

OVERSIGHT VISIT REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CONDUCTED AT BUHLEBUYEZA DAY CARE CENTRE ON 06 MARCH 2013 AND A PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON 07 MARCH 2013 AT VUKUZAKHE COMMUNITY HALL, DURING THE “TAKING THE LEGISLATURE TO THE PEOPLE” (TLP) AT THE DR PIXLEY KA ISAKA SEME LOCAL MUNICIPALITY - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development (the Committee) has a mandate in terms of Rule 112(2) of the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature to conduct oversight over the Department of Social Development (the Department) by holding it accountable through various measures which the Portfolio Committee may undertake during the course of a financial year.

The Portfolio Committee uses oversight visits to facilities and projects as one of the instruments to execute its mandate to conduct oversight over Departments.

2. PURPOSE OF THE OVERSIGHT VISIT AND PUBLIC HEARING

a. The purpose of the oversight visit was to:

- ❖ To oversight the Department over its reported progress on its deliverables as outlined in the APP and Annual Report;
- ❖ To assess the support provided by the Department with regards to the programmes offered by Buhlebuyeza Day Care Centre;
- ❖ Interact and deliberate with the Department and stakeholders on the overall functioning of the Centre;

- b. The purpose of the public hearing was to allow the department a platform to report back to the community on a range of service delivery concerns raised during the pre-TLP oversight visits conducted on 14 November 2012.

3. METHOD OF WORK

After the approval of the programme of Taking Legislature to the People, the Committee informed the Department about the site visit and the purpose thereof. The Department and management of the Buhlebuyeza Centre were then invited to be part of the visit. The Researcher briefed the Committee on 27 February 2013 on the findings of the research on the Centre and the responses of the Department. The actual oversight visit was conducted on 06 March 2013 at Centre.

During the site visit, the Committee was represented by Honourable Members of the Legislature. The Department was represented by the HOD, Management of the Buhlebuyeza Centre, and the Chairperson of the Centre. Other invited stake holders who were part of the oversight visit were, Local Councillors, Ward Councillors, Community Development Workers, PR Councillors and Chief Whip of the Municipal Council.

On 07 March 2013, a public hearing was held at Vukuzakhe community hall.

4. PROGRESS REPORT MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO THE CONCERNS RAISED DURING THE PRE-TLP OVERSIGHT VISITS ON 14 NOVEMBER 2012

The MEC, Hon. KC Mashego - Dlamini, provided the following progress made by the Department of Social Development in relation to issues emanating from the public hearings as were raised to the Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development during the pre-TLP Oversight Visits on 14 November 2012.

The MEC presented her progress report as follows:

Ward 1

Ms Zodwa Ngwenya, of Stand No 2886 indicated that they do not receive all their social grant (money) which government make available to them; a portion of it gets deducted from the service point that include Post Offices and banks without any explanation.

She therefore, pleaded with the Department of Social Development to investigate and give feedback on the reasons for such deductions, whether they are lawful or not. She further pointed out that, for the poor, the three months waiting period is too long to get the grant from South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).

Progress Report: The MEC reported that Ms Ngwenya's concern was addressed, though she does not recall the month in which she was paid the amount deducted from her account, thus making it difficult for the agency to refer the matter for further investigations by South African Post Office (SAPO). The MEC further indicated that the incident took place long before the appointment of the new service provider tasked with the responsibility to distribute social grants.

She is currently receiving her social grant in one of the registered Merchants. The agency monitors all pay out points to ensure that, any complaints of similar nature are dealt with immediately.

The Committee should also note that, beneficiary education, on the utilization of the new SASSA payment card is done through media and when the cards are issued to beneficiaries.

Ward 2

Ms Nomvula Dlamini of Stand No. 107 raised a concern that she is running the Ntwenhle Day Care from her house. They have ninety three (93) children of ages between 2-5 years. The day care is unable to receive funding from the Department or other sponsors, because they do not have a site, where they can build the center, and therefore pleaded for assistance to obtain a piece of land suitable for a new early childhood development center.

Progress Report: The MEC reported that the Ntwenhle Day Care center was prepared for registration in October 2012, but it was identified that the health inspector's report that was submitted, was not specific on the number of children that can be accommodated at the current center, hence registration could not be finalized. The health inspector from the municipality was then requested to correct the report, and it was only received in December 2012, thus the registration was planned for end of February 2013.

The MEC further indicated that, the municipality was engaged to conduct inspection at the center which would fast-track the process of registering it with the Department. Ntwenhle Day Care center did not have a functional committee and was assisted by the Department to elect a committee.

It was also assisted to complete the business plan for consideration for funding in the 2013/2014 financial year. However, the center failed to submit the business plan before the closing date as expected, which was 15 October 2012.

Follow ups were done even after the closing date, but still the centre failed to submit its business plan. Ntwenhle Day Care centre is therefore not on the list of those that would be considered for 2013/14 funding, noting that, a business plan is one of the key requirements when funding is considered.

5. OVERSIGHT VISIT TO BUHLEBUYEZA DAY CARE CENTRE

5.1 Background

The Buhlebuyeza Day Care Centre is situated in Ward 5, at Wakkerstroom. It was established in 1987 and started getting funding from the Department during the last quarter for 2010/11 financial year. The current enrolment in the Centre is 130 children. The Centre receives funding (grant) from the Department, to sustain itself, and also charges a monthly fee of R 60.00 per child, as a mean to collect revenue which complements the funding provided by the Department. The Centre operates on weekdays, Mondays to Fridays from 07:30 to 16:00.

The Department approved and transferred R460,008.00 grant funding for 2011/12 financial year and R 373,824.00 for 2012/13 financial year. The funds are being utilized for stipend for all practitioners, chef, cleaner, grounds man, administration, equipment and for provision of food.

5.2 Staff Establishment

The centre has seven practitioners, four (4) of which are for Grade R teachers, One (1) Centre Manager (Principal), One (1) chef and (1) grounds man

6. SERVICES RENDERED BY THE BUHLEBUYEZA DAY CARE CENTRE

The Centre provides a day care and early childhood development services. The Centre Manager indicated that they have 105 children enrolled for Grade R. However, it could not be established if the curriculum they are providing for Grade R is in line with the standards prescribed by the Department of Education.

The Centre Manager also indicated that they are teaching the Grade Rs to read and write.

The Committee was concerned that the Centre did not have tables, which result in the children writing on the floor. It was further noted that, it is overcrowded, as it was required to have at most 55 children. The Committee was further concerned that the ventilation was of poor standards, and there is no space to sleep, especially the younger children.

7. GENERAL OBSERVATION

- ❖ The Committee further noted that the centre has enrolled 130 children, and in terms of Health and Safety regulations, it is supposed to accommodate 55 children. It was indicated that the previous health inspector had given the Centre a go ahead to cater for the 130 children.
- ❖ The centre has no challenges as per their programmes.

8. INTERACTION WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF BUHLEBUYEZA DAY CARE CENTRE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Compliance to Norms and Standards

The Accounting Officer of the Department indicated to the Committee that, the Centre is providing a good service and partially complies with the norms and standards issued by the Department. However, it must be noted that there is lack of provision of adequate space, no emergency action plan and the emergency exit door. The absence of policies and procedures regarding health care is a major challenge.

8.2 Buhlebuyeza Centre Committee/Board

The Committee wanted to know whether the centre has a board, as this body is important in South African democracy as part of promotion of good governance and accountability of management.

The Department indicated that the centre has a functional committee comprising of six community members accounting to the Department.

8.3 Staff Personnel

The Committee was concerned on whether the teachers are trained or working as private, and the extent in which the Department of Education is training the teachers of the Centre.

The Department indicated that only one teacher was developed and assisted by the department.

The Committee noted with concern that the lawns of the Centre is too big to be looked after by one person. During the discussions, it was noted that it is due to shortage of funds.

8.4 New Structure of the Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Regarding the overcrowding of the centre, the Committee indicated that there is a need for another center or extending the current centre in order to comply with the norms and standards.

The Department indicated that there are negotiations with local churches to hire a church as an extension of this center for the interim, while waiting for the new center to be completed as it will ease the challenge of overcrowding at Buhlebuyeza day care Center.

The Department further indicated that National Development Agency (NDA) has committed to building a new early childhood development center and has committed R800 000 for this project. The Department further informed the Committee that, the new structure is expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

In addition, the Department informed the Committee that there is an ECD called Thandolwethu which was built by Independent Development Trust (IDT), but it is operating in a shack which is not conducive for an ECD. It was reported that, plans for the construction of the ECD will cost R800 000 during 2013/14 financial year.

8.5 Safe Environment for Children at Buhlebuyeza day care centre

Apart from the fact that the Centre does not have an emergency action plan and policy, the Centre Manager has taken major steps to ensure that all children in the Centre are safe at all times. No unknown or unidentifiable person or visitors are allowed in the Centre.

8.6 Adequate Space and Ventilation

There is no adequate space and ventilation for the kids. The building has small windows that cannot provide for adequate ventilation and fresh air. This has a potential to negatively affect the children because transmission of communicable diseases such as flu and TB is easy in such environment.

8.7 Kitchen and bathrooms

The kitchen which is used for the preparation of food for the kids is always kept clean. Toilets were also found to be hygienically clean and water provided for the kids to wash hands after using the toilet.

8.8 Safe Storage for Harmful Things to Children

The Centre Manager indicated that the Centre does not keep products which are hazardous to kids.

8.9 Measures for Separation of Children as Per Age Group

There is a measure in place to separate kids according to their age groups. The Centre Manager indicated that, kids with disabilities are not separated from their peers but are given special and extra care without the others feeling neglected. Kids are separated as follows:

- Kids between one (1 year) and two and half (2½) years are separated and grouped together.
- Kids between three (3) and five (5) years are separated and grouped together.

8.10 Governance

The Centre has a Constitution and a Board which meets four times a year or as and when required. The Board is elected in the Annual General meeting and comprises of parents. Records of the Board meetings are also kept and scored for future references.

8.11 Financial Management

The financial year of the board starts from 1 April to 31 March each year. The Centre has a sound financial management process in place. The Centre was able to produce audited financial statements for the year end 31 March 2012. The financial statement indicates that the Centre is a going concern and recorded a net profit of **R 65,065.49** at the end of March 2012. The total combined value of assets amount to R 89,092 including the building and equipment.

8.12 Playground

The Centre doesn't have a playground and enough toys for the kids to play. The issue of the playground needs to be addressed to allow the kids their right to play.

8.13 Funding from donors/stakeholders

The Committee enquired on whether the centre is being funded by any donors. The Manager reported that, they have once requested a church to assist with accommodation, to cater for the other children to avoid the overcrowding; they are still waiting for the response. The Department will also register a need for the extension of the building with National Development Agency (NDA).

8.14 Action Plan for Emergencies

The Centre could not provide an emergency action plan and the management had little knowledge of what they would do in an event of unforeseen emergency, like fire. The building also didn't have an alternative emergency exit to be used in an event there is emergency. The Committee further needed clarity on whether there is a standard plan in place that is used for the entire Province.

The Department reported that, there was a consultation together with the municipality. An emergency plan will be developed by 15 March 2013.

The Head of Department (HOD) reported that there are no major problems, with regards to medical issues, the Centre has an easy access to the clinic, the centre has a first aid kit and there are incident reports provided.

9. FINDINGS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

- 9.1 There is non-compliance to norms and standards, as the Buhlebuyeza centre registered 130 children instead of 55, thus the overcrowding;
- 9.2. There are no policies and procedures, no emergency plan in place, no emergency exit door, and the staff is not trained to deal with unforeseen emergency issues;

- 9.3 There is no business plan in Buhlebuyeza centre;
- 9.4. The services that are provided to the Grade R pupils are of a serious concern in terms of the pupils' preparedness and readiness for Grade 1;
- 9.5. Buhlebuyeza Centre does not have adequate space and air ventilation;
- 9.6. The centre does not have a playground and enough toys for kids to play;
- 9.7. The Department is only funding 118 children out of the 130 children;

10. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee recommends that the Department should:

- 10.1. Ensure that the centre complies with the norms and standards by putting systems, plans and measures that will assist the Buhlebuyeza Centre in dealing with overcrowding without necessarily having to deny children access to the Centre.
- 10.2. Assist the Centre to develop policies and procedures, an emergency evacuation action plan and provide training to the Centre personnel on the handling of emergency situation.
- 10.3. Ensure that proper business plan is developed in order to access funding.
- 10.4. Ensure that they urgently engage with the Department of Education (DOE) to ensure, that the services provided to the Grade Rs are in line and integrated to the DOE curriculum.
- 10.5. Ensure that it comes up with a plan to avoid children being at risk with TB or any diseases due to the centre not having ventilations.
- 10.6. Ensure that the Centre has adequate play grounds and enough toys for the Children;

- 10.7. Put measures and systems to ensure that all the registered children in the Centre are funded, considering that only 118 out of the 130 children are currently funded;
- 10.8. Ensure that there are plans put in place to ensure the establishment of Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres equal to the needs of the community;
- 10.9. Develop an action plan to ensure that children are provided with sleeping facilities to allow time for sleeping, especially for the younger children.


A comprehensive progress report should be submitted by 30 September 2013.

11. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all the Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development for their attendance and active participation during the oversight visit and during the public hearing.

She further thanked the Mayor; Councillors; HOD, the management of the Centre, the officials of Department for cooperation and the Legislature staff for providing support to the Committee.

Lastly, the Chairperson recommends on behalf of the Portfolio Committee, that the House adopts the report with its findings and recommendations.



HON. P NGOBENI
CHAIRPERSON: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

21/06/2013
DATE