancies and, of course, rape culture.

We seek to enhance teaching efforts while addressing the critical drivers of social ills such as the broken fibre of society.

Thus, today's launch comes at the appropriate time to focus the nation on all that harms the most vulnerable in our society, women and girls.

In this regard, we must spare neither courage nor expense to protect the girl child and women in general from the HIV pandemic, STIs, and unwanted pregnancies.

We have decided to arm the girl child and women of our country with the knowledge, skills and manoeuvres they need to protect themselves from some of SAs morally reprehensible male species.

Patriarchy will end when we stop feeding it, clothing it and protecting it from harsh elements of human rights reality.

Our primary concern is the impact of social ills such as gender-based violence and rapes negatively affecting women's and girls' well-being and mental health.

Hence, advancing women's rights and protecting the girl child from harm is not an act of altruism but the only moral thing to do in the face of relentless onslaught against them from some male species.

As a country, we must realise that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a linchpin in our arsenal to push back against social ills, especially HIV, and early and unintended pregnancies.

And, of course, to push back against patriarchy and male chauvinism.

Similarly, we are alive to the reality that addressing social ills is a societal responsibility, hence using a public medium such as radio to reach out to parents and caregivers.

The fact that all these social ills such as drugs/alcohol use, early pregnancies, and gender-based violence sometimes happen on schools grounds or to learners accentuates that maxim that our schools are a microcosm of society.

Thus, the drama series *'Life on Madlala Street'* is a last-ditch effort to scale up our prevention messages through the medium of radio.

We opted to use the much-loved and accessible medium of radio to amplify the critical messages of CSE in an age-appropriate manner.

Peggy Noonan, a veteran journalist and columnist at the Wall Street Journal, summed it up succinctly when she said: "TV gives everyone

an image, but radio gives birth to a million images in a million brains”.

Thus, our target market is a million brains of learners, teachers, parents, caregivers, and radio lovers of all hues.

Radio is one of the mediums able to reach even the marginalised in our communities in the context of Covid-19 and high unemployment rates.

In addition, the Radio lessons seek to ignite conservation in society, especially amongst the learners, parents and caregivers.

This is a unique tool to teach and reach beyond the classroom.

Our determination is to teach the values of gender equality anti-gender-based violence messaging while tackling the hot potato of early and unintended pregnancies.

In a similar vein to reach a mass audience, last year (November), we launched Breaking the Silence TV series to tackle the scourge of HIV amongst adolescent girls while promoting critical messages from CSE.

In the same year (2021), the cabinet adopted the revised Basic Education Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools as a pushback against men in fancy suits who impregnate young girls as young as ten years.

This revised policy seeks to ensure the accessible provision of information on pregnancy prevention, care for the pregnant, counselling and choice of termination of pregnancy, amongst others.

As a caring Government, we must move society towards embracing the noble value of non-sexism and social justice for all.

When I took the oath of office, I vowed to be faithful to the Republic of South Africa and obey, respect and uphold the Constitution and all other laws of the Republic.

At the heart of the 1996 Constitution is the call to: heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

Most importantly, the Constitution enjoins us to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free each person's potential.

We cannot free each person's potential if women and young girls are trapped in abusive relationships, susceptible to rape, torture, and neglect.

In a simple language, our job is to protect the most vulnerable in our society: women and girls.

The scourge of early and unintended pregnancies amongst school learners and gender-based violence and rapes keeps me awake at night.



The insidious combo of early/unintended pregnancies and rapes hits at the heart of women's (and girl children) inherent dignity and seeks to destroy their self-worth.

We have to do everything in our power to protect the girl child from abuse from men in fancy suits without an iota of moral rectitude.

What kind of male animal "in their right mind" sleeps (more precisely rapes) with young girls as young as ten years?

As a society, we must confront the elephant in the room, men who have gone rogue in the name of exerting power through sexual assault.

In 1994, Nelson Mandela said women's rights are integral to a free society in his address to the National Assembly.

Mandela told the lawmakers that: "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression."

Finally, I would like to again extend our gratitude to USAID for supporting the conversion of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education lessons to audio.

I also extend our thanks to our implementing partner, the EDC.

Through partnerships like these, we can make fundamental progress in addressing the social ills that continue to bedevil our society, mainly aimed at women and girl children.

Your presence here indicates your solid commitment to ensuring that our learners can also have an equal chance at realising their full potential as dictated by the Constitution.

I trust that today marks the beginning of a journey for us as a country to harness the collective energy of our people so that together we can march to victory.

I thank you.