

## **Challenges Facing Community Healthcare Workers in Kenneth Kaunda District in North West**

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My name is Nomalizo Sizani. I am a Community Healthcare Worker (CHW). I stay in Potchefstroom, in the North West province. I started working at Boiki Tlhapi Clinic since 2011. When we started to work as CHWs we went to training sessions for CHWs. We started signing 3-month contracts and getting R1500 as a stipend. As time goes on we got an increase of our stipend to R2200. Before we were working 8 hours with that stipend of R2200. Now we are made to sign contracts for 6 months with the stipend of R3700.

The challenge that we are facing is that many of us have more than 10 years experience as a contract worker for the Department of Health as CHWs but we don't have benefits, such as housing allowances, or medical aid. When our fellow colleagues reaching 60 years old, they are removed in the Health Department system without even saying anything.

We came together to decide who can assist us concerning the issue of being permanent employees as the government does not want to approve this. Before, we were members of the unions, hoping that they will assist us but they have never done anything to help. Instead they are the ones who sell us to the government. Many CHWs still believe in unions and when we started our campaign they refused to sign the documents needed to fight for permanence.

What is so painful is that we are losing our colleagues without any compensation for their families.

Another challenge we face is that in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, we have been made to sign a 9-months contract but in the Bojanala District, Dr Ruth Mompati District Municipality, and Ngaka Modiri Molema district, they gave CHWs a 12-months contract to sign with annual leave of 22 days yet we only have 9 days leave. In our province, they are practicing inequality by treating us differently in the districts yet we are all in the same province.

When unions failed us, we were assisted by the Gauteng Community Health Care Forum and Khanya College. When we started, we had a few CHWs part of us and the majority of them were under different unions. Since we started organising for CHWs to join the national legal case for permanence it has been much easier for us. We also have different campaigns at the different sub-districts now.

Our aim is to reach as many CHWs to fight this struggle of being permanent, especially since we have assistance for this national legal case. Finally many CHWs are not believing in the unions anymore.

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