



**correctional services**

Department:  
Correctional Services  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Date: 27 September 2018**

**To: All Media**

**Attention: News Editors**

### **CORRECTIONAL CENTRE BOOK CLUBS ENSURING OFFENDERS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**

Two hundred and forty (240) offenders from, 24 correctional centre book clubs, across the country will participate in the 9<sup>th</sup> Funda Mzantsi Competition (FMC), in George from 1 to 5 October 2018, under the theme "*Building Creative Minds*".

Sixty more offenders are participating this year, compared to last year (2017), confirming the growing interest in reading within correctional facilities as well as the important role of this initiative in the rehabilitation of offenders.

This annual championship is hosted by the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) through its outreach unit, Centre for the Book (CFB), in collaboration with the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and George Municipality.

The project was in response to a survey, conducted by the South African Book Development Council in 2007, on general reading habits in South African communities. The report of the survey revealed that South Africa is not a reading nation. The Centre for the Book, therefore, decided to intervene by way of establishing book clubs in communities, schools and correctional centres.

At the same time, the process of taking part in the championship has assisted with the improvement of the Grade 12 pass rate of inmates because offenders are able to read with understanding, and analyse, as compared to reading for pleasure. Over the last four years, the inmate matric pass rate was 68.9% in 2014, 73% in 2015, 72% in 2016 and 76.7% last year (2017).

Book clubs in correctional centres ensure that offenders remain focused amid their circumstances so that they can reach their full potential. The education and skilling of inmates has been successfully implemented as a rehabilitation programme engineered to mould inmates to return to their communities as better, changed and law-abiding citizens. The FMC offers offenders the opportunity to refocus and channel their energies in mapping their destinies by means of educating themselves for a better future. DCS is committed to expanding these book clubs to involve even more offenders.

As Correctional Services, we have adopted Funda Mzantsi, as part of our rehabilitation efforts, to enhance the massification of reading as well as to address the two fundamental issues of education and learning. Through this initiative, DCS is entrenching the culture of reading among inmates to increase their literacy levels. This programme is being utilized as a vehicle to stimulate greater offender participation in literacy programmes.

Learning in our correctional centres contributes to the elimination of illiteracy, and equips, especially young, offenders with the necessary skills to be self-sufficient upon release. In line with rehabilitation, major tasks undertaken by DCS include literacy, vocational training, basic occupational skills training, entrepreneurial skills training, business studies, engineering studies, basic and tertiary education qualifications.

DCS is mandated by the White Paper on Corrections to provide for the safe custody of offenders, and to ensure that offenders are exposed to rehabilitative opportunities, that may lead to their successful reintegration in order to lead a crime-free life. Initiatives such as Funda Mzantsi are proving to be effective tools to empower offenders for successful reintegration into their communities.

This week, 24 to 30 September 2018, DCS is commemorating Corrections Week. Corrections Week is observed annually to promote awareness, and understanding, of the correctional system in South Africa.

Ends.

Issued by: Department of Correctional Services

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