

Success Story from Our Communities - 1

Taking an HIV Test: Traditional Leaders of KaNgcamphalala lead by example

"Test for HIV so that you can be helped and live longer" - these were words of a member of the Inner Council of KaNgcamphalala during a Community Dialogue to Promote HTC. This event was organized by the Inner Council in partnership with Cabrini Ministries (an implementing partner of SAfAIDS) and SAfAIDS Swaziland Office. The event was held on 3rd November 2012 and it attended by 86 people (50 female and 36 male), of these 66 were motivated after the Community Dialogue, and voluntarily tested for HIV at the PSI and TASC HTC mobile clinics which were organized to be on-site. As soon as community members witnessed their Traditional Leader being the first one to take the HIV test, they felt encouraged to also follow suit. This role modeling is what the SAfAIDS component of the *MaxART* project is promoting in its work with Swazi Traditional Leaders. Of those who tested, there were more than four couples who accessed couples testing.



Traditional Leader of KaNgcamphalala taking public HIV test whilst the community members look on



Success Story from Our Communities - 2

ARVs Work and Can Bring Well-being Back into Your Life !

These were the strong urgings relayed by the former chief of KaNgcamphalala Chiefdom during a community HTC event that was organized by the Traditional Leaders of the chiefdom and SAfAIDS and partners, on 3rd November 2012, which reached almost 100 community members. Having engaged with the SAfAIDS Community Mobilisation activities under MaxART Project, the retired chief openly shared how he is living positively with HIV and has been also on TB treatment. He mentioned that when he became sick, he was found to have TB and only later that he was infected with HIV, and he was at a stage that was almost too late for treatment to have effect. He bore witness to being able to live positively and be back to health as a result of accepting his HIV positive status and starting immediately on ART, and adhering to his treatment regimen religiously. He encouraged his community, especially those who delay to test and those taking ARVs with alcohol and other drugs such as smoking cigarette and dagga, to take an HIV test and taking ARVs seriously. He emphasized that those who are on ART should continue to take them even if they have regained their “original state” before they became ill; highlighting that failure to adhere to ART will lead to serious complications, which will affect their well-being.



*Former Chief of
KaNgcamphalala Chiefdom
with the SAfAIDS team*

Success Story from Our Communities - 3

Practicing HIV Prevention even after Testing HIV Negative

During the ka Ngcamphalala community event, on 3rd November 2012. The Inner Council lead by example through promoting a key step to HIV prevention: taking an HIV test and accessing HIV counseling pre- and post-testing. Traditional Leader Babe Mamba who is a member of Inner Council, after he got tested for HIV in public, encouraged community members to prevent new infections and re-infections by protecting themselves all the time using condoms consistently and urged them to reduce number of concurrent sexual partners. He took a box of condoms with him, and openly stated that as a Swazi man, it is possible that he can have more than one wife - but this does not mean that he will not protect himself and his wives. He stated firmly he will be using condoms every time and continue going for an HIV testing, and encourage his wives to join him in future.

He said that it does not matter what HIV status one has – what matters is protecting oneself – from infection or re-infection – this is most important issue, emphasized this Traditional Leader, *“Remember prevention is better than cure”*. He expressed his wish that every man will begin using condoms in his community – and not see it as something to be ashamed of – but a sign of being caring, and encouraged men to carry condoms as a sign of being a PROTECTOR as a man. *“Once I run out of condoms I know where to go, so you better be safe than sorry”* he shared. And finally he ended by encouraging women in the community to also demand that their male partners protect themselves by using condoms and avoid engaging in un-protected sex.



Traditional Leader Mamba displaying a box of condoms that he collected for his own use, after taking his HIV test

SAfAIDS Swaziland in collaboration with Cabrini Ministries visited KaNgcamphalala chiefdom where Cabrini Ministries implements HIV interventions. The team introduced the MaxART project to the Traditional leaders (TLs) of the area. The TLs expressed a concern that there seem to be a lot of efforts towards addressing HIV in the Chiefdom but these have left out the leaders of this community. In principle all the people of a community including community based volunteers (CBVs) belong to that community and are led by the Traditional leaders of the community where they belong. The Traditional Leaders were happy to hear how SAfAIDS and partners are involving them now in training workshops and community dialogues, and giving the TLs the “power” to lead and champion the community mobilization towards increasing access and uptake to HIV testing and treatment in their community.

Following attending capacity building workshops provided by SAfAIDS through MaxART Community Mobilisation, in the KaNgcamphalala community, the Traditional Leaders are now conducting door to door follow up visits; as a sequel to visits done to the same household by SAfAIDS Swazi partners’ CBVs who have visited these homes to share information and mobilise uptake of HIV testing services and access and adherence to treatment. Through these follow-up visits by the Traditional Leaders, households will be doubly encouraged and motivated to access testing and treatment services, convinced that they have supportive and conducive environment in the community, promoted by their Traditional Leader.

“I have tested the seventh time already and I want to do it again in public and be seen by my community so that they also go for testing. You can also take pictures while we are doing a public testing then produce IEC material which can be distributed in the community. In that way people will see the importance of testing when we lead by example”

- Inner Council member



Traditional leaders (left) engaging in dialogue on HIV testing and treatment with Cabrini Ministries and SAfAIDS (right)



Success Story from Our Communities - 4

Mobilising Couples HIV Testing Through Community Dialogues

The Community Dialogue on Promoting HTC at Ka Ngcamphalala; served as eye opening and perception changing among over 100 community members who participated. Partners such as Cabrini Ministries, PSI and TASC were present to provide mobile HIV testing to the community. Traditional Leaders took the lead in strongly encouraging taking an HIV test using any of the 3 services on-site. Specific emphasis was made on couples testing, where partners go for testing together, if they were both present, or their partner was nearby the Dialogue site. Community members were further encouraged that, if they feel un-comfortable with Cabrini Ministries, since they are an organisation the community works with on a daily basis and some of the staff members are related to the community members; those wishing to test can access this at the on-site service provided by PSI and TASC. One married couple in the area decided to go for a couple HIV testing; and announced this. Upon doing so other couples were encouraged and followed suit.

"We want people to see that this (couples testing) is very important. Whatever results I get in there or my wife gets, it will remain the same. I love her and I will support her in everything. We have been through a lot together so why leave her at this time?" said the male partner in the couple, who tested for HIV at this Community Dialogue. He continued *"People are usually afraid to get tested with their partners or rather telling them their results. It is not an easy thing to do but it can help people support one in different ways."*



**Couple waiting to be tested
during the community HTC event**



Success Story from Our Communities - 5

Traditional Leadership: Championing Innovation in the Response to HIV

SAfAIDS Swaziland MaxART team together with their partner Khulisa Umntfwana visited a Traditional Leader (TL) from Mhlane chiefdom of Kwaluseni Inkhundla in Manzini Region. The Traditional Leader, Induna Bongane Mbingo who is also a religious leader was trained under the SAfAIDS MaxART HIV Testing and Treatment Advocacy Leadership Program in mid-2013. As a result of the training he has been motivated to share information with his community; and innovatively mobilise his community and grasp available opportunities within his community as a strategy for sharing HIV testing and ART adherence information within his constituency, for example through Community Cultural Ceremonies/Events. Traditional Leader Mbingo testified that the community dialogues and the trainings around promoting uptake to HIV testing services and starting ART and adhering thereof; has created change in the communities reached. He recognized that more men are comfortable to share and discuss issues around sexuality, HIV and stigma/discrimination during the Community Dialogues. Peer-to-peer encouragement among men to “know their HIV status” in the community had also increased as a result of applying the Community Dialogue Model.

Another outcome of the community mobilization interventions above; there was an increase in number of community members in Indvuna Mbingo’s chiefdom visiting his homestead for HIV related consultations and counseling; giving him an opportunity to make prompt referral and address concerns they may have on HIV testing and starting or adhering to HIV treatment. Meanwhile Indvuna Mbingo has also initiated inter-denomination services where other communities are invited from the Kwaluseni Inkhundla (Logoba, Kwaluseni and Mahlane) to come together for prayer session, and use this platform to provide HIV testing and treatment uptake motivation, as well as provide mobile testing services for on-site testing. Between 24th and 25th November 2012, the Traditional Leader is planning to host another inter-denomination service; where different age groups will be awarded for the work they do in the community. The Awards will be in different categories depending on the work the people do in the community. e.g. for the youth activities, Lutsango (Women Regiment), community volunteers and others. One of the strategies that make this intervention sustainable is that the community is using available resources and also recognizes available skills and expertise within themselves. The business people in the area are contributing to community activities. This includes Pick n’ Pay who always contribute in feeding OVCs within this community.

“This is our brainchild. We are promoting positive thing and positive living. Since HIV is a Centre of everything, we have realized that some of the approaches were not right and not reaching the people we are targeting. Now we want to acknowledge all those who have been doing a great job in the community” , shares Indvuna Mbingo.



Success Story from Our Communities - 6



Traditional Leaders and Community Based Workers: Critical Links between Community –based and clinically - based Settings

In the Shiselweni region, the SAfAIDS Swaziland together with a Tradition Leader (TL) Khumalo and CBV of Ngwenyameni – whose capacity has been built under the MaxART project, on promoting HIV testing uptake and access and adherence to ART - visited a Zombodze Clinic. Sister Zwane, the sister-in-charge at this clinic highlighted how both the CBV and the Traditional Leader work as a link between the Ngwenyameni community and the clinic. At the clinic the CBV has an information desk at the waiting area where clients wait before they are attended. This is where she provides information on HIV prevention, adolescent health and treatment literacy. Both the CBV and the Traditional Leader refer community members for HIV testing and as such most of the clients visiting the clinic come from Ngwenyameni community as indicated in the clinic records. One of the challenges noted thus far is that the majority who come for testing are women; as men are complaining that the health facility is not conducive for them (male-friendly). The clinic in consultation with the CBV and Traditional Leader Khumalo are in the process of arranging for men-focused HIV testing services to be held on Saturdays. Mobile testing services for men will also be arranged at a constituency and chiefdom level. When the team was leaving the facility the nurse expressed her appreciation to the Traditional Leader and CBV by mentioning that *“Kulungile nine ningavalelisi ngobe ningitsi”* meaning that the CBV and the TL need not to say bye because they are part of them now !

Snap Shots Successes and Glimmerings of Positive Change:

Babe Ndzimandze Petros, of Luyengo Royal Kraal, was trained by SAfAIDS as Champion of HIV prevention and treatment. Babe Ndzimandze set an example during the training when he underwent HIV testing during that training. When narrating his story, he stated how he now tests for HIV every 6 months. Following the training, he conducted Community Dialogues in his community; and called on men in his community to go for HIV testing and setting a date for this “mass testing” for his community men-folk. About 17 men attended sidla inhloko at Luyengo clinic, 15 of them tested for HIV; and all agreed that they will go for HIV testing every 3 months.

Chief Sokhaya Mdluli is a chief at Mbilaneni Community. Chief Mdluli introduced the project of HIV testing and treatment to all community members including CBVs, and continuously liaises with the CBVs to give him feedback on the work they are doing in the community. Both Chief Mdluli and the CBVs designed a tool that will help them to report on progress on a monthly basis. In complementing the CBV work, chief Mdluli allocated a land to the CBVs to cultivate crops for IGA. In so doing, CBVs get money from the crops that they sell and this enable them to do community work and give to those in need of food.



Success Story from Our Communities - 7



CBVs empower Households in Shiselweni on HIV prevention



MoH and SAfAIDS Trained RHM singing and dancing to a song they composed on SAfAIDS at the end of the training

Nonhlanhla Magagula is one of the SAfAIDS trained CBV and a member of SWANNEPHA based at eNgwenyameni community. Nonhlanhla conducts door-to-door visits in her community. She has also created support groups and teen clubs. When the SAfAIDS Swaziland Team visited her during the door to door sessions with her clients. She led the team to a Myeni homestead where they found Nonhlanhla's client, Babhekile Myeni, a 21 year old lady who is bedridden and being cared for by her younger sister who is 18 years old. Babhekile agreed to get tested for HIV, and begin treatment as a result of the CBVs encouragement and knowledge sharing during her home visits.

The CBV encourages her clients to consistently go for CD4 count, eat well and always take their medication on time." *Remember to always ask your sister to remind you to take your treatment*" Nonhlanhla said.

She plays a huge role as a treatment supporter to her clients.

She has also established teen clubs in the community she serves to reach adolescents who come from HIV affected households with information on keeping themselves "HIV free"



Success Story from Our Communities - 8



How Ngwenyameni Chiefdom Traditional Leadership Handles HIV Issues

A Traditional Leader, Bucopho Robert Mkhonta shared his story with the SAF AIDS team during a field monitoring visit as follows:-

"Here at Ngwenyameni community we have regarded HIV issues as our responsibility to address. I am a member of an Inner council and part of my plan is to ensure that issues of HIV are addressed in all the community meetings and other platforms like church services, gathering. There are chiefdom meetings held within the different communities in this area. Our meetings always start with a word prayer then followed by information on HIV prevention, testing counselling and treatment. We also invite the CBVs during the development meetings so that they motivate and encourage people to test and be treated. , I am working closely with a Church Leader from Pentecostal church who works for MSF (Doctors without Borders).



This has made it easy for the people of eNgwenyameni to even test and disclose their HIV status during their church services. Partner organisations are sometimes invited to provide onsite testing services during the community meetings. However there is need to improve access children's access to testing and treatment services within the communities since children are still left behind from testing and treatment because they rely on their parents' consent".

Snap Shot Successes:

Indvuna Skuta Nkambule is a Traditional Leader of Timbutini community. After the Traditional leaders workshop he went back to his community and did not wait for the organization to follow him up, upon himself he looked for organizations that provide HTC. He went to Lamvelase Clinic and arranged with the management to provide HTC services whenever there are community meetings.

“We usually call them for our community meetings so that they give the community a chance to test. Knowing your status is very important because then you will be able to make informed decisions and choices” shared Induna Nkambule

Lamvelase has conducted three community based HTC services within Timbutini where a lot of people got tested. One of his priority plans is to make the community testing part of the community best positive behaviour. ***“I would like to thank SAfAIDS and Khulisa Umntfwana for choosing Timbutini community for such projects”***



Babe Sikuta Nkhambule, Timbutini Indvuna taking notes during dialogue at Timbutini whilst Director of Khulisa Umntfwana Stella Lukhele looks on

HIV testing at Work place

In one workplace where the SWABCHA is implementing SAfAIDS MaxART related project activities, employees have reported that they have noticed a positive attitude and change on HIV and TB issues amongst employees. After wellness sessions, employees are encouraged to approach the SWABCHA officers for one-on-one sessions where private issues are discussed; and emotional and psychological concerns of the employee are addressed. SWABCHA offers motivational talks on signs and symptoms of diabetes ; as well as testing employees regularly for blood glucose and blood pressure levels; and during these wellness activities, SWABCHA provides HIV testing and treatment related information to their employees. This integrate approached is contributing to reduction in stigma and discrimination around the topic of HIV among employees.