



NEWSLETTER

September 2026



Keynote Speaker: Mindset Change
NISTIC Principal
Dr. Mlondi Mkhonta

Empowering Out-of-School Youth Through Opportunity and Mindset Change at Gege Inkhundla

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NATICC Brings BMDs Closer to Matsanjeni South Residents

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Acknowledgements

The Nhlanguano AIDS Training Information and Counseling Center (NATICC) would like to thank everyone who contributed to this edition of the NATICC Newsletter. Creating this publication would not have been easy without the valued authors who delivered articles, photographs, insights and valued information to our readers. Each person who shared a story has contributed to the improvement of NATICC's programs and work in Eswatini.

Most of all, we are honored to work with the emerging leaders that will guide the future of development in their communities. The communities that you will read about in this newsletter are mobilized, energized and determined to be self-reliant in preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and reduce teenage pregnancy and school dropouts. As these stories demonstrate unity, inclusion and strong local leadership are ingredients in a recipe for success.

EDITORIAL

Closing the Distance: When Services, Safety and Hope Reach the People Who Need Them



Every quarter, we ask one simple question: did we get closer to the people we serve? The articles in this edition answer it in different ways, but they share a thread. Whether it is a birth certificate, a place beside a child in court or an honest conversation about safety, the true measure of our work is access.

In Matsanjeni South, we worked with Home Affairs to register 72 residents in Kwaluseni and Nkonka, because a birth certificate is a child's first key to school, health care and a future. At Gege Inkhundla, 107 young people met service providers face to face and left with information on training and funding, and with a stronger belief that change is possible.

Protection demands the same closeness. Our social workers stand beside child survivors through court preparation, so that no child faces the process alone. We are also asking harder questions of our communities. When maintenance disputes turn children into a battleground, they carry burdens that belong to adults. When churches stay silent about gender-based violence, survivors are pushed deeper into isolation.

What connects these stories is listening. Each began by going to where people are rather than waiting for them to come to us. That approach builds trust, and trust is what makes a young person ask for help, a parent registering a child or a faith leader choosing to speak.

We thank our partners, government counterparts, community leaders, volunteers and staff, whose commitment turns plans into services and services into change.

As you read, ask where distance still stands between a child, a survivor or a young person and the support they deserve. Then help us close it. Register a child. Speak up when something is wrong. Silence protects no one, but closeness can change a life.

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Thank You

Each person who shared a story has contributed to the improvement of NATICC's programs and work in Eswatini. Much appreciation goes to the Social Media Team (SMT) for their effort in completing the third issue of the year 2026.

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Empowering Out-of-School Youth Through Opportunity and Mindset Change at Gege Inkhundla

by Nkosephayo Madonsela

A dialogue at Gege Inkhundla brought 107 young people face to face with training, funding and employment opportunities



Key stakeholders, including Gege youth, ENYC representatives, Indvuna Yenkhundla, Gege MP, Gege Station Commander, RA and NATICC Executive Director, following the proceedings.

For many young people, access to opportunity can be the difference between remaining on the margins of the economy and taking the first step towards a more independent future. Recognising the importance of connecting out-of-school youth with practical opportunities, NATICC convened an Out-of-School Youth Dialogue at Gege Inkhundla on 28 July 2026. The engagement brought together 107 young people, comprising 62 males and 45 females, alongside organisations supporting youth development.

The dialogue provided a platform

for young people to learn about opportunities in entrepreneurship, vocational training, funding, employment, agribusiness, renewable energy, digital innovation, and social support. Discussions also addressed social issues affecting young people's wellbeing and participation in their communities.

Officially opening the dialogue, NATICC's Executive Director Mr Sisekelo Nzima encouraged young people to invest in market-relevant skills, build strong networks, and make use of available opportunities. He urged participants to embrace

entrepreneurship, innovation, and continuous learning as practical pathways towards economic independence and sustainable livelihoods.

Bringing Opportunities Closer to Young People

The engagement brought together key stakeholders, including the Eswatini National Youth Council (ENYC), YOMA Project, STREEC, MAIS Africa, Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund (YERF), Regional Development Fund (RDF), Nhlanguano Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre (VTRS), NAMBoard, REPS, and the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (Social Welfare Department).

Their participation enabled young people to engage directly with service providers and access practical information about available programmes and services. Discussions covered Gender-Based Violence (GBV), respectful relationships, peaceful conflict resolution, youth



Bhekimuzi Gule from Mlindazwe Chiefdom under Gege Inkhundla posing a question.

development programmes, entrepreneurship and funding, agribusiness, vocational and technical skills, renewable energy, and digital opportunities.



NISTC Principal, Dr. Mlondi Mkhonta, making his remarks.

Changing Mindsets, Creating Possibilities

A central theme of the dialogue was mindset change. Dr. Mkhonta introduced participants to the Six Principles of the Life of an Eagle, using the eagle as a metaphor for vision, resilience, adaptability, positive influence, and personal responsibility. The session encouraged young people to develop a clear vision, rise above challenges, embrace change, surround themselves with positive influences, remain resilient, and take responsibility for creating opportunities. The discussion encouraged a shift towards self-reliance, innovation, resilience, and active engagement with available resources.

From Information to Action

One of the key outcomes was the immediate interest shown by participants in opportunities presented during the dialogue. Following the presentation by Nhlanguano Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre (VTRS), 23 young people expressed interest in applying for the next cohort of vocational training. In addition, eight young people signed up for funding opportunities through the Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund (YERF). The 31 expressions of interest demonstrated how direct engage-

ment between young people and service providers can help transform information into action. Participants were able to ask questions, clarify requirements, and identify practical pathways towards skills

encouraged participants to consider concrete pathways for their personal and economic development. The immediate interest in vocational training and YERF funding provided a tangible indication of



Gege young people follow presentations from key stakeholders during the engagement.



Gege youth follow the proceedings during the event.



ENYC Shiselweni Regional Manager, Mr Thembikosi Hlatiwako, delivers his remarks during the engagement.

development and economic empowerment.

Beyond a Dialogue

The Gege Inkhundla Out-of-School Youth Dialogue demonstrated the value of creating platforms that connect young people with institutions, information, and resources. By combining practical opportunities with discussions on mindset, relationships, skills development, and entrepreneurship, the engagement

the dialogue's impact. More importantly, young people left with greater awareness of available programmes and potential next steps towards their aspirations. The engagement highlighted the importance of sustained platforms that move beyond awareness by connecting out-of-school youth to opportunities that can support skills development, sustainable livelihoods, and meaningful participation in economic and community development.



Gege youth listening attentively during the stakeholder engagement.

When the Church Stays Silent

by Hlonipha Mkhwanazi

What every pastor and church leader in Eswatini needs to know about gender-based violence. The first person a survivor tells may decide whether she is helped or silenced.



"Pastor, my husband has been beating me." Those words may be spoken to you one day after a Sunday service, and the next few minutes can decide whether that person gets help or disappears back into silence.

In Eswatini, people often turn to a pastor before they turn to the police, a social worker or a clinic. That makes church leaders the first line of response to gender-based violence (GBV), whether they planned for it or not. Two recent trainings for pastors, one on the psychology of silence and one on the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2018, set out what that responsibility looks like.

It is happening in our congregations

The Eswatini Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2021–2022 found that 28.4% of women aged 15–49, about one in four, have experienced physical or sexual violence. Every region is above one in four, from Manzini at 24.3% to Lubombo at 35.0%. More than half of the physical violence against women is committed by a current or former husband or partner. Most of it happens at home, where a pastor's counselling room may be the only place a survivor feels able to speak.

Yet 65.5% of women who experienced sexual violence never sought help of any kind. In a congregation of 200 adult women, roughly 55 may have lived through violence, and

many are sitting in the pews on any given Sunday.

Why people stay silent

The workshop explained silence through several patterns that pastors will recognise:

- **Normalization:** Sayings like "every marriage has fights" make danger sound ordinary, until a woman stops recognising her own experience as abuse.
- **Blame.** Asking "Why didn't she leave?" or "What did she do?" shifts responsibility from the person who chose violence to the person who suffered it.
- **The cycle of violence.** Tension, violence, apology, reconciliation, calm, and then tension again. The hope that "this time he has changed" is human, and a survivor's return to the relationship does not mean she was not serious about her safety.
- **Authority.** If a pastor says "a good Christian wife must endure everything," a survivor may hear that God wants her to stay in danger. Spiritual authority carries safeguarding responsibility.
- **Spiritual bypassing.** "Just pray" or "don't expose the family" can replace real action. Prayer is never the problem. It works best alongside professional support, safety and accountability.

Forgiveness is not the same as going back

During the training, church leaders were asked to separate four ideas that are often blurred together: forgiveness, reconciliation, accountability and safety. A person can forgive without returning to an unsafe home. Scripture calls us to seek justice and defend the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17), to love as Christ loved

the church (Ephesians 5:25), and to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (Proverbs 31:8–9). No reading of Scripture should be used to justify violence, coercion or humiliation.

What the law says

The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2018 covers offences including rape, incest, stalking, sexual exploitation and a range of offences against children. Two provisions matter directly for church leaders:

- **Section 70** creates a duty to report specified sexual offences. Failing to do so can bring a fine of up to E1,000, up to three months in prison, or both.
- **Section 71** makes it an offence to coerce a victim into not reporting or into withdrawing a complaint. Threats, money, family pressure and misuse of authority can all count. The message is plain: confidentiality must never be used to conceal a sexual offence or leave a child at further risk. If a family offers money or reputation as a reason to stay quiet about a child being abused, the child's safety comes first.

Building a safe church

A GBV-responsive church rests on five pillars: prevent, recognise, respond, refer, and hold people accountable regardless of status or reputation. Practical first steps include a safeguarding policy, a trained focal person, confidential reporting, a referral list, child protection procedures, and men's fellowships that teach healthy masculinity and respect. Real strength, as the workshop puts it, is self-control, responsibility and courage, not control over another person.

NATICC Brings BMDs Closer to Matsanjeni South Residents

by Tengetile Mkhonta

A birth certificate is more than paper. It is a child's first key to school, services and a future.



Community members from Kwaluseni Chiefdom, under Matsanjeni South Constituency, engage BMD officers on the birth and death registration process.

For many people, a birth certificate is more than just an official document, it is a gateway to accessing essential services and opportunities. Yet for some communities especially near the borderlines in Eswatini, birth registration remains a significant challenge.

During community dialogues, field officers noticed recurring concerns from community members. Many people, including children and adults, do not have proper National identification documents. The lack of civil registration was emerging as a barrier to accessing important public services and fully participating in social and economic life.

Without a birth certificate, individuals can face difficulties when enrolling children in schools. This has resulted in some children dropping out of school. This has also hindered adults without such documents from accessing some social services that require proof of legal identity. Recognising the seriousness of the issue, NATICC collaborated with the Births, Marriages and Deaths (BMDs) department under Home

Affairs to help communities address their registration needs. The initiative brought registration services closer to people who might otherwise face challenges travelling to the BMDs offices. Through this collaboration, in the third quarter of 2026 NATICC, by inviting BMDs officers, has helped register 72 previously undocumented residents in 2 communities (Kwaluseni and Nkonka) under Matsanjeni South constituency, of which 45 were children and 27 were adults. Furthermore, the organisation provided financial assistance to children in need of regis-

tration. The other 4 chiefdoms (Qomintaba, Dinabanye, Nsalitje and Bambitje) will also be assisted as this initiative is meant to curb the issue in the whole constituency.

The experience also demonstrated the value of community dialogues in identifying challenges that may not always be visible at national or regional level. By listening, directly to community members, NATICC was able to identify birth registration as a priority issue and work with government counterparts to respond to the need.

The collaboration with BMDs highlights how partnerships between civil society organisations and government institutions can help address barriers faced by underserved communities and also reinforces the importance of ensuring that everyone has proper National identification documents to access their rights and services as citizens of the country. The organisation reaffirms its mandate to continue supporting communities in finding practical solutions to challenges identified at grassroots level ensuring that rural residents are not left behind.



Community members follow the registration procedures during the outreach.

When Your Salary Gets Garnished: The Untold Story of a Man Fighting to Keep His Life Together

by Khulile Tsabedze

A relationship may end, but the responsibility of parenthood does not.

For generations, many people have believed that maintenance is mainly the responsibility of the father. The reasoning is easy to understand: when parents separate, it is usually the mother who has carried the pregnancy, nurtured the child from birth and continued to raise him or her day to day, so the father is expected to provide financially. The law, however, now looks at the matter differently. It focuses on who the child lives with, and that arrangement largely determines who should provide maintenance and who should receive it.

This is where garnishment comes in. In legal terms, to garnish means that a court orders an employer to deduct a fixed portion of a person's salary and pay it directly to another party, in this case the parent or guardian caring for the child, so that a legal obligation such as maintenance is met. Payday is usually a moment of relief. After a month of hard work, you expect your salary to cover rent, groceries, transport, school expenses and other family responsibilities. But for a father facing a maintenance order, payday can bring a different reality: a portion of his salary is deducted before he receives it. For some men, this can create financial pressure, frustration and even embarrassment. A father may have other children to support, household expenses to meet, or debts to pay. He may ask himself, "How am I supposed to manage everything?"

These concerns are real and deserve to be heard. At the same time, there



Illustration: AI-generated image

is another important perspective: the child's. Children still need food, clothing, education, healthcare and a safe home, regardless of whether their parents are together. A relationship may end, but the responsibility of being a parent does not. Maintenance enforcement, including salary deductions where legally applicable, exists to help ensure that children receive the financial support they need when voluntary payments are not being made consistently.

Yet the dispute itself can leave marks that no deduction can repair. When maintenance becomes a running battle between parents, children often carry the emotional and psychological burden: anxiety, confusion, guilt and the feeling of being a problem to be paid for. Tension at home can affect their sleep, concentration and school performance. In the worst cases, children are neglected, as a parent who is angry, stressed or overstretched has less patience, time and attention to give, and the very support the order was meant to secure never fully reaches the child.

This does not mean that fathers

should have no voice in the process. A father has a responsibility to understand his maintenance order, keep records of payments and communicate through the proper channels when his financial circumstances change. Losing a job, experiencing a significant reduction in income or facing other substantial changes may require the maintenance arrangement to be reviewed through the appropriate legal process. Simply stopping payments or disappearing is unlikely to resolve the problem.

Just as importantly, garnishment should not push a father out of his child's life. Maintenance is only one part of parenting; a child also needs a father's time, guidance, affection and presence. It is often observed that some fathers withdraw from their children because the deduction feels like punishment, or because the mother keeps nagging and asking for more than he is legally required to pay or financially able to provide. Withdrawal is understandable but costly, and it is the child who loses most. Where a parent believes that the amount is too low or too high,



Illustration: AI-generated image

the fair route is a review through the proper legal channels, not constant pressure, and not the withholding of the relationship.

Maintenance disputes can become deeply emotional. A father may feel that the amount requested is unfair, while a mother may feel that the father is avoiding his responsibilities. When emotions run high, it is easy for parents to blame one another. Terms such as “deadbeat” or “gold digger” may become part of the conversation.

But the child should never become the battlefield. The more constructive question is: What does the child need, and how can both parents contribute responsibly?

For fathers supporting children in more than one household, the financial pressure can be especially difficult. One income may have to meet many obligations. This is precisely why communication, financial planning and proper legal advice are important. Garnishment can feel like a financial loss, but the issue is bigger

than the amount deducted from a salary.

It is about responsibility, fairness and the wellbeing of a child. Fathers deserve to be heard and treated fairly when genuine financial difficulties arise. Mothers deserve to be supported, not judged, for carrying the daily work of raising a child. At the same time, children deserve consistent financial support and a meaningful relationship with both parents. The end of a relationship does not end the responsibility of parenthood.

Ultimately, the goal should not be men versus women. It should be responsible parenting, fair processes and children whose basic needs are not forgotten. Because while a child may not understand a maintenance order or a salary deduction, they understand something much simpler: whether they are loved, cared for and present in the hearts of both their parents.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Empowering Young People Through Life Skills Education

by Gugu Mavimbela

Life skills prepare young people not only for school and work, but for life itself.

In July 2026, NATICC partnered with UNESCO for a Life Skills Education initiative where young people are given opportunities to develop important life skills such as communication, decision-making, critical thinking, problem-solving and building healthy relationships. Life skills education is about preparing young people not only for school and work, but also for everyday life. Part of this work is collaboration. In the Shiselweni region, UNESCO, NATICC, INSERT, and Ngwane Teachers Collage are working together to create meaningful opportunities for young people to



Youth from Mantambe Constituency engage with NATICC officers to discuss the UNESCO programme and its objectives.

learn, participate and grow. NAT-ICC brings valuable community experience to help ensure that programmes respond to the real needs of young people, while tertiary institutions contribute knowledge, research and innovation through pre- service and in-service teachers' training. The aim is to ensure that young people receive accurate, rel-



Tsambekeyo community members under Gege Constituency are introduced to the UNESCO programme and its objectives.

evant information and develop the confidence and skills to make informed and responsible decisions about their health and wellbeing.

An important part of this work is sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education, delivered in an age-sensitive and appropriate way. The initiative also recognises that young people's choices and wellbeing are influenced by the communities around them. Through community engagements and dialogue, partners create opportunities to discuss cultural and social norms that may affect young people's health, relationships and access to information. These conversations encourage understanding, reflection and positive change while respecting the importance of community voices. These partnerships show that empowering young people is a shared responsibility.

By working together, we can cre-



Mr. Velaphi Hlatjwako asks a question about the project during the engagement.

ate spaces where young people feel supported, develop confidence and gain practical skills that can help them navigate life and contribute positively to their communities. Investing in life skills and SRH education means investing in healthier, informed and empowered young people and stronger communities.

EPISODE 10

FEELINGS FIRST: BUILDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

in Young People

*Stronger Minds.
Kinder Hearts.
Brighter Futures.*

GUEST
**KHULILE
TSABEDZE**

HOST
**THOKOZANI
DUBE**

GUEST
**NKOSEPHAYO
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Standing Beside Child Survivors: NATICC's Court Support and Preparation Services

by Thokozani Dube

As stalled cases move again, NATICC walks beside every child survivor through the justice process



Illustration: AI-generated image

For a child who has survived abuse, the justice system can feel as frightening as the abuse itself. Unfamiliar rooms, unfamiliar adults, and the pressure of having to recount painful experiences can retraumatise a child if they walk into that process alone. This is where the Nhlanga-no AIDS Training, Information and Counselling Centre (NATICC) steps in.

Our Role in Court Support and Preparation

As a Social Worker at NATICC, part of my role is to walk alongside children who have been victims of abuse as their cases move through the justice system. This support begins long before a child ever sets foot in a courtroom and continues well after the case has concluded. Our court support and preparation services include:

- Psychosocial support and counselling to help children process their experiences and manage the emotional weight of testifying
- Court preparation sessions, where we explain the court process in age-appropriate, child-friendly language, so children know what to

expect and feel less afraid of the unknown

- Case management and follow-up, ensuring each child's welfare is monitored throughout the life of their case, not just on the day of a hearing
- Accompaniment and emotional support on court dates, so no child has to face the process without a familiar, supportive presence beside them
- Liaison with police, prosecutors, and the courts, applying our working knowledge of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act of 2018 and the Children's Protection and Welfare Act (CPWA) to help ensure each case is handled in a manner that protects the child's rights and wellbeing
- Referral pathways connecting children and their families to additional services they may need, including medical, psychological, and social support

A Difficult Two Years

It would not be honest to tell this story without acknowledging a real challenge we faced. For the past two years, many cases – particularly sexual abuse cases falling under the SODV Act – were simply not being attended to. Without a Principal Magistrate in place, cases stalled. Children and families who had already found the courage to come forward were left waiting, sometimes for years, for their day in court. For survivors, this kind of delay is its own quiet injustice: it prolongs uncertainty, denies closure, and can undermine a child's trust in a system meant to protect them.

A Turning Point

Since the introduction of a Principal Magistrate, we have seen real, tangible change. A significant number of cases that had been sitting dormant are now being heard. Families who had almost given up hope are seeing their cases move forward. Just as importantly, we are beginning to see positive outcomes from these cases – outcomes that affirm to survivors that their voices matter and that the system can, in fact, work for them. This shift has renewed our own sense of purpose at NATICC. Court support work is slow, patient work, often carried out far from public view. But when a case finally reaches its conclusion and a child can begin to move forward, it is a powerful reminder of why this work matters.

Looking Ahead

We remain committed to standing beside every child who comes through our doors, for as long as their case takes. The progress of the past months shows what is possible when the justice system has the capacity to function as it should. Our hope is that this momentum continues, so that no child in our community has to wait years for the protection and justice they deserve.



Eswatini High Court

NATICC Staff Debrief: Reflecting, Reconnecting And Recharging

by Tyson Nhlabathi

| A strong organisation is built by people who feel connected, supported and valued



NATICC staff gather in a circle, following the day's instructions led by Peer Educator Ms Lindokuhle Mamba.

NATICC staff stepped away from their usual routines and gathered at the NATICC Backyard Garden for a refreshing and engaging staff debrief session.

The session created a valuable space for staff to pause, reflect on their experiences, reconnect with colleagues and strengthen the teamwork that supports NATICC's work with communities.

Beyond the discussions, the debrief was filled with fun, laughter and interactive activities designed to encourage staff to relax and connect in a different setting. One of the highlights was "Pick a Card," where staff

participated in light-hearted activities that encouraged communication, spontaneity and plenty of laughter.

Staff also took part in a blindfolded sweet-picking activity, testing their ability to follow instructions and trust one another. Another energetic activity saw staff sitting in a circle while walking around the chairs until a signal was given to sit. Anyone left without a chair stepped out, adding excitement and friendly competition to the session.

While the activities were fun, they also reinforced an important message: a strong organisation is built by people who feel con-

nected, supported and valued.

Staff debrief sessions provide an opportunity to reflect on challenges, celebrate progress, share experiences and support one another. They also help create a healthier and more collaborative working environment, enabling staff to return to their responsibilities with renewed energy and a stronger sense of purpose.

For NATICC, investing in its people is an important part of strengthening the organisation's ability to serve communities. Through spaces that promote wellbeing, communication and teamwork, staff are better positioned to work together towards NATICC's shared goals and continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of the people they serve.



Social Worker, Ms Sisana Mngometulu, sorts cards during the activity.



Activity proceedings: NATICC staff follow the instructions as they participate in the activity.



NATICC staff actively engage in the activity.



Staff members take part in a team-building activity, blindfolded as they pick sweets.

NATICC Staff Build Digital Resilience Through Cybersecurity Training

by Tyson Nhlabathi

Cybersecurity is safeguarding



Ms Londiwe Dlamini from Jonathan Cyber empowering NATICC staff on AI-enabled fraud and deepfakes, equipping them with knowledge to identify and guard against digital threats such as deepfake videos, voice cloning, AI-generated content, AI phishing and identity theft.

NATICC staff recently participated in a two-day cybersecurity training with Jonathan Cyber, strengthening their knowledge and skills to protect sensitive information and promote safer digital practices.

For an organisation working with survivors of gender-based violence,

children, young people and communities, protecting information is more than an IT responsibility — it is safeguarding people. Sensitive case records, personal information and psychosocial support data must be handled responsibly to protect confidentiality, dignity and trust.

The training equipped staff with practical knowledge on recognising cyber threats, strengthening data protection practices, responding to incidents and safely managing information during both office and field-based work.

With emerging risks such as social engineering, AI-enabled fraud and other digital threats, building staff capacity is essential to ensuring that NATICC remains resilient and accountable.

For NATICC, digital security is part of safeguarding. Protecting information means protecting the people we serve.

STAFF & ORGANISATION

Financial Literacy Training Empowers NATICC Staff

by Tyson Nhlabathi

Financial wellbeing is not only about how much you earn, but how effectively you manage, protect and grow what you have

NATICC staff recently strengthened their financial management skills through a Financial Literacy and Financial Management training facilitated by the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA).

Led by Consumer Education and Financial Inclusion Specialists Ms Zandile Dlamini and Mr Mbuso Gamedze, the session focused on practical approaches to budgeting, saving, responsible spending, debt management, in-

vesting and retirement planning.

Staff were encouraged to understand their cash flow, distinguish between needs and wants, and make informed financial decisions that support both their current needs and long-term financial security.

The training reinforced an important message: financial wellbeing is not only about how much you earn, but how effectively you manage, protect and grow what you have.



NATICC staff receive financial literacy training led by Consumer Education and Financial Inclusion Specialist, Mr Mbuso Gamedze.

NATICC Establishes Child-Led Advisory Board to Strengthen Survivor-Centred Programming

by Tyson Nhlabathi

What happens when young people are not only invited to participate, but are entrusted to help shape programmes that affect their lives? For NATICC, it is a step towards putting the best interests of the child at the heart of programming.



Child-Led Advisory Board members (L-R): Zanengcebo Shongwe, Veliswa Motsa, Tekugcina Dlamini, Letsiwe Motsa, Nothando Ndlangamandla and Lindokuhle Mamba.

On Saturday, 8th August 2026, NATICC has reached a significant milestone in strengthening survivor-centred programming with the establishment of a Child-Led Advisory Board (CLAB), anchored in meaningful child participation and creating a structured platform for young people to contribute to decisions that affect child protection, wellbeing and access to support services. Members of the newly established Child-Led Advisory Board (CLAB) were formally inducted and capacitated to contribute to the governance, accountability and responsiveness of child protection programming.

Opening the induction, NATICC Executive Director Mr Sisekelo Nzima described the members as “esteemed members”, recognising the values and skills they bring to child-focused programming. “We need people who will have special skills in assisting with programming involving children,” Mr Nzima said, highlighting the importance of having their perspectives reflected

in planning, reporting and child advocacy.

He explained that CLAB members were appointed based on the values they bring, rather than through voting, and will have their own sittings where they can discuss issues affecting children, provide recommendations and contribute to programme improvement.

The Board was oriented on its responsibilities, ways of working and expectations, with its mandate covering child protection and survivor support, programme reviews, barriers to accessing services, monitoring and feedback.

Putting Children’s Best Interests First

The CLAB model is built on the principle that children’s views should be heard and considered while protecting their safety, dignity, privacy and wellbeing.

NATICC Social Worker, Ms Sisana Mngometulu, capacitated members on Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

(PSEA), reinforcing the importance of safe and respectful participation. NATICC Program Manager, Mr Kenneth Makhanya, further unpacked the Board’s Terms of Reference, including its strategic, operational and capacity-building objectives.

Through Monitoring and Evaluation, CLAB members will also help ensure that young people’s feedback contributes to organisational learning and better programming:

LISTEN → LEARN → RECOMMEND → ACT → IMPROVE

Mr Nzima congratulated the new members and expressed appreciation to parents and guardians for consenting to their participation, wishing them well as they begin this important journey.

Ultimately, CLAB is about more than giving young people a seat at the table. It is about creating safe spaces where their perspectives can contribute to better, safer and more responsive programmes—always guided by the best interests of the child.

A Seat at the table, a voice in the decision, a role in the change

With the Child-Led Advisory Board, NATICC is strengthening a model of participation where young people are not viewed only as beneficiaries, but as contributors to knowledge, partners in learning and participants in shaping the programmes that affect their lives.

ACRONYMS

BMDs	Birth, Marriage and Deaths
CPWA	Children's Protection and Welfare Act
CLAB	Child-Led Advisory Board
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ENYC	Eswatini National Youth Council
FRSA	Financial Services Regulatory Authority
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IT	Information Technology
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NATICC	Nhlangano AIDS Training, Information and Counselling Centre
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RDF	Regional Development Fund
REO	Regional Education Office
SODV	Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
STREEC	Solar Training, Renewable Energy and Entrepreneurship Center
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VTRS	Nhlangano Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre



Building Relationships Endurance and Dignity

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