



Social Development leads fight against Poverty

S'busiso Sankqela

HUMANSDORP, As the world observed the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October, the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development (DSD) placed the spotlight on its ongoing poverty alleviation and food nutrition programmes aimed at uplifting vulnerable communities across the province.

The commemoration led by MEC for Social Development, Ms Bukiwe Fanta, took place in Humansdorp, Vaaldam township forming part of Social Development Month; a period dedicated to accelerating initiatives that combat poverty, hunger, and social injustice.

During the event, the MEC officially launched a new Community Nutrition and Development Centre (CNDC) Elderly and Children Resort in Vaaldam. The Vaaldam CNDC is the 38th centre established by the Department in the province.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Every October, the Department of Social Development draws a public focus on its programmes through the *Social Development Month*. This is a deliberate campaign of social mobilization to reach, influence, and involve all relevant segments of society to harness their capabilities so that they reach full potential.

As you will notice that the sway in the content of most stories in this edition, they are about informing, motivation, problem-solving to promote sustainable development in communities. To affirm this point, let us look at the salient piece on the launch of a Community Nutrition and Development Centre in Humansdorp, Sarah Baartman. It is an initiative that came through a process where community members themselves harnessed their human agency to establish a centre to address immediate hunger. This centre does not only address hunger but implement income-generating programmes that enhance self-reliance and resilience. It is about a society reaching its potential.

In the words of Nora Quebral (1971), who is often called the “mother of development communication,” this newsletter is a link between the Department and the society’s planned transformation from poverty to a dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and the larger unfolding of individual potential.

ENJOY THE READ!

CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR – IN –CHIEF

- Mzukisi Solani

EDITOR

- Samora Madolo

SUB – EDITOR

- Sbusiso Ndoni – Sankqela

WRITERS :

- Nomalanga Lucwaba
- Siphumelele Mdyodyo
- Sbusiso Ndoni – Sankqela

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Samora Madolo
- Sibabalwe Nkebe,
- Siphumelele Mdyodyo
- Nosipho Witvoet

DESIGN & LAYOUT :

- Akhona Peter & Sbusiso Ndoni - Sankqela

These centres are an important community resource designed to improve food security and empower residents through sustainable nutrition and development initiatives.

In a moving and heartfelt moment, the MEC also unveiled a memorial plaque at the CNDC in honour of the late founding chairperson of the Elderly and Children Resort CNDC, Mrs Shirleen Vissi who passed away nearly 4 years ago. The gesture, described as both sombre and heartwarming, reflected the Department's enduring values of compassion and service to society.

The event also included a tree-planting ceremony led by the MEC, a symbolic act representing growth, resilience, and the Department's continued commitment to eradicating poverty across the province.

Beyond Humansdorp, the Department continues to strengthen food security initiatives across the province, an essential intervention given the harsh economic pressures facing many communities. In Gqeberha Joe Slovo township (Ward 14) Nelson Mandela Metro, where high unemployment and limited household income make daily survival a struggle, community-based food support plays a critical role in cushioning families against hunger.

One such example is the Masibambisane Community Nutrition and Development Centre, supported by the Department of Social Development. The centre provides nutritious cooked meals to more than 300 people every day, offering reliable food access to residents who often cannot afford regular, balanced meals.

This daily support reduces the financial burden of food costs for many households, allowing limited income to stretch further towards other essential needs.



Members of Masibambisane CNDC in Joe Slovo, Gqeberha
Picture - Sibabalwe Nkebe

Masibambisane also maintains a thriving food garden, which supplements its meal programme and serves as a local source of fresh produce in a community where access to affordable, healthy food is limited. The garden has grown into a model of community resilience, earning the centre the Best Subsistence Producers Award from the Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (DRDAR).



MEC Fanta unveiling a plaque at the CNDC in Humansdorp.
Picture - Samora Madolo

This recognition underscores how small-scale, community-driven agricultural projects can contribute to food security, skills development, and economic relief in impoverished areas. Through these efforts, the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development continues to demonstrate that eradicating poverty is not merely a policy goal it is a shared mission rooted in dignity, compassion, and community empowerment.

Big walk for Cancer

Nomalanga Lucwaba

Every October, communities across the globe unite to observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time dedicated to spread awareness, honoring survivors, supporting those currently fighting the disease, and championing for funds to research for better prevention, treatment, and ultimately, a cure.

In this spirit of solidarity and wellbeing, the Buffalo City Municipality District of the Department of Social Development, together with other government departments, committed partners and stakeholders, hosted an uplifting Walk for Cancer in Phakamisa Township, Qonce.

The event brought employees, community members, and local organisations together in a colourful show of unity, compassion, and hope. Participants walked not only to raise awareness, but also to celebrate life, promote healthy living, and stand shoulder to shoulder with families affected by breast cancer.



Integrated Programme Marks Orange Day in Sterkspruit



HOD for Social Development Mr. Machemba addressing the community and all stakeholders at the Orange Day Commemoration in Ngquba Village, Sterkspruit.
Picture- Nosipho Witvoet

The Department of Social Development, led by HOD Mr. Machemba, marked Orange Day in Ngquba Village, Sterkspruit a community heavily affected by gender-based violence (GBV).

The event formed part of the 365-Day Integrated Programme against GBV and brought together partners, including SAPS, Community Safety, NPA, DOJ, Eskom and DSD, for a panel discussion with residents.

Community members raised concerns about limited support when reporting violence, crime and abuse. The session created a space for

honest dialogue and stronger collaboration between government and the community.

Mr. Machemba stressed the need for continuous, coordinated action to prevent GBV, noting that Orange Day observed globally on the 25th of each month serves as a reminder of the commitment to building a future free from violence.

The programme ended with a renewed call for all sectors to work together to ensure women and girls live safely, with dignity and equality.
Story supplied

Child Malnutrition and the Right to Food in the Eastern Cape

Siphumele Mdyodyo

South Africa's Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), constitutionally mandated to protect fundamental human rights, has raised urgent concerns over rising child hunger in the Eastern Cape. The Commission's findings have placed specific responsibility on the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development (DSD) to lead the provincial response to this escalating crisis.

Recent data from the Department of Health shows a sharp increase in Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases. Between September 2023 and August 2024, the province recorded 2,758 children with SAM, more than double the 1,087 cases reported during the Commission's previous reporting period (2021/2022).

This deterioration represents a direct violation of constitutionally enshrined rights: Section 27(1)(b) guarantees everyone the right to sufficient food and water, while Section 28(1)(c) affirms every child's right to basic nutrition. The SAHRC's inquiry found that government had not adequately met these obligations.

During its enquiry, held from 8–12 August 2022, the Commission engaged NGOs, healthcare workers, and community leaders. Their input revealed a range of systemic issues contributing to child malnutrition, including the shortage of or absence of healthcare facilities in rural areas, and poor coordination among departments responsible for food security and child welfare. The SAHRC's report concluded that a unified, accountable, and departmental-driven response was urgently required.

As a result, the Commission formally tasked the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development through the Office of the Head of

Department with leading, coordinating, and implementing its recommendations. This mandate positioned DSD as the central driver of the province's efforts to combat child malnutrition, supported by its agencies, SASSA and the NDA.

In response, DSD adopted and strengthened the Integrated Community Registration Outreach Programme (ICROP), administered by SASSA. ICROP brings essential social services, particularly social grant registrations directly to deep rural, remote, and underserved semi-urban communities where high malnutrition rates are concentrated. By deploying mobile, one-stop service units equipped with the necessary staff and technology, the programme reduces the travel barriers that often prevent families from accessing lifesaving support.

Working from data supplied by the Department of Health, the National Development Agency (NDA) provides six-month nutritional support packs for identified malnourished children to aid recovery. Other provincial departments have also been assigned responsibilities as part of this coordinated approach. The Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform must enhance household food sustainability, while the Department of Education is required to ensure adequate nutrition in Early Childhood Development Centres attended by affected children.

The Department of Social Development now stands at the centre of the province's response to child hunger responsible for driving coordination, delivering services, and ensuring that constitutional rights to food and nutrition are realized for every child in the Eastern Cape

UPCOMING EVENTS

18 November 2025

**LAUNCH OF ANTI-SUBSTANCE ABUSE
FESTIVE SEASON PROGRAMME**

 Aliwal North | Walter Sisulu LM
JOE GQABI DISTRICT

18 November 2025

**MEC LUNCHEON WITH
OLDER PERSONS**

 Aliwal North | Walter Sisulu LM
JOE GQABI DISTRICT

19 November 2025

**MEN CHAMPIONING CHANGE
WORLD AIDS DAY BUILD UP EVENT**

 St Stephens Anglican Church
New Brighton | Gqeberha
NELSON MANDELA METRO

20 November 2025

**16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST
WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

 BB Zondani Hall
Grahamstown | Makana LM
SARAH BAARTMAN DISTRICT

3 November - 3 December

DRAM 2025

DISABILITY RIGHTS AWARENESS MONTH

"Creating Strategic Multisectoral Partnerships
for a Disability-Inclusive Society"

#DRAM2025
#DisabilityInclusiveSA



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