

**NTSHONGWENI: REPORTBACK OF**  
**FIRST INFORMATION-SHARING MEETING**  
**Held at Lalelani L.P. School, Ntshongweni**  
**8 June 2002**

**Present:**

- \* Moses Ndlovu, Cedric Mhlongo and Tanja Arntz (HIVAN)
- \* Fani Moyo, Local Councillor
- \* Zama Khumalo, Department of Land Affairs (DLA)
- \* Cheryl Walker, Independent Land Reform Specialist
- \* Colly Carey, National DLA HIV/AIDS Co-ordinator (NDLA - HIV/AIDS)
- \* Mr. Sibisi, Chairperson of Community Property Association (CPA)
- \* Hopewell Moses, Valley Trust (VT)
- \* Zibuyemasisweni - Crafts Co-op
- \* Zimeleni Gardens Project
- \* Ntshongweni HIV/AIDS Support Group (NHASG)
- \* Community Health Workers (CHWs)
- \* Home-based Care Workers (HBCWs)
- \* Ntshongweni Development Forum (NDF)
- \* Ntshongweni Youth (NY)

**1. Opening:**

Mr Sibisi, chairperson of the Community Property Association, who acted as the meeting chair, welcomed all present and requested a community member to open the meeting with a prayer.

**2. Apologies:**

Scott Drimie  
Additional members of Zibuyemasisweni

**3. Purpose of the meeting:**

Zama Khumalo, the Department of Land Affairs Planner for the Ntshongweni area, outlined the purpose of the meeting, stating that it was aimed at sharing information around HIV/AIDS and the impact the epidemic would have on the land reform process underway in Ntshongweni.

As the DLA needed the input of others with more expertise in the field of HIV/AIDS, it was hoped that by convening with the different stakeholders in the area, the Department could work more effectively in the community. She believed it was important for the community to

approach HIV/AIDS as they would any other illness, so as to reduce stigmatisation and enhance effective community responses to HIV/AIDS. ZK said that DLA was also trying to assess how the land reform process was achieving its purpose at the face of the epidemic.

#### **4. Introductions:**

Participants were requested to introduce themselves and their organisations, and to outline their designations and roles, interests and expectations from the meeting.

The expectations described are summarised as follows:

##### **Networking:**

- Communication with different organisations and/or stakeholders in the community of Ntshongweni
- To get to know each stakeholder and how collaboration could be effected
- Linking up with interfaith responses to HIV/AIDS

##### **Information:**

- To understand how HIV/AIDS affects the utilisation of land
- To find ways to align land reform policy with the challenges of HIV/AIDS
- To know more about HIV/AIDS cures and how the community could obtain access to them
- To acquire more general knowledge on HIV/AIDS, training, prevention, care, community development, etc.

[Mr. Sibisi explained that there is no cure for AIDS, which is why the community needed to find effective ways of coping with the epidemic, working together with different stakeholders such as those present at the meeting, as well as others in the community who could be involved].

##### **Care:**

- To ensure that care is given in a non-discriminatory manner
- Training for caregivers on HIV/AIDS
- Caregivers to be more active in the community
- More people to be involved in caring for the infected and affected
- Parents to give more support to their infected children
- To see more women participating in curbing HIV/AIDS by engaging in home visits to the sick
- To focus on the care of orphans of AIDS and set up an orphanage for them
- Provision of care materials/ resources to caregivers, e.g. nutritional support, gloves, etc. (to ensure their sustenance and peace of mind regarding transmission of the virus by providing adequate protection etc.)

- To learn how HIV-positive persons could be assisted in accessing treatment (anti-retroviral drugs)
- To promote the HIV/AIDS Support Group in the community
- To motivate for HIV/AIDS workshops on “How to live with HIV/AIDS”

**Prevention:**

- More people to disclose their HIV status
- Encourage voluntary counselling and testing (VCT)
- To promote use of condoms and encourage abstinence
- To support behaviour change as a tool for prevention
- Need for trust, to be open and to change attitudes
- Bigger community information dissemination meetings on HIV/AIDS
- Maybe introduce HIV/AIDS into the school curriculum
- Encourage sports to keep youth engaged to prevent HIV infections
- Youth meetings

**Way Forward:**

To appoint an HIV/AIDS committee

**5. Presentations**

**5.1 Valley Trust**

Hopewell Moses (HM), HIV/AIDS Co-ordinator, presented the HIV/AIDS programme from The Valley Trust. Their programme focuses mainly on youth but he emphasised that it is important to define ‘youth’ because there were different youth sub-cultures requiring varying tactical approaches around HIV/AIDS. For example, HM differentiated between youth who are “unemployed”, “sports-minded”, “employed”, “educated” etc. He also stressed that it was important to investigate ongoing HIV/AIDS activities to formulate a sound HIV/AIDS response in the community.

The VT’s HIV/AIDS programme focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care projects. They have introduced stage plays/ interactive drama, personal development, sports and recreational activities, forums, voluntary counselling and testing, etc. as appropriate responses to the epidemic. The programme also highlights the notion of sustainability of initiatives, so that community members could maintain these activities once outsiders/ external stakeholders had left the communities.

**5.2 Cheryl Walker (CW)**

Cheryl works as an independent specialist on land issues. Since she is not a specialist in HIV/AIDS, she stated that she would like to provide

support where she can. She said she would be happy to share her research findings on land reform and land policy issues with the stakeholders in the Ntshongweni area, as she was interested in ensuring that the land reform process was appropriate and in learning how it could be improved.

Cheryl felt that land reform was vulnerable to the impact of HIV/AIDS and that this had to be addressed. She noted that South Africans could learn from the experiences of other countries, such as Uganda. She would be visiting Kenya later in 2002 to obtain information on these issues, especially regarding orphans in relation to land access.

### **5.3 Colly Carey (CC), NDLA HIV/AIDS**

Colly expanded on the intended aims of the meeting, saying that information on community needs was required so that the NDLA could incorporate these factors into their planning to ensure the sustainability of the land reform process. Policymakers needed to be well informed about HIV/AIDS so that they would understand the implications of the policies they formulated at community level.

In order to educate the DLA management accordingly, NDLA planned an HIV/AIDS workshop (to be held on the 26 – 28 June 2002), to introduce their managers to HIV/AIDS issues and so better inform their policy decisions.

### **5.4 Moses Ndlovu (MN), Centre for HIV/AIDS Networking (HIVAN)**

MN described HIVAN's community liaison role as focusing on facilitating networks and partnerships in the fight against HIV/AIDS at community level. He explained that the Ntshongweni process involved drawing together different stakeholders to work closely with the community in the fight against the epidemic. Such collaboration amongst stakeholders was important because they could complement each other in terms of their resources and capacity to fight the epidemic.

MN explained that, for the present, HIVAN's engagement with communities consisted primarily of holding a series of community workshops. These workshops had two aims: firstly, to identify HIV/AIDS-related activities, assets and needs in communities; secondly, the forums would be used to obtain data on organisations and individuals who could appropriately partner these communities. This approach would ensure that partnerships would be formed in accordance with community-identified priorities in relation to HIV/AIDS.

He said that all stakeholders, including the community, were to be seen as equals within partnerships, and that all stakeholders had a very important role to play in the networking effort.

## 6. Way Forward

The participants felt that although a good beginning had been made by convening the meeting, in order to achieve the ultimate objectives, additional stakeholders should be invited to participate. These stakeholders were identified as:

- Interdenominational (religious) groups, church ministers, etc.
- Schools
- Taxi industry – drivers and owners.
- Virginitv testing teams
- Women's groups – e.g. funeral/burial clubs "*Omasingcwabisane*"
- Other existing community schemes and societies
- eThekwini AIDS Council (soon to be launched)
- All other youth groups, e.g. sports, local celebrities, etc.

It was agreed that another meeting should be held to include these representatives. It was also felt that all participants should be active in responding to the epidemic. HIVAN's contribution as a networking agent was welcomed and a mandate to proceed with the proposed networking forums and community audit exercise was agreed to.

The meeting was regarded as an initial step towards informing stakeholders about each other so that collaborative consultation around HIV/AIDS and land reform could take place. The meeting had brought to light a number of pre-existing initiatives to which others could contribute.

It was suggested that in future, meetings should be arranged for Sundays because most people were not available on weekdays or Saturdays.

The formation of an HIV/AIDS forum or committee was also discussed: it was suggested that the committee could be composed of two members from each organisation identified and represented in the engagement process.