

Progress made in fighting GBV in higher learning institutions

Higher Education and Training Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, says good progress has been made to implement sustainable and impactful measures to address the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV) in higher learning institutions.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

The country's Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector is home to more than 2.5 million youth with 51% being females.

According to the minister, 10% of all reported rape cases originate from young women in the higher education sector and only one in ten women report a rape case.

"My Department of Higher Education and Training through Higher Health has done so much over the past few years to implement sustainable and impactful systems, controls, infrastructure, and safety nets to address the scourge of GBV within the PSET sector."

The minister was speaking during the inaugural Transforming MENTalities Summit, which is aimed at engaging men and boys to address the root causes of violence against women.

He said that since launching the GBV Policy Framework in 2020, Higher Health has been putting systems, controls, capacity in institutions to respond to GBV issues.

Higher Health developed a Technical Task team which various PSET stakeholders as well as technical experts who are together developing a multi-sectoral response to issues of GBV in the PSET system.

“In 2021, the Task Team released procedural guidelines on how to respond to cases of GBV on campus; protocol on rape; and protocol on code of ethics. As part of our Women’s Month celebration this month, the Task Team released the Protocol on Campus Safety and Security Minimum Standards; the Protocol on Safety in Private Accommodation, the Protocol on Safety in Residences; and Protocol on Staff-Student Relationships,” he said in his address on Tuesday.

“Higher Health is currently working with the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) in developing Protocols on Statement of Complaint, whistleblowing and other legislature requirements for our system.”

The Minister said that Higher Health is continuing to implement various programmes and support structures for students and frontline staff at institutions of higher learning. Programmes are offered on 420 campuses across South Africa including urban and rural areas.

Civic and Health Education Skills Programme

Another important achievement in addressing GBV in PSET institutions, includes the launch of an online National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 5 Civic and Health Education Skills Programme in July 2023, which is the first of its kind in the Global South.

The programme will cover modules that include gender-based violence and will be offered in all 12 South African languages.

The Minister said the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) will be one of the institutions that will be playing a pivotal role in the sector’s efforts to deepen the fight against GBV.

He said the HSRC will forge a nexus of academics and researchers from South African public universities and various organisations to harness the power of collective insights, rallying men and boys as “staunch allies in our campaign to reduce violence, bolster human rights, and realise gender parity.”

The council will conduct studies that will pinpoint communities at risk. These studies will examine intricate layers of perception, aspiration, and change across KwaZulu Natal, the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Limpopo. These provinces bear the brunt of reported rape cases.



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“Our journey will not be solitary. It will be a collective effort of research networks, embracing institutions such as Nelson Mandela University, University of the Western Cape, University of Venda, and [the] University of KwaZulu-Natal,” Nzimande explained.

He said, the PSET institutions will also be engaged, through seminars and workshops in order to have inclusivity and

impact, and the sector's outreach programme will sensitise young minds to gender issues.

The Transforming MENTalities Summit is based on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (Unesco) Transforming MENTalities initiative, launched in 2015 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and later spread to a number of other countries.

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