

LEADERSHIP IN HIV PREVENTION

A Collaborative Leadership Programme



ZODWA CHIYA, KWAZULU-NATAL

Many people think that disabled people are not subject to gender-based violence (GBV). Disabled people are also often left out of HIV prevention efforts, especially since they may need specific communication and services tailored to their needs. I am a visually impaired person and this programme provided me with a unique opportunity to build a team of visually impaired peer educators to educate about HIV prevention and GBV. My prevention plan was located in Umzimkhulu, a rural area in Kwazulu-Natal. Ten visually impaired participants were trained on HIV prevention and GBV and were later joined by two other disabled people. There are so many challenges faced by the disabled community but through this project we were able to increase knowledge of HIV and GBV and also to sensitise health care workers

to the needs of the disabled community. In addition, participants felt empowered that they too could make a difference in their community. I hope to expand this project to include people with various disabilities, as I believe they remain neglected under current HIV and GBV prevention efforts.



SINEGUGU DUMA, WESTERN CAPE

The aim of my project was to design and implement a mentor-driven prevention strategy for HIV/AIDS and unplanned pregnancy among university students. Twenty-three existing student mentors from Baxter Hall Residence, University of Cape Town, were trained to support and teach other students in the residence about safe sex. A series of interactive and specialist facilitated workshops, debriefing sessions and reflections on different safe sex methods for prevention of HIV and unplanned pregnancy were held between February and May 2014.

The knowledge gained from the workshops, following suggestions from the students, was translated into the development of a UCT Safe Sex Mobile Application for Smartphone users. This was developed in partnership with the UCT Samsung Innovation Laboratory. Smartphone users at UCT can now access the App to learn about male and female condom use and other safe sex issues in privacy. I hope to take the project broader than the UCT community so that more people can have convenient access to reliable and up to date information on safer sex.



THABILE MAHLANGU, MPUMALANGA

My project, "Breaking the Silence" is aimed at addressing HIV and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention in churches in Matsulu township. While I initially intended to target women and youth, I soon realized that men also needed to, and wanted to, be involved. In addition, to respond to church member requests, a seminar for single parents and couples was conducted. We have adapted existing educational materials on HIV and GBV for endorsement and distribution in the church. The church now has a dedicated 20-minute slot each Sunday to address issues of HIV and GBV prevention and events such as World AIDS Day now feature on the church calendar.

Finally, an important milestone achievement under this programme is that there is now a box of condoms in the back of the church. I plan to expand this programme to other interested churches in the township, a number of which have already indicated interest.

**NADIA MARTIN, NORTHERN CAPE**

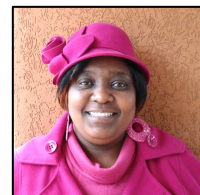
My project was implemented in Kimberley, focusing on the sexual health issues and rights of gay men and men who have sex with men (MSM). It also addressed homophobia and stigma related to sexual orientation. I held workshops with gay men and MSM to explore their health care needs and experiences with health care services. I did not anticipate the level of fear I encountered in terms of confidentiality and discrimination experienced by these groups; in fact the community sessions I had originally scheduled had to be completely changed because of this fear. I learned that there is a tremendous amount of work to be done to change perceptions about gay men and MSM, and to allow them to access the health and other services to which they are entitled. I have now linked up with an NGO working with gay men

and MSM in the area to collaborate on effective ways to achieve my goals of decreasing stigma and discrimination and promoting health rights for all.

**NOTHANDO MBATHA, GAUTENG**

The aim of my project was to capacitate staff members at the Direlang Community Centre to teach adolescents about HIV prevention, sexuality and gender-based violence (GBV) using arts, music and poetry. Direlang is based in Garankuwa township near Pretoria. Sessions were held at the Community Centre. Both the staff and the adolescents enjoyed the creative methodologies used. However, during the programme we found that many of the adolescents in the community had social problems that needed referral to social workers. These linkages were made and appropriate support was provided. The adolescents involved in the project helped to plan a final event at a local nature reserve to which parents, community members and other adolescents were invited. I plan to continue to provide support to

adolescents around the Direlang Community Centre, by continued engagement with the schools that the adolescents attend and continuing the successful arts-based approach to exploring HIV and GBV prevention.

**ZANELE MLAMBO, GAUTENG**

The goal of my project was to train peer educators from Thulamntwana Combined School on HIV and GBV prevention, and to promote the use of family planning services to prevent unplanned pregnancy. Thulamntwana is an underserved informal settlement in Johannesburg South. Two camps were conducted with 60 young peer educators from the area, during which training was provided on sexual health and reproductive rights, and leadership skills (self awareness, communication and negotiation skills, values, goal setting, and decision making). At the end of the camp learners were inspired and motivated to set new goals for the future, particularly taking into consideration their new understanding of the consequences of unplanned pregnancy. I assisted the peer educators to form Boys and Girls Education Movements

in the school, with the aim of extending these to neighbouring schools in the area. For sustainability and continued support, important partnerships were formed with an existing youth development NGO and the Departments of Social Services, Health, Art, Sports and Culture.

**THAMI MNCUBE, KWAZULU-NATAL**

I aimed to reduce risk among young people (age between 18-24) to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as reducing unplanned teenage pregnancies. I am a Social Worker with the Department of Social Development (DSD) so I have established relationships both in the community and with service providers. The project was implemented in Straatford Farm Village, Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal province. A two-pronged approach was employed: 1) increasing knowledge of prevention methods, and 2) promoting knowledge of and access to primary health care services. It was implemented in partnership with Dundee DSD and Siphuthando

Community Organisation. Eleven young people were trained (4 males and 7 females) to conduct community awareness campaigns on HIV and AIDS, STIs, HIV counseling and testing, and teenage pregnancy. Going forward, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (Umzinyathi District) is helping the group to register as a cooperative and they are also in the process of registering as a non-profit organisation (NPO).



ELIAS MPHAHLELE, LIMPOPO

The goal of my project, “In Favour of our Future”, was to establish a debating club at Zaaiplaas Primary School in Limpopo to raise awareness of HIV and gender based violence (GBV). This is particularly unique as most HIV awareness programmes are aimed at High School learners. Debating proved to be a very effective method to get messages across in a fun and challenging way in this age group. It is also a useful skill that the learners can use in other classes and school events. The project involved ten grade 6 and 7 learners who, in addition to holding debates, organised an Open Day on HIV and GBV awareness. Given that the Circuit office under which Zaaiplaas Primary School falls had mandated schools to establish debating clubs, the programme is sustainable and can be replicated in other

schools in the circuit. In future additional interactive methodologies, including poetry, will be used to continue to attract and educate learners at the school about HIV and GBV.



NDUMISO NGIDI, KWAZULU-NATAL

Secondary schools bring into close proximity a collective of young people at the start of their sexual development and activity. This may present a high-risk environment for HIV infection. In addition, because of their developmental stage, adolescents are vulnerable to many forms of GBV at school, in the community and at the household level. My project, “Inyathelo Lethu”, was designed and developed to address these issues among learners from Senzokwethu Secondary School in Ntuzuma township near Durban. The innovative aspect of this plan was that it brought together two groups of peer educators: a newly established group at Senzokwethu and an existing peer educator group from the Durban University of Technology (DUT). They worked collaboratively in developing and implementing a HIV and

GBV prevention curriculum in the secondary school. The project reached 200 learners through workshops and weekly dialogues. In addition to a reported increase in confidence, self-esteem and leadership at school, many of the secondary school participants had a marked increase in their school grades. Due to their interaction with the DUT students, secondary school learners also showed increased interest in future opportunities such as post-secondary education. My future plan is to partner with more township schools to reach a larger population of learners.



KHOSI TSHABALALA, GAUTENG

I am a Life Sciences educator and have always been passionate about finding solutions to HIV/AIDS and STIs. Under my project, I aimed to strengthen learner access to information on the prevention of HIV, unplanned teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence and medical male circumcision. Although these topics are included in the school curriculum, I believe that it is essential for grade 11 and 12 learners to have a deeper understanding because they may face these problems both during and after leaving school. I worked with grade 11 and 12 science groups at Mncube High School in Mofolo Central township in Soweto. Key to the programme’s success and sustainability were the partnerships established. I mobilised community members from the HIV/AIDS centre located on our school premises to help educate the

learners. We also worked closely with local members of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), who brought materials and effective methods to provide accurate information and referral to services. My future plans include integrating these topics into provincial high school competitions and working with other educators in Soweto to take this work forward.