

14 June – School Killings – Rehabilitation for Offenders?

WMACA Challenges MEC

Women & Men Against Child Abuse notes that there might have been some misunderstanding of our position regarding rehabilitation and/or diversion programs available to youth in conflict with the law.

Following the recent Forest Hill tragedy where one child was killed and two others hospitalised by a 20-year old fellow pupil, Luke Lamprecht

of WMACA responded to MEC Panyaza Lesufi by saying that the government does not offer rehabilitation programmes for juveniles or adults who commit serious crimes such as murder.

Lamprecht, WMACA Advocacy manager and child safety specialist, was reacting to Lesufi's suggestion that pupils who are expelled from school should undergo a rehabilitation programme before they are considered for admission at another school.

WMACA is entirely supportive of any rehabilitation, diversion or corrective program available to our country's youth, we just feel that, as passionate as the MEC may be about such programs, there is a severe lack of government-initiated and/or funded facilities that deal with youth offenders (up to the age of 18), an issue which needs to be addressed with urgency.



Contrary to Mr. Lesufi's wishes to reintegrate the Forest Hill accused, the schools act of 1996 makes no provision for learners over the age of 18 to enter a youth rehabilitation program and reintegrate in

the school systems - the accused individual should be charged, tried and allowed the opportunity to defend himself as a young adult person, although we will continue to exert pressure upon the Department to look at the well-

document bigger picture: MEC Lesufi suggested an amendment to the current Education Act that would allow for the development of programs to reintroduce youth offenders into the school system - we welcome and look forward to any platform that allows problematic children the opportunity through intervention to become functional young adults.

The Education Department should however ask itself how the toxic environment of gang violence within the school and local community has been well documented, yet allowed to fester unaddressed. Prevention remains better than cure - The Department of Education needs to address the culture of abuse and gang violence and in doing so prevent the death of children.

[#MiniMeToo](#) [#ForestHill](#) [#CourageousConversations](#) [#SeenButNotHurt](#)

Our research shows that NICRO does not take anyone who falls into that category. The nature of the crime determines who they can take.

Bosasa has a cut off age of persons they take into their programs. Even then someone accused of murder is not admitted into their programs.

SECURITY SA -Where's the crime rehab for pupils, Lesufi?

Date: 15 Jun 2019

Women & Men Against Child Abuse wants a national inquiry into 'astounding levels of physical and sexual abuse and gang-related crime' at schools.

The Gauteng department of education has been called on to identify rehabilitation programmes for pupils expelled for crime as research has pointed to a serious shortage of such state-assisted programmes.

Non-governmental organisation (NGO) Women & Men Against Child Abuse said education MEC Panyaza Lesufi had suggested pupils should undergo rehabilitation before being considered for admission to another school but did not identify any available programmes.

The organisation said Lesufi should identify the programmes available to "rehabilitate" youngsters who have committed murder or attempted murder, such as in the case of the Forest High School pupils. Three pupils were stabbed by a fellow pupil.

"There is a serious lack of government-assisted initiatives or NGOs, and no diversion nor rehabilitation programmes available to deal with a 19-year-old who murders a fellow pupil that would allow for successful reintegration into our school system without putting other children at serious risk," founding director Miranda Jordan said.

She said Lesufi should let the law run its course and consider that while education

WMACA Advocacy Spokesperson, Ngaa Murombedzi



WWMACA Founding Director, Miranda Jordan

was a constitutional right, the right of other children to be educated in a safe space should take precedence.

The organisation referred to Lesufi's statement during an SABC interview that the "sad part is the three pupils were not supposed to be at school because they weren't writing exams".

Jordan said they disagreed with this statement and that the tragedy was that perpetrators like these were within the school system and the school was aware of it.

"Bullying and sexual assault seem to be a part of the culture at this school so it should not come as a surprise that violence is

rampant in that schooling community," she said.

The organisation also called on the education department to launch a national inquiry into what it said were astounding levels of physical and sexual abuse and gang-related crime at schools.

The NGO vowed to monitor the "violations of children's basic right to safety until government, educational and judicial authorities start implementing methods to curb the unacceptable assault of pupils".

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