**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION NUMBER 3873**

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**National Assembly written Reply: 3873 of 2022 – converted from oral PQ 757**

**3873. Mr A M Shaik Emam (NFP) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

Whether her department has any plans in place to work with other stakeholders to introduce safety ambassadors at schools to identify learners from dysfunctional homes, in order to intervene through social workers and bring about a safer, secure and functional society; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of the plans? NO4831E

**REPLY:**

The Department of Social Development is part of a tripartite agreement with the Departments of Health and Basic Education for the implementation of the Integrated School Health Programme which amongst other functions also identify learners from dysfunctional homes for intervention by social workers.

The Department already implements the 365 days child protection programme of action that mobilises all government departments, non-governmental organisations, communities, families, religious and traditional leaders in the identification and reporting of cases of vulnerable children so that such children are referred and linked to available services.

The Department also implements RISIHA, a community-based child protection initiative that is aimed at orphans and vulnerable children within their families and communities. Through this initiative, the Department and community-based organisations employ child and youth care workers who identify children in need of care. Through this initiative, there are continued education and awareness programmes as well as provision of community-based prevention and early intervention programmes to cushion vulnerable children. This is complemented by the National Child Care and Protection Forum, which is an intersectoral forum represented by all key departments, NGOs, religious and traditional leaders to ensure collaborative efforts in identification and responding to the needs of vulnerable children.

At the time of responding to this question, the following provinces have shared province-specific interventions to deal with vulnerable children:

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| **Province** | **Response** |
| **Gauteng** | Working with other stakeholders to introduce safety ambassadors at schools is the mandate of the Gauteng Department of Community Safety. However, the Department of Social Development in collaboration with GDCS and stakeholders regarding safety ambassadors at schools and identification of learners from dysfunctional homes; continues School Social Work services and interventions through our School Social Workers and brings about a safer, secure and functional society. The aspect of safety ambassadors has been discussed and is in the evaluation and assessment of such learners in partnership with the Department of Community Safety. It follows that the noted Department already has safety ambassadors visa vie the safety patrollers programme with young adults who work in their respective communities and schools.The Plan is to utilise/ enjoin the safety patrollers towards the mentoring of teenagers in schools and thus institute learner- based safety ambassadors. These safety patrollers cum ambassadors will be shaped to mentor teenagers in schools in the strive to groom them towards learner-based safety ambassadors. This will serve a dual role in having positive pro- active mentoring between the young adults and the school-based learners.The Gauteng Department of Education has established an SLA program which serves as a student-led safety protocol program.This is currently under consideration for development and change evaluation. Due to GDSD being in partnership with GDE; it is |

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|  | subject to consideration within the SLA between the 2 Departments. These programs and Departments could ‘piggy - back’ and partner with each other in dealing with learners, school safety and the other young adults and school/community safety programmes.Aspects/ of Plans to work with Stakeholders:The provincial office in consultation & evaluation with the School Social Work team / School S/ W Managers & Supervisors at the Regional offices in the 5 Regions has instituted the creation of Regional School Social Work forums. These forums will have participating bodies of all stakeholders that work within the school social work ambit; and host relevant regional stakeholders in child protection, as well as other government departments that are pertinent to school and learner safety. The envisioned aim is to work coherently for stakeholders within government and civil society to aptly identify learners, families and communities that need care and through networking, partnerships have been able to meet and refer affected learners for psycho-social support and the accompanying social service delivery. |
| **Mpumalanga** | Yes. The Mpumalanga Social Development Department is working closely with NPOs in providing prevention and Early intervention services to schools. These include NPOs that the department is funding.The department further funds 51 Prevention and Early Intervention Community Based organizations that are having 456 Child and Youth Care Workers who are working within the community. They identify children and families with challenges and link them with relevant stakeholders.Local schools also refer cases to them and they refer them to local Social Development Offices for further management. These organizations are funded by the department.The department also funds NPOs that reach out to schools to provide support and early intervention programmes. |
| **Western Cape** | The department currently works with the Western Cape Education Department to identity children and youth at risk. When children are identified at the school, they are referred to DSD for the most appropriate support/interventions to address their needs. Thisalso enables DSD to identify issues within the family context that |

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|  | must be addressed. The Department of Education has a Safe School Directorate with safety ambassadors who also refer children and youth risk to the Department of Social Development when required. |
| **Eastern Cape** | There are no plans to introduce safety ambassadors at schools. The Department of Social Development participates in the multi- disciplinary team to deal with social ills in school when invited. Interventions in schools are rendered by social workers who aredeployed in each ward, for intervention on social ills and prevention programmes. |
| **Northern Cape** | Identification of learners from dysfunctional homes, provision of psycho social support and general welfare services are rendered by the Department of Social Development and partners at schools. RISIHA programme is implemented by the Risiha Child and Youth Care Workers rendering support services at Schools in the Province and NACCW implements the Esikolweni programme – which involves trained Child and Youth Care Workers, who are placed full time at Schools in Daniëlskuil and Postmasburg. Trained behaviour change facilitators also render social behaviour change programmes at schools in the Frances Baard and Pixley Ka Seme Districts. Trained coaches implement the Ke Moja Programmes – “No thanks I am fine without drugs” at Secondary Schools. Trained volunteers, Social Auxiliary Workers and Social Workers implement programmes at schools.  The Northern Cape Department of Social Development and Basic Education entered into a partnership to support priority schools in the Province. DSD is working on a plan to recruit learner Child and Youth Care Workers to be placed on a full-time basis in these schools from 2023 to render support services to learners, implement and /or coordinate the implementation of relevant programmes e.g. bullying, Ke Moja, Social Behaviour Change and to refer learners and their families for Social WorkIntervention and psycho-social support services. |
| **Limpopo** | The department is collaborating with the Department of Education in terms of child protection services. This is done in the form of capacity building for teachers and learners on child protection services.The department also conducts outreach services in the form of awareness campaigns, dialogues and life skills programmes at schools. |
| **KwaZulu Natal** | The Department have plans in place to work with all relevant stakeholders including the Department of Education to introduce safety ambassadors at schools to identify learners from |

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|  | dysfunctional homes, in order to intervene through social workers and bring about a safer, secure and functional society.Currently there are Provincial and Districts Inter-sectoral Child Care and Protection Forums which are functional in the Province. The purpose of the forum is to facilitate and coordinate the process of ensuring that all organs of the state and civil society organisations involved with care, protection and wellbeing of children cooperate in the development of a uniform approach aimed at the coordination and integration of services to children. The Department will strengthen partnership with the Department of Education and relevant stakeholders with the aim of establishing Task Team that will look at introducing Safety Ambassadors at schools to identify learners from dysfunctional homes in order render psychosocial support services and other relevant services to the affected children. |
| **Free State** | The Free State Department of Social Development does not have any plans to introduce safety ambassadors at Schools. However, the Department currently works with the Child and Youth Care Workers in the employ of NPO’s through the Isibindi Ezikolweni program as well as the RISIHA program to implement the early intervention program. These programs are aimed at identifying learners from dysfunctional homes and refer to Social Workers. |