

LEGAL AID SA JOINS SIU AND GP GOVERNMENT IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Gauteng Premier and SIU officials signing the MOU and pledge



Exhibiting services at the event

Legal Aid South Africa honoured an invitation to the Special Investigating Unit's (SIU) Stakeholder Engagement Forum in Johannesburg. The forum was aimed at strengthening the SIU's relations with various stakeholders within the Gauteng province, as well as improving its intergovernmental relations.

In support of the theme of working together to rid society of corruption, malpractice and maladministration, Legal Aid SA took a chance to exhibit services, share information about the organisation and support and celebrate law enforcement agencies' efforts to combat corruption in the province.

The Premier of Gauteng, David Makhura, delivered the keynote

address and applauded his administration for taking the fight against corruption seriously by establishing a provincial task team to monitor and identify any acts of corruption in the provincial government. Head of the SIU, Adv. Andy Mothibi, pointed out some key sectors which have seen increased attention due to the high rate of corruption related to contracts and tenders.

Adv. Mothibi further gave updates on both ongoing and completed cases in the province, and nationally. The event ended with well-facilitated roundtable discussions with representatives of different organisations on corruption, and suggestions to further assist in the fight against corruption.

LEGAL AID SA JOHANNESBURG LOCAL OFFICE VISITS ROSEBANK COLLEGE

Principal Legal Practitioner from Legal Aid SA's Johannesburg Local Office, Magate Nkgapele, took some time to provide education and information on the criminal and civil justice system to students of Rosebank College in Braamfontein. The campaign is part of the institution's Youth Leadership Programme which is scheduled to take place throughout this year to inspire the confidence of young people in various systems established to provide services in South Africa.

Students received an opportunity to learn how Legal Aid SA fits into the justice system in South Africa as well as the criteria and application for legal aid in both criminal and civil matters. They also took the chance to ask questions related to wrongful accusations, self-defence and how legal graduates move through the ranks from Candidate Attorney to Senior Counsel.

It was a very fruitful session, with students expressing interest in the fact that in South Africa, legal aid is provided to anyone who cannot afford legal representation in criminal matters.



Principal Legal Practitioner Magate Nkgapele addressing students

OUR VISION

A South Africa in which the rights and responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution are realised to ensure equality, justice and a better life for all.

LET US ALL PROTECT CHILDREN MOVING SOUTH AFRICA FORWARD

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN AND THEIR NEEDS

The Department of Social Development and stakeholders in the child welfare sector hosted children from across the country at the launch of the 2018 Child Protection Week. The special guests of honour used the platform they were given to relay their views on violence and discrimination against their peers.

The nominated speakers from various NGOs gave details and advice on what interventions would best suit the sector. Ms Lindiwe Letsheleha advised that children with disabilities and albinism need



Ms Lindiwe Letsheleha addressing the audience

to voice their special needs to teachers so that they are not excluded from school activities.

Mr Bothale Mokoena use the opportunity to inform parents and teachers that nurturing talent and supporting children ensures that they do not engage in bad habits.

The event brought together major national and international NGOs to listen to the views of the children who represented different communities, and encouraged a dialogue between all parties present. Legal Aid SA remains committed to upholding children's rights.

LEGAL AID SA BELLVILLE LOCAL OFFICE HOSTS HIGH TEA FOR YOUNG GIRLS



Awaiting Trial Prisoner playing piano during the high tea event

Twenty-four girls from Huis Vredelust Hostel in Elsie's River were hosted by the Legal Aid SA Bellville Local Office at a high tea event as part of a Child Protection Week awareness campaign. The girls are awaiting trial, so information on Legal Aid SA's services was vital for their upcoming matters.

The Legal Aid SA team used this opportunity to build a positive mood amongst the minor girls. They asked a lot of questions on court proceedings, engaging with Legal Aid SA's Legal Practitioners. A key question that was addressed was on how the expungement of criminal records works.

In closing the event, one of the girls gave a short performance to show gratitude for the information session.

LEGAL AID SA LADYBRAND SATELLITE OFFICE ATTENDS CLOSE OF CHILD PROTECTION WEEK

In the spirit of participating in building awareness of the rights of children, Legal Aid SA's Ladybrand Satellite Office attended the closing ceremony of Child Protection Week, hosted by the Department of Social Development. Legal practitioners provided learners and parents with legal advice and invited them to turn to Legal Aid SA to assist them when they need legal assistance.

Minister of Social Development, Susan Shabangu, spoke of how all stakeholders should pay attention to the laws designed to protect children, especially in cases involving unaccompanied and undocumented children of foreign nationality.

Residents of Ladybrand, including Lesotho nationals residing in the town, visited all the exhibition stands displaying services they can



Legal Aid SA's Mosiwa Mokoena engages with learners during the close of Child Protection Week

make use of. Legal Aid SA Legal Practitioners, Daphne Morudu, Mosiwa Mokoena and Meshack Sithole, responded to questions from community members, ensuring that education on legal rights was improved.

MAJENJE LEARNERS RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THEIR RIGHTS



Ms Mboweni (educator) and Almond Selabaleli with learners after the presentation

Legal Aid SA Paralegal, Almond Selabaleli, visited learners of Ehlaketani Primary School in Majenje during Child Protection Week to further support the efforts of government departments and NGOs across the country during this time.

Mr Selabaleli provided the learners with information on the rights they are entitled to as children, as well as the responsibilities and obligations that go along with such rights. He also gave them a step-by-step explanation of what they needed to do if their rights are violated at home or at school. Anti-Fraud and Legal Aid Advice Line posters and leaflets were distributed to the school, to ensure that learners know where to turn for help.

STAKEHOLDERS EMPOWER ADULTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN KZN

As part of the 2018 Child Protection Week, Legal Aid SA joined the Children in Distress NGO in KwaZulu-Natal to share information and expertise with community members so as to bring to light the challenges faced in the fight against the abuse of children.

The event was attended by numerous entities, including the South African Human Rights Commission, which also took the opportunity to engage with the stakeholders present, such as teachers, principals, pastors and health care givers.

Legal Aid SA gave important details such as what constitutes abuse and its different forms. Another key focus were the rights that people needed to be aware of, such as rights to family and parental care, the right to human dignity and the right to legal representation. Civil Legal Practitioner Daisy Munsami added that this annual campaign creates significant awareness amongst parents, caregivers, educators and communities at large about their responsibility to protect and care for our children.



Legal Aid SA Pietermaritzburg Head of Office, Nokuphiwa Nguqu (red jacket) with the Legal Aid SA team at the community event



LEGAL AID SA INTRODUCES SERVICES TO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN IN ELSBURG

The community of Elsburg in Germiston was invited to a services' open day at the local clinic in their area. Mothers and their children were informed about the various stakeholders available in their immediate surroundings and were urged to make use of the services available. Stakeholders such as the Ekurhuleni Metro Police, Ekurhuleni Municipality Social Services Unit, Legal Aid SA and HIV/AIDS testing NGOs spoke to the audience about the services they can freely access.

Legal Aid SA Legal Advisor, Thandiswa Maholwana, informed the community that they can rely on Legal Aid SA for legal advice and legal representation on matters related to their children. She invited the mothers to visit the Legal Aid SA Germiston Local Office and call the Legal Aid Advice Line for advice.

Community members took the opportunity to speak to the Legal Advisors present on matters related to guardianship of their grandchildren in the absence of their parents and also the transfer of title deeds from deceased family members. Many also asked if the Road Accident Fund has an age limit on claims.



LEGAL AID SA ENGAGES WITH TEDDY BEAR FOUNDATION'S SOCIAL WORKERS

After presenting the mandate, objectives and services of Legal Aid SA to social workers of the Teddy Bear Foundation, Legal Practitioners from the Legal Aid SA Johannesburg Local Office took the opportunity to build stronger relations and clarify the position the organisation takes on children and child-related matters through an in-depth discussion.

Legal Practitioners Mmasello Madiwana and Phethi Nkosi answered questions related to the Legal Aid SA Means Test and also addressed the perception that Legal Aid SA changes practitioners when defending accused persons in court. Further information was given on the constitutional rights of both victims and the accused, and the legality of not reporting abuse of children.

This engagement comes on the back of the establishment of a formal referral system with the Teddy Bear Foundation, where vulnerable parents of children who cannot afford legal representation can use the services of Legal Aid SA to have a voice in court and access to justice. This partnership seeks to always ensure that the best interest of the child is heard and represented in courts.



SERI Domestic Workers' Rights: A Legal and Practical Guide



(L-R) Commissioner at CCMA, labour rights activist at the Casual Workers' Advice Office, domestic worker and activist, Senior researcher at UJ, SERI researcher

SERI LAUNCHES DOMESTIC WORKERS' RIGHTS GUIDE

Legal Aid SA recently honoured an invitation to the launch of a Domestic Workers' Rights Legal and Practical Guide by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI). The guide has been created to raise awareness of the rights of domestic workers and the obligations of employers in terms of the domestic employment relationship. The user-friendly guide explains what the law says about domestic workers and also gives practical advice on how domestic workers can engage with their employers.

Legal Aid SA contributed to the research and included contact details of the Legal Aid Advice Line in the publication.

The launch included a panel discussion between commissioners from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), domestic workers, researchers and activists calling for the review of employment rights of domestic workers in South Africa. All in attendance pointed out that the guide was beneficial to domestic workers but advised that further engagement and research should include employers and the Department of Labour.

LEGAL AID SOUTH AFRICA BOARD



Back: Ms Adila Chowan, Mr Nkosana Mvundlela, Ms Marcella Naidoo, Professor Yousuf Vawda, Ms Thulisile Mhlungu, Advocate Pieter du Rand, Judge President Dunstan Mlambo, Judge Motsamai Makume, Ms Vidhu Vedalankar
Front: Mr Patrick Hundermark, Mr Matome Leseilane, Ms Nonhlanhla Mgadza, Advocate Brian Nair, Mr Jerry Makokoane

LIVING THE LEGAL AID SA VALUES

I'm Valecia May and this is my story.

In 2011, when we moved into our house there was a regular guy who was living on the streets who used to come knock on our door for food. He came every evening and we would let him come inside and eat a proper meal at the table instead of eating outside. So this became part of our everyday routine.

The guy I am speaking about is Joseph Clarke. One morning during winter as we were leaving the house, my husband reversed the car out of the driveway and noticed something in his way. When he stopped the car and checked what it was, he saw Joseph lying under a piece of cardboard. He woke him up and told him that he could go and lie under the carport as we had couches outside, which we were not using at the time. That evening my husband and I sat and spoke about taking Joseph into our house. We both agreed that he could move into the spare room, but he turned down the offer.

We then spoke to him and told him that due to his age he cannot continue living the way he was. We then came to an agreement that he can live there but that he needs to take care of his personal hygiene and my husband also gave him some clothes to wear. We would let him use our bathroom to see to himself. He then told us that he does not want to live inside but will sleep outside under the carport on the couch.

During this time Joseph also decided to sober up and attended the AA programme with my husband, which led to his sobriety. He is currently sober for 4 years and in this time acquired his ID card and applied for a government grant.

He is still living with us and we have put up a structure in our yard where he is living so that he can have his own space. He does piece jobs to keep busy and to be independent. He also acquired goods such as a TV, a bed, clothing, a stove and a microwave from the money he earns.



Regional Court Legal Practitioner at the Legal Aid SA Athlone Local Office, Valecia May

My husband and myself are in the process of extending our house to provide Joseph with a better place to stay. I hope my story encourages every one of us to think about those who are in need and find a way to lend a helping hand.