

Department of Womxn, Youth and Persons with Disabilities fails to have any positive impact

by **Nazley Sharif MP** – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Woman, Youth and People with Disabilities

When you hear or think of the Department of Woman, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, ask yourself some of these questions:

1. Does this Department directly assist and alleviate struggles Womxn, Youth and Persons with Disabilities face on a daily basis?
2. Does this Department ensure that it contributes to the eradication of Gender-based violence and femicide?
3. Are there any service delivery systems to ensure that there are real and tangible opportunities for Womxn, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to enter the economy?
4. Does the Department truly care about promoting the rights of Womxn, Youth and Persons with Disabilities?

Well, since the re-alignment of this Department in 2019, it has failed miserably and the resounding answer to these questions is a **HARD NO**.

The scourge of GBVF has not decreased, we have not seen any evidence that there is any fight against this pandemic and that more lives are being saved. In fact, I would argue that most of the interventions that government fails to implement, since 2019 is literally killing people. This is a direct result of poor planning, poor leadership, and a complete lack of any accountability on the part of the Department and other key implementing departments across government. A clear and damning example of this is the Department not meeting any of its targets in the implementation of the Emergency Response Action Plan, the Department and its leadership should hang their heads in shame.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane, you have now had two opportunities to turn this Department around. The way you speak about GBVF in the House, is absolutely perfunctory. You lead an entire department of over 100 officials and a budget of R201.1 million to make an actual change in the lives of Womxn, the LGBTQIA+ Community, Youth and Persons with Disabilities but you simply don't.

Programme 2 that is meant to assist in the fight against GBVF as outlined by your Department in the APP and Strategic Plan, is underfunded and the targets are not SMART, they are not aligned with the needs of those you are meant to serve. None of the targets directly make any difference to the lives of those affected by the daily violence of GBVF, instead, they are centered around one or two reports that may or may not have any impact, webinars, minuscule efforts for public participation and there is absolutely no mention of the National GBVF Council that is yet to be finalized.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane, if you are serious about contributing to the eradication of GBVF then it is your job to hold key departments like Police, Justice, Social Development and more to account. Weekly reports to the President just do not cut it anymore. Paying so many high-ranking officials more than R1.3 million per annum and still hiring consultants to the value of R16.4 million is just not acceptable.

The Department needs to rethink its mandate and use the budget more efficiently in order to meet the needs of Womxn, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.