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Mpilo fire doctors receive birth certificates, IDs

More than 45 Mpilo Central Hospital health-care workers who lost their property after a fire gutted their residence have received their birth certificates and identity cards.

The doctors escaped the horrific inferno while their personal belongings were razed last week on May 26.

Among the health workers affected are 33 Doctors, four radiographers, one pharmacist, two pharmacy technicians, three lab scientists, one physiotherapist and one administration officer. One of the doctors suffered a sprained ankle.

Members of the public and civic organizations have been rallying behind the Mpilo healthcare workers and their families by providing food, toiletries and clothing.

Last week, WILD donated food and toiletries to the healthcare workers and continues to receive donations from well-wishers who have demonstrated their acts of kindness by donating clothing and bedding to the healthcare workers. In a statement the Chairperson of the Health Services Board (HSB) said Government was working on restoring the livelihood enjoyed before the inferno.

“The HSB and Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) extend their sympathies on the loss of their valuables and other belongings in the inferno and wish the doctor who injured his ankle a speedy recovery after his surgery at the hospital,” said Dr Sikosana.

He said registrars’ office agreed to work on Saturday and was able to replace the Identity Cards and Birth Certificates of all the affected health workers already.

The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing estimated the repair costs for the building recently destroyed by fire to be ZWL 26,534,620.

“An additional ZWL 260,815,051 is required to repair the previously damaged doctor’s quarters and to complete works on the mortuary, chapel and block of flats.

Dr Sikosana said there was general consensus that the majority of the other hospital buildings need to be inspected for both structural integrity and adequacy of fire prevention and protection.

In an interview the spokesperson for the affected Dr Misheck Ruwende said the doctors were humbled by the support received so far.

He appealed for help in purchasing household property like fridges, stoves and beds as they cannot readily replace those.

“We are grateful for the help we have received so far, it’s humbling to see members of the public sacrifice their resources just to get us food and toiletries. We still need to continue assessing the situation and we are happy that the government is now working on replacing our tools of trade so that we get back to saving lives soon,” he said.

Part of Government’s interventions include availing accommodation while funding the reconstruction of the burnt building and two others which were gutted by fire years ago.

Gwanda RDC capacitated to align institutional strategy with NDS1

Gwanda Rural District Council, this week conducted a week-long workshop to revise its institutional strategy in line with



the National Development Strategy. The process was facilitated by Women's Institute for Leadership Development.

The local authority is benefitting from the Civil society strengthening project which seeks to strengthen local authorities' capacity so that they are able to deliver gender responsive services to all citizens in their jurisdiction.

The workshop was attended by Councillors for Gwanda Rural District Council's 24 wards, Traditional leaders and Councillors technocrats. Facilitators for the

workshop included representatives from Thuli Training centre which is one of the thirteen Institutes of the Public Service Commission. The facilitator, Ephraim Mutyandaedza and Sandra Malisao unpacked the value of strategic planning.

"Strategic planning is the process by which leaders of an organization, such as a local government, determine what it intends to be in the future and how it will get there," said Mutyandaedza.

The meeting was an opportunity to develop a vision for the Local

Authority's future and determining the necessary goals, priorities, and action strategies to achieve that vision incorporating the National Development Strategy 1 which speaks of vision 2025.

Considering that a strategic plan serves as a community's roadmap and is used to prioritise initiatives, resources, goals, and department operations and projects, Gwanda RDC conducted an environmental scan to analyse current and emerging forces that exist within their area of jurisdiction.

The scan was in form of consultation to all Local leaders who were available who managed to point out their needs.

“The strategic plan is a big-picture document directing efforts and resources toward a clearly defined vision thus we all need to understand what is needed in your areas,” said the facilitator. Councillors who were available

managed to point out the challenges they encounter in their wards which need immediate attention. “In my ward we are facing a serious challenge of water shortage,” said Amon Nyathi a councillor from ward 10.

Water challenges were one of the most consistent challenges which are faced by almost all the 24 wards from Gwanda Rural District

Council. Shortages and inadequate mothers’ waiting shelters in the available local clinics was also noted by many Councillors during the meeting.

“Women are facing a serious health challenges as there is a shortage of mothers’ waiting shelters for expectant mothers,” said Miclas Ndlovu who is a councillor for the RDCs ward 13.

Plumtree residents call for improved service delivery



Residents of Plumtree town have raised concern over poor service delivery highlighting non-collection of refuse, inadequate supply of water, and poor fire and ambulance services.

Residents in Rangio suburb gave an insight on poor response to fire incidents highlights that they witnessed a house in their vicinity burning down to ashes.

“It is the fire department’s prerogative to protect life and property in the event of fires in our area, but sadly this department in our town is non-existent which is a cause for concern in a growing town like Plumtree,” said a resident who identified himself as Xolani.

Xolani also highlighted that a hardware store which is located in the proximity of the fire station

was reduced to ashes and no one is holding the department accountable for these misfortunes.

“Our local authority is under-resourced and those in charge of operating the fire machinery are ill equipped. They attend to burning houses without enough water or any extinguishers. A house in Rangio burnt to the ground when the fire department arrived while the first room was on fire, until the other 8 rooms were burnt because they did not have enough water,” he said.

Another resident, Brandon Nyoni who resides in Madubezi suburb gave a general observation of how the area has been affected.

“When it comes to refuse collection, the local authority is ineffective, unpredictable and unreliable as they can go up to month without collecting refuse, and when they come and collect, they just come unannounced,” said Nyoni.

Nyoni noted that this “ineffectiveness” has resulted in the community disposing garbage in undesignated areas while some have resorted to burning the refuse which results in air pollution. In an interview with Siphathisiwe

Sibanda who resides in Mathendele suburb, she expressed that inadequate supply of water is a crisis in their area as citizens are now resorting to practicing open defecation in the periphery of the homes, a situation that could result

in an infestation of diseases such as cholera due to poor sanitation and hygiene practices.

“The water crisis gives us as women an extra burden of fetching water,” said Sibanda.



Gwanda water crisis a cause for concern

The week long water crisis in Gwanda which is currently being rectified has exposed members of the public to numerous diseases including the deadly Covid-19 as women are now forced to seek water from a handful of boreholes scattered around the town.

WILD gathered that the water woes are a result of arrears that the council owes to the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) which saw the parastatal cutting water supply last week on Saturday.

Residents had to use the bushes to relieve themselves as they could not afford to buy water from those with boreholes.

The debt which is pegged at above \$14 million, dates back to two years ago and this prompted the electricity supply authority to disconnect power to the Zimbabwe National Water Authority’s (ZINWA’s) water pumping systems.

In an interview, Matabeleland South Provincial Medical Director Dr Rudo Chikodzoke said the water challenges made it difficult for residents to wash hands regularly and maintain social distancing to

avert the spread of Covid-19.

She said water challenges also exposed residents to diseases that include cholera, typhoid, diarrhoea amongst others hence the need for constant supply of water.

“We understand there was no water in Gwanda for some days and residents were forced to scramble for water from the few boreholes scattered around the town. This development created a lot of challenges as it exposed residents to deadly diseases like Covid-19 and cholera,” said Dr Chikodzore.

The Town Clerk Priscillar Nkala said water had been restored to most parts of Gwanda as the local authority, ZESA and ZINWA had reached an agreement.

She could not readily give more details on the agreement but said water had been restored to the relief of many residents.

Sifiso Mthethwa from Ward 5 said although the water has been reconnected, council had resolved to cut supply for everyone owing, including schools.

“I had taken my child for vaccination at Gwanda High School yesterday and sadly there was no water since the school is one of

institutions that are owing. Our streets are now smelly even bushes because for the past days people have been going to the bush to relieve themselves,” she said.

“Council may claim we now have water but they have disconnected most households which means we still do not have water.

Our children were sent back from school as well as they cannot continue lessons without running water, it is a disaster,” said Ms Mthethwa.

She said many households are failing to cope as the only functional boreholes cannot sustain the current water needs in Gwanda.

Another affected resident Saziso Mguni said despite ZESA arrears, council should consider repairing old and broken pipes as the water problem dates back from years ago.

“We pray that council fixes these problems soon so that sanity is restored. As women

“We are suffering because it is our duty to ensure our families have enough water for bathing, drinking, cooking and cleaning.

This is straining us and we cannot continue living in fear of contracting diseases,” she said.

Mguni said disconnecting owing rate payers is not a solution as many are at a risk of contracting deadly diseases because of water shortages.

Absence of councillor in Matshiya village leading to poor service

Sibanye Animal Welfare and Conservancy Trust (SAWC) in partnership with Women’s Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) conducted a community dialogue in Matshiya with Ward Development committees (WADCO) and the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs). The meeting was attended by 25 VIDCOs and five WADCO members under the Kusile Rural District Council in Lupane. The meeting was aimed at addressing the challenges faced by the community which include poor service delivery in the absence of their councillor.

During the meeting, it was noted that citizens were unaware that their councillor had been recalled. The committee also highlighted that they have a serious problem of Human Wildlife Conflict as the

elephants are grazing in their fields and they don’t receive any compensation.

Another grievance stated by the committee is the leadership gap, as they do not know their duties since they were just elected but were never inducted on how to execute their duties at a time when the councillor was recalled. This has resulted in the lack of development within the ward compared to other Wards.

A council representative Mthokozisi Ndlovu, stated that the council is open to attend all ward submissions and they are ready to assist. The ward committees agreed that they will hold a meeting and invite the council chairperson to assist them so as to get updates of council resolutions up to a time when the ward has a Councillor.

Forty-five graduate from the WILD Leadership School

Ulations, dance and a collective feeling of accomplishment were the major highlights today as female leaders graduated from Women’s Institute for Leadership Development’s Leadership School. The graduation brought the curtain down on the first cohort of the Mentoring Course which started in January and covered various topics which include Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Time

Management and Public Speaking, Vision and Purpose, Self Confidence, Networking and Social Capital, Leadership Skills, Public Office Leadership Development, Women and the Law, Health, Sustainable Business Practices, Communication and Public Speaking, Self Mastery and Emotional Intelligence.

The mentees were comprised of young and older women from



various backgrounds ranging from business, social entrepreneurship to politics.

Speaking at the ceremony, the elated graduants narrated how the school improved their leadership skills and positioned them to take up leadership positions.

“Before enrolling into the Leadership School, I was unable to even speak convincingly to one person but now I can even address thousands of people. I am grateful for this opportunity presented by WILD,” said Juliet Samson.

Other speakers commended WILD on inclusiveness in recruiting mentees.

Tariro Gurure, a young woman living with disability said she “never at any point felt marginalised or discriminated against” and called on WILD to further include People With Disabilities in the selection of mentees in the next cohort.

Visitor Ndebele highlighted the non-partisanship of the Leadership School saying the school “improved the quality of female political leadership regardless of political party affiliation.”

In her key note address, WILD Board Member who was also a Mentor in the program, Prisca Dube, said the school was WILD’s way of fuelling the potential of women to take up leadership

positions in all spheres of life.

“As you graduate today, we are hopeful that this program has given you impetus to overcome the hurdles and barriers that you have been unable to overcome because you are women,” she said.

The Mentoring course is WILD’s flagship program which has helped numerous women break the glass ceiling to occupy spaces previously reserved for men.





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Unsafe and unproven reproductive health products could compromise women's health

Women are in danger of developing serious vaginal infections which can compromise their reproductive health by using Yoni products which continue to dominate the market, health experts have warned.

The Yoni product is named after an Indian word for uterus or vagina and these have also taken social media platforms by storm with anecdotal claims that they cleanse the vagina, improve fertility and balance hormones.

Some have claimed the product which comes in oil, steaming leaves and pearls form is an answer to women's problems which include infertility, menstrual cramps, vaginal disorders and yeast infections.

Social media platforms are awash with adverts and testimonials on the product which medical experts have termed dangerous for the reproductive system, as so far no studies have proven its efficacy.

Women from different walks of life have however taken up the product oblivious of the fact that tempering with the vagina in any way including steaming may provide the perfect environment for bacteria that cause yeast infections and other vaginal infections to thrive.

The most publicised product is the Yoni pearls which are inserted into one's vagina for 24 to 48 hours using a plastic applicator. Yoni pearls, also known as the vagina detox pearls, are small, cloth-covered balls full of exotic herbs which include motherwort,

angelica, borneol, rhubarb, rhizoma and osthol. Marketing claims state that the same pearls can help women with dark menstrual blood from the beginning and the end of the cycle, irregular periods, vaginal disorders, yeast infections and other bacterial infections. Medical Experts say cultural beliefs can be blamed for the promotion of Yoni products which foster a misconception that women's bodies are deficient thereby propagating a negative female self-image in many women.

In an interview, Dr Sharon Muganyi said there hasn't been any scientific research to prove that any of the Yoni products are good for use and that they are effective in solving problems listed on marketing platforms.

"From the scientific point of view the vagina naturally cleanses itself hence no need for anything but water. The moment we add anything we expose ourselves to yeast and bacterial infections and that is a dangerous move," said Dr Muganyi.

"The feminine washes as well are not recommended as there is no science behind their use and they really temper with the immune system of the vagina needed to fight bacteria and infections," she said. She called on women to stick to basics and only use products that have been certified and verified by experts to avoid unnecessary infections.

In one of the testimonies, Prudence* said she uses the pearls once a week and they have helped lessen her period pains and lighten her usual heavy flow. She said she prefers steaming and it was working wonders in her life.

"I have finally found a remedy to my period pains and the heavy flow which affected me financially because I needed more than three packets of pads monthly. I steam once a week and ever since I feel fresher and I no longer have severe cramps like before," she said.

Renowned gynecologist Professor Solwayo Ngwenya said there are many proven natural ways which clean and tighten the vagina.

He said using foreign substances like Yoni which are yet to be certified as safe for use exposes women to vulvitis, vaginitis, cervicitis, endometriosis, salpingitis- infections that may affect their feminine hygiene and sex life.

"I really do not advise women to use unproven medicine especially on their private parts. All medicines should be prescribed by doctors or gynaecologists as these experts have a better understanding on what is safe and recommended," said Prof Ngwenya. "Some of these widely used products interfere with the natural flora and they change the pH levels in the vagina and fuel the development of abnormal cells."

He emphasized that women should use water as it is the only recommended natural way of keeping the vagina clean.

"Women can tighten their pelvic floor exercises and vaginas. These products are used in the name of enhancing sex lives and I would like to remind women that sex is in the mind hence all they need is to be mentally ready and happy to enjoy as using these products may lead to smelly discharges which are a huge turn off," added Prof Ngwenya.