

# Dozens of North West NPOs face closure as Social Development department fails to pay subsidies

By [Liezl Human](#)

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Critical services for the elderly and victims of sexual assault will soon be halted if non-profit organisations do not receive their subsidies from the North West Department of Social Development (DSD).



Illustration: Lisa Nelson

Dozens of NPOs in the province say they have been desperately trying to get funding for months. Some face closure.

One such organisation is Age-in-Action that provides home based care to elderly people in rural communities. “What worries us is that our clients are left in the cold,” said Mary Jane Segone, provincial director of Age-in-Action.

Segone said that the organisation last received funding from the DSD in March 2021. She said they managed to secure two months’ salaries for staff, but since June last year, they have not been able to pay staff. Some of the 24 staff members haven’t been able to send their children to school, said Segone.



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17 Mar 2022



Some of the staff even took the organisation to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) over the non-payment of their salaries. Three of the Age-in-Action offices in the North West have already had to close because the organisation could not pay rent. A fourth office is facing closure.

Communicating with the provincial department has been a challenge, according to Segone. "We are still hoping they will get back to us," she said.

### **NPOs battling to make ends meet**

Similarly, Tlokwe Crisis Centre, an NPO operating from Potchefstroom Hospital, is battling to make ends meet. The centre has not received funds since December 2021. The centre provides services to victims of sexual offences and gender-based violence, and sometimes also helps neglected children.

Centre director Mpho Ntsundwane said she has had to work 48-hour shifts because staff could not afford to travel to work. "I had to come in because the victims were there. We can't leave the victims alone. We can't close the centre ... I was exhausted."

Ntsundwane said the department has not told them what the reason for the delay in payment has been, though the centre has sent in all the relevant documents.

The centre usually gets about R600,000 per year. This covers food for victims, comfort packs, toiletries, maintenance of the centre, and staff salaries. The first two deposits were paid months late last year and the third and fourth are still outstanding.



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Lisa Vetten of the Care Work Campaign wrote to the national department, requesting urgent intervention for Age-in-Action and follow-ups on the outstanding payments. Vetten said they plan to meet national department officials this week to discuss the issue.

In June 2021, the provincial DSD [returned](#) R144m of unspent budget to the National Treasury for the 2020/21 financial year.

The provincial DSD did not respond to our questions despite promising to do so over a week ago. Spokesperson Petrus Siko said that the department would respond but never did. Thasbo Mosito, the media liaison officer for the MEC, promised to look into the complaints but never responded to our questions.

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