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Western Cape Provincial Parliament
IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

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COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Standing Committee on Social Development on its oversight visit to StellCARE in Stellenbosch on 3 May 2022

The Standing Committee on Social Development having conducted an oversight visit to StellCARE in Stellenbosch on 3 May 2022, reports as follows:

The delegation

The delegation of the Standing Committee on Social Development included the following Members:

Democratic Alliance

Plato, D (Chairperson)

Kaizer-Philander, WF

Mackenzie, RD

African National Congress

Windvogel, R

Apology

BakuBaku-Vos, NG (ANC)

Brinkhuis, G (**AL JAMAH**)

1. Background

The Standing Committee on Social Development conducted an oversight visit to StellCARE in Stellenbosch on Tuesday 3 May 2022, as part of its oversight function.

The purpose of the visit to StellCARE was to assess the programmes offered and the safety protocols that were in place at the NGO. The Committee also wanted to inspect how the NGO was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in delivering quality services to the people of Stellenbosch and the surrounding areas.

2. Salient points that emanated from the visit to StellCARE in Stellenbosch

Ms. Nieuwoudt, the Director for StellCARE welcomed the Committee and proceeded to brief the Committee on the services and safety protocols of StellCARE. She informed the Committee that StellCARE was established in June 1917 and is registered as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO). The NPO was founded on the principles of philanthropy and upholds its care for vulnerable sectors of society by promoting the public good through its vision and mission. To achieve its objectives, StellCARE is in collaboration with its partners including the Department of Social Development. StellCARE delivers a basket of social development services with special attention to the poor, vulnerable, and those with special needs.

Ms. Nieuwoudt informed the Committee that StellCARE provides services to the communities of Stellenbosch, Kayamandi, Eerste River and Merweville. It was reported that StellCARE has 24 social workers, nine in Stellenbosch including one mediation, three in Kayamandi, 10 social workers in Eerste River, and one in Merweville. In addition, the NPO has three social auxiliary workers for the Stellenbosch area, one for Kayamandi, and three for Eerste River. In terms of the administrative personnel, StellCARE has three administrative officers, one financial administrative officer, one general worker and three cleaners.

The scope of service delivery at StellCARE focused more on designated social welfare services, developmental and promotive services, community development, and social enterprise. In terms of social welfare services, the NPO provides psycho-social services to beneficiaries focusing on the poor and vulnerable levels of interventions such as prevention and early intervention, statutory services, and reunification. The developmental and promotive services are more focused on early childhood development, nutrition school support and aftercare, school drop-outs, children and youth, promoting child health care and the 1 000 days, elderly care, and protection services.

Community development focuses on sustainable development programmes based on the ABC model, sustainable livelihood and poverty alleviation, youth development, social relief, capacity building, and community-based organisation such as Eye-on-the-Child assisting in safer communities. The Committee was informed that the social enterprise focused on a social cooperative model as a hybrid under StellCARE, this includes, agriculture, retail, environmental management, recycling, innovative product development, mainly, blankets.

StellCARE reported that its mandate was to address the social needs of its mandated communities through programmes such as children and families, psycho-social services, restorative services, developmental community services, monitoring and evaluation, and social enterprise. The NPO provides comprehensive child and family care and support services to communities in partnership with stakeholders and civil society organisations; integrated developmental psycho-social services to poor and vulnerable persons in partnership with stakeholders; integrated development, social crime prevention and anti-substance abuse services to youth under care in partnership with stakeholders; sustainable development programmes, focusing on sustainable livelihoods and poverty and poverty alleviation, creation of jobs and safe communities.

In addition, the NPO conducts effective monitoring and evaluation procedures to improve the quality of social service programmes, ensuring accountability and transparency, reporting on performance thereof, and identifying possible shortcomings and gaps. To alleviate poverty, job creation, skills development, provide sustainable livelihoods and restore the dignity of marginalized families and communities.

The NPO also reported that it provides preventative information sessions regarding gender-based violence, Children's Act, Children's rights, responsibilities and child participation, and parental rights, and responsibilities. The NPO deals with late birth registration by assisting various communities with undocumented and stateless children to access social security. The NPO reported that it was managing 711 foster care children.

The NPO has introduced asset-based community development principles in targeted communities, manage nutrition and food security programmes, and 24 community-based kitchens providing nutrition to vulnerable persons. In addition, StellCARE managed 27 community kitchens in Langa, Gugulethu, Vrygrond, and Strand on behalf of the Department of Social Development. The NPO also provides residential care to 47 vulnerable children in a primary school hostel facility securing access to education, as well as emotional and developmental support.

3. Challenges reported by StellCARE

- 3.1 Staff retention was highlighted as a major challenge due to low salaries. There are disparities and inequalities in salaries especially the salaries of Social Workers. It was reported that StellCARE could not afford to give salary increases and benefits due to a lack of funding.
- 3.2 The NPO has not received an increase in funding in the past three years from the Department of Social Development.

- 3.3 Shortage of staff was reported as a challenge, resulting in high caseloads for social workers. It was reported that the case ratio at StellCARE was 1:189 per Social Worker although the norm is 1:60 cases per Social Worker.
- 3.4 Lack of support by the Department of Social Development for Prevention and Early Intervention funding of traditional child protection service organisations.
- 3.5 Lack of funding for the Expanded Public Works Programme for support services for the Isibindi Programme and the Drop-in Centres. It was reported that the funding was paying for 60 volunteers and it ended at the end of March 2022.
- 3.6 Quality control and disparities in monitoring and evaluation control over NGOs.
- 3.7 Inadequate bed space for children with severe behaviour challenges, despite the High Court Order was reported as a challenge in the province.
- 3.8 Long periods prior to a placement for children with risky behaviour.
- 3.9 It was reported that facility management and quality of programmes in Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCCs) was a challenge.
- 3.10 There was a high number of children with no birth certificates in various communities. A total of 211 children have been assisted and StellCARE carried the cost of the transport cost and also paid for the birth certificates at the Department of Home Affairs.
- 3.11 The Stellenbosch Court was referring all GBV cases to StellCARE. The Committee was informed that 70% of violent cases that were referred to StellCARE in February 2022 were violent cases against elderly persons.

4. Successes reported by StellCARE

- 4.1 StellCARE ensured that services were not interrupted during the peak of the COVID-19 and there was a continuation of assistance and provision of services to the most vulnerable people. The NPO assisted the community with accessing their SASSA grants as well as door-to-door registration for vaccinations.
- 4.2 The NPO provided nutrition services to 113 400 individuals per month in 52 feeding points between April and August 2020. During the visit, it was reported that StellCARE has 24 feeding points and was providing meals to 16 500 individuals per week.
- 4.3 StellCARE has a successful partnership with a primary school in Merweville. It was reported that the school was about to close down and StellCARE managed to secure the school and was affording children with uninterrupted school attendance in a safe space away from violence at Merweville.
- 4.5 The NPO has successfully managed foster children's school opportunities in various communities.
- 4.6 The EPWP Programme managed by StellCARE has created 220 job opportunities; 72 sustainable livelihoods in partnership with the provincial Department of Social Development.
- 4.7 StellCARE received a clean audit for the past few years including the last financial year.

5. Request for information

The Committee REQUESTED the Department of Social Development to provide it with the following information by Friday, 8 July 2022:

- 5.1 A detailed contingency plan that is in place to provide support to Social Workers and provide services to children in various communities once the contract of the 60 volunteers for the Eye-on-the Child programme comes to an end.
- 5.2 Reasons for ending the funding for the Eye-on-the Child Programme and the alternative care in place since the funding has been stopped.

- 5.3 A detailed process for the placement of children in conflict with the law in CYCCs and the turnaround time for the placement.
- 5.4 A Report on the plans in place for additional funding for StellCARE to employ additional Social Workers given the challenge of a high case ratio of 1:189 per Social Worker at StellCARE as compared to the norm of 1:60 case ratio per Social Worker?
- 5.6 A detailed information on the support provided by DSD to support StellCARE in the upkeep of the Merweville School.
- 5.7 A detailed information on how the Department monitors the welfare of children at the Merweville School.
- 5.8 A detailed breakdown of the StellCARE funding during the past three financial years for all the programmes funded by the Department. The information should include detailed funding for the next financial year.

6. Resolution

The Committee resolved to conduct a visit to the Merweville School. The visit will form part of the sites that will be visited when the Committee visits NGOs in the Central Karoo and other areas outside the Cape Metropolitan area.

The Committee successfully concluded its visit.



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MR D PLATO, MPP

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT**

