

LGBTIQ+ Organisations Attend Dialogue to Call for Government for More Action

By Refilwe Lentsitse

Release date: 1 August 2021

On 22 July 2021, Uthingo (an LGBTIQ+ organisation from Daveyton on the East Rand of Gauteng) and the Ekurhuleni Pride Organising Committee (EPOC, an organisation from KwaThema, also on the East Rand), with various Gauteng Department representatives attended a virtual dialogue hosted by the Gauteng LGBTIQ+ sector. The dialogue was held to bring to the forefront the concerns, efforts and interventions pursued by local/provincial government and sector organisations in addressing the issues facing the LGBTIQ+ community in the region, such as health, safety, and social issues. The dialogue was attended by MEC of Infrastructure Development Tasneem Motara, Merita Ground, Provincial Coordinator for GBVF in the Gauteng Department of Community Safety and the Director of the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities for the City of Ekurhuleni, Lindiwe Khonjelwayo.

Ntsupe Mohapi, the founder of EPOC, spoke about the many challenges that the LGBTIQ+ community faces. "It is even difficult to access health services for the queer community," she said. Mohapi touched on the current and long existing killings of people in the LGBTIQ+ community, with the country seeing an increase over the last six months. She also spoke of how the rape of gay men is not taken seriously.

"As EPOC we have been doing a lot of dialogues with the community including the local pastors, police stations and clinics, but we also lack resources. People need knowledge, the government needs to step in and come see the challenges we face on the grassroots level" said Mohapi. She also spoke about the issues around housing and how difficult it is to apply for a house as a person in the LGBTIQ+ community.

Mosading Mokgomogane, a member of the Student Representative Council at Ekurhuleni East Rand College, spoke of the challenges they face in schools as members of the LGBTIQ+ community and the need for sensitisation of lecturers.

Lindiwe Khonjelwayo said that as a department they do acknowledge and admit that they have been slow. She added that "there is a need for a formalised forum of the LGBTIQ+ community as much there are other forums such as the faith based organisations, traditional healers and so forth". She also encouraged the introduction of a LGBTIQ+ portfolio.

The dialogue ended with a question and answer session with closing statements from the panel.

This article was submitted on 23 July 2021. You may republish this article, so long as you credit the authors and Karibu! Online (www.Karibu.org.za), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.