

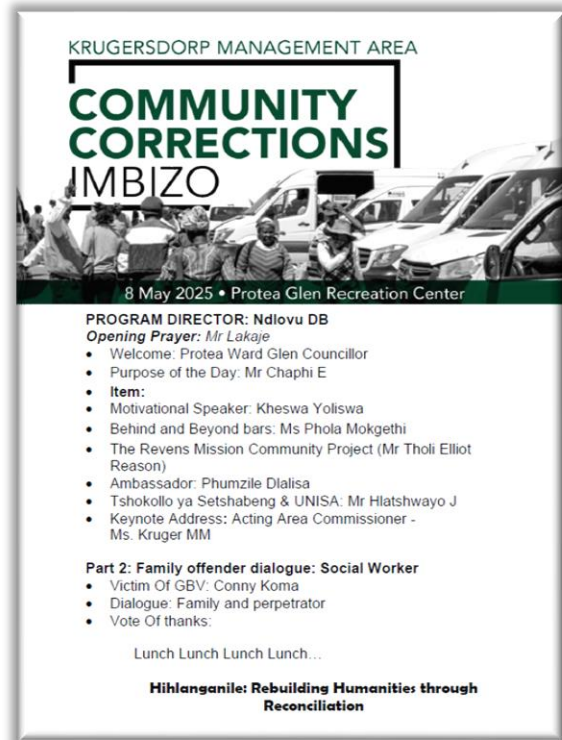
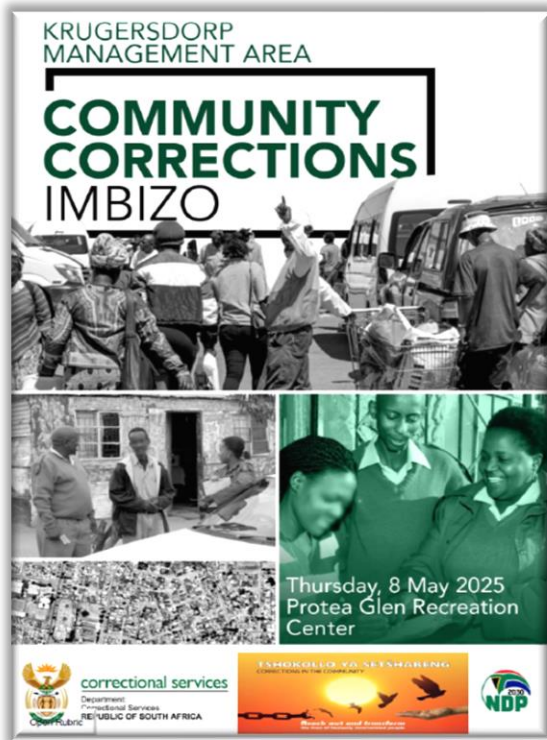
TSHOKOLLO YA SETSHABENG

CORRECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

NEWSLETTER

2025 | ISSUE 1

***Hihlanganile* –A reflection on the Krugersdorp Community Corrections Imbizo in Soweto**



On 8 May 2025, the Protea Glen Recreation Hall in Soweto was transformed into a place of powerful connection, healing and renewed hope as the Krugersdorp Community Corrections office, in collaboration with UNISA's *Tshokollo ya Setshabeng* Engaged Scholarship Project,

hosted a memorable Community Corrections Imbizo. Held under the theme "Hihlanganile (United) – Rebuilding Humanity through Reconciliation," the event brought together parolees, their families, community members, correctional officials and representatives from various organisations to reaffirm the shared



responsibility of restoring lives after incarceration.

The Imbizo opened with heartfelt messages and warm welcomes, setting the tone for a day of meaningful engagement. Mr Emmanuel Chaphi, Head of the Krugersdorp Community Corrections office, reminded attendees that the successful reintegration of parolees begins at home. “When families accept their loved ones back, half the battle is already won”, he shared. “The rest depends on a community that understands that correctional services is not the task of one department—it’s a societal responsibility”. He urged parolees to earn their place in society through action and accountability, and he encouraged the community to support those ready to change by embracing their efforts with dignity and hope.

The stories shared throughout the day were raw, emotional and deeply inspiring. Ms Phola Mokgethi from Behind and Beyond Bars spoke openly about her journey through a life marked by abuse and trauma. Her powerful testimony of survival, healing and forgiveness served as a reminder that no one is beyond redemption. Mr Reason Toli, founder of Ravens on Mission Community Project, shared how his own incarceration sparked a desire to help others. Through his organisation, he now works to support



Ms Phumzile Dlalisa

former inmates in finding employment and rebuilding their futures. Ms Phumzile Dlalisa offered an honest reflection on her own mistakes and time in prison. She urged others not to justify wrongdoing but to take

accountability, and she spoke passionately

about the importance of education and emotional healing for offenders. Her experiences within the correctional system shaped her into a mentor and advocate for change, and she thanked UNISA for its role in making education accessible behind prison walls. She called for the expansion of academic support and bursaries for incarcerated women, believing education is one of the most powerful tools for transformation.



The event also featured a moving family-offender dialogue facilitated by social worker Ms Sophie Rampou, who explained that Victim-Offender Dialogues (VOD) are not about securing early release, but about emotional restoration and forgiveness. Her message was echoed by Mr Kenny Shabalala, who shared his journey from crime to redemption. Sentenced at the age of 18, he admitted to living a reckless life rooted in survival. But prison became his turning point. Through discipline, education and

skills development in welding and plumbing, he emerged with the intention to guide the youth away from crime and inspire them to choose better.

Among the most heart-rending testimonies came from Ms Conny Koma, a survivor of gender-based violence who has faced a lifetime of abandonment, emotional trauma and poverty. Despite immense hardship and rejection from her own family, she expressed gratitude for the support she's found in her community shelter. Her story reminded everyone that even those who appear broken by life still carry immense strength and resilience.

Representing the Tshokollo ya Setšhabeng Project, Mr Joseph Hlatshwayo spoke of the importance of partnerships in community corrections. UNISA's commitment to engaged scholarship, he said, is rooted in collaboration with the Department of



From left to right: Ms Lorraine Ntuli, Ms Sunita Zive, Dr François Louw, Ms Kgotlele Moremi, Ms Phola Mokgethi, Mr Joseph Hlatshwayo and Ms Mmanoko Kekae

Correctional Services and civil society. The project has specifically focused on empowering female parolees and building support networks to help them reintegrate with dignity.

In her keynote address, Acting Area Commissioner Ms Kruger described the Imbizo as a living expression of ubuntu—a space where stories are not only told but heard. She emphasised that community corrections is not just about monitoring parolees, but about creating environments of hope, trust and second chances. For reintegration to succeed, she said, communities must move beyond punishment and embrace a vision of justice rooted in healing, inclusion and opportunity.



The day ended with a heartfelt vote of thanks from Mr David Ndlovu, who celebrated the courage of the speakers and the commitment of all involved. As the event drew to a close, it left behind more than words—it left behind a powerful call to action: to welcome back those who seek change, to offer support over stigma and to build a society where reconciliation is not only possible, but necessary.



Mamelodi girls' event lights the path to restoration



On 28 June 2025, the spirit of hope and restoration filled the heart of Mamelodi as more than 30 young girls and women gathered for a deeply moving event themed *“Healing is possible when we open up”*. This uplifting gathering offered a safe and sacred space where emotional wellness, identity and healing from trauma took centre stage.

Dr Tandiwe Mdlungu, representing the *Tshokollo ya Setšhabeng Engaged Scholarship Project* (UNISA), was among the special guests invited to speak. Her message was one of deep affirmation and encouragement, reminding the girls that their presence, voices and stories are sources of light—however small they may seem. *“Even the tiniest candle can break*

through the darkest room”, she said. *“You don’t need a spotlight—your story, your smile, your voice is already a form of light”*.

Her heartfelt words inspired several girls to speak openly about their pain, resilience and dreams—many for the first time. As the day unfolded through group discussions, reflective exercises and honest storytelling, the atmosphere became one of collective healing. Girls who had once viewed themselves through the lens of past wounds began to reclaim their identities not as victims of circumstance, but as survivors with purpose.

There were moments of laughter and tears, but most of all, moments of transformation. The support in the room was palpable as participants held space for one another, learning that healing is not a solitary destination, but a shared journey.

As Dr Mdlungu beautifully concluded, *“You can shine in your own corner, and in doing so, you light the way for others”*.