



# HLOKOMELA

## AN INITIATIVE OF THE HOEDSPRUIT TRAINING TRUST



# What is Hlokomela?

Established in 2005, the Hlokomela project implements targeted health and educational development initiatives for 69 local agricultural businesses associated with the Hoedspruit Training Trust (HTT). HTT is a not-for-profit organisation that seeks to empower commercial farm workers and their families with a greater sense of responsibility for their personal health, spiritual, and educational development and to enable access to quality prevention, treatment, care and support services.

Hlokomela's purpose is to improve the health and reduce the vulnerability of migrant and permanent farm workers and their families in the Hoedspruit area to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and other chronic health conditions through improved knowledge, awareness, access to services, and healthier living conditions.

Hlokomela's key governmental and international partners include

International Organization for Migration,  
the Republic of South Africa Department of Health,  
the Limpopo Department of Health, the South African Police Service,  
the European Union, Dept. of Agriculture,  
Right to Care, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
National Development Agency and Maruleng Municipality.

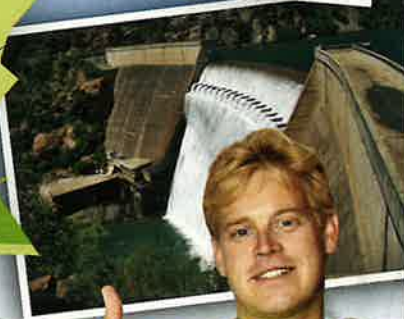
**TOGETHER AGAINST HIV AND AIDS  
LETS GET TESTED**

CALL 082 560 0248 FOR MORE INFO OR VISIT US AT [WWW.HTT.ORG.ZA](http://WWW.HTT.ORG.ZA)

HLOKOMELA F&E USAID LIMPOPO Right to Care

# Where does Hlokomela work?

Hlokomela's geographical focus is the Hoedspruit agricultural community in the Maruleng Municipality, Mopani District, Limpopo Province, South Africa, adjacent to the Kruger National Park. Hoedspruit is predominantly a fruit and game farming area with a large population of seasonal and migrant workers.



feel THE  
FREEDOM  
OF A  
WILD WATER  
CHALLENGE

# How serious is the HIV epidemic in the Hoedspruit farming community?

Research conducted in January 2008 on 10 farms in the Hoedspruit area confirmed the seriousness of the HIV epidemic in the area. It also found farm workers highly vulnerable to HIV infection. The results indicated 29% of farm workers in the community are infected with HIV, a rate of HIV prevalence which is considerably higher than that of the general population in Limpopo Province. The study found young farm workers and female farm workers, especially unmarried women, young women, and women who live away from the farms on which they work, are especially vulnerable to HIV infection. Moreover, 60% of all employees and 53% of HIV positive employees do not know their HIV status, while a high proportion of employees report never using a condom. This research builds on earlier studies that also revealed alarming levels of unsafe sexual behaviour among farm workers.

Refer to [www.iom.org.za](http://www.iom.org.za) and [www.htt.org.za](http://www.htt.org.za) for more details.

## Overall HIV Prevalence



# The challenge to commercial farming

The agricultural sector provides 11% of South Africa's formal employment, as well as 27% of informal employment - but despite this the industry's response to HIV and AIDS has been slow and inadequate compared to the scale of the problem.

Consequently the following are evident:

1. Increased absenteeism:
  - Due to workers' illness
  - To attend ill friends and family
  - To attend funerals of friends and family
  - To take care of orphaned children.
2. Reduced productivity, which impacts on profitability return on investment and increases stress in the workplace.
3. Loss of critical skills and trained labour.
4. Increasing labour costs, e.g. training new staff, health care, funeral costs.
5. Reduced supply of local labour, resulting in the dependence on migrant labour and external labour recruitment services



# Equitable solution

Hlokomela's partnership with commercial farms in the Hoedspruit area is not only a humanitarian response to an unfolding human tragedy. It also makes sound business sense. A study conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) calculated and compared the costs of operating HIV education, counselling and testing, and staff time spent on the programme with the costs of HIV and AIDS to the company - including employee turnover, training new staff, loss of productivity, absenteeism and funeral costs. The report found workplace HIV and AIDS programmes reduced employee absenteeism, turnover rates and loss of productivity, as well as assisting employees to cope with discrimination and understand their vulnerability to infection. Six of the seven companies showed net benefits for their HIV and AIDS programmes, amounting to an average of \$47 per employee in 2006.

With sensible, informed workplace HIV and AIDS policies and programmes, appropriate training interventions, and the roll out of prevention and treatment programmes, a more productive agricultural industry and enhanced rural socio-economic development are possible.



# Whom does Hlokomela benefit?

Farms in the focus area usually employ only about 10-50 permanent workers but a large number of seasonal workers are employed during the picking season. Many of these seasonal workers are migrants from other areas of South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere in Southern Africa. Hlokomela currently provides services to workers and their families on 69 farms in the Hoedspruit community, including a number of employees on commercial game reserves in the area adjacent to the Kruger National Park and elsewhere in the region. An estimated 10,000 farm workers and their families benefit directly from Hlokomela's services. Each month, Hlokomela helps approximately 400 people access voluntary HIV counselling and testing (HCT) services. Our corps of empowered Change Agents, or Nompilos, works face to face with farm workers to address the deep-rooted social and cultural barriers to behaviour change and to empower them with accurate information and knowledge about the choices available to them for healthier lives. Hlokomela also helps 500 people living with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy (ART). It is worth noting that of all the workers from the participating farms who have been tested for HIV, more than 60% have tested in the short time Hlokomela has been offering HCT outreach services. Hlokomela's public awareness campaigns provide information about HIV and AIDS to the entire community. Most significantly, since Hlokomela introduced its prevention of mother to child transmission service, no HIV positive babies have been born to pregnant women on ART at the Bavaria, Hlokomela and Phelwana clinics.



# 7 What does Hlokomela do?

Hlokomela seeks to contribute to the reduction of HIV prevalence and the impact of AIDS among commercial farm workers and their families through an integrated programme of prevention, treatment and care:

- Working with farm management to assist in developing a healthier work environment, and to develop and implement workplace wellness policies and programmes that include HIV and AIDS and other life-threatening conditions;
- Providing Primary Health Care by training and mentoring farm workers as caregivers (Nompilos);
- Sensitizing, training, and mentoring male role models with the aim of addressing issues such as gender based violence, transactional sex, and poor health-seeking behaviour in men;
- Developing and implementing an integrated social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) programme. This includes peer communication (face-to-face dialogue between Nompilos and farm workers), peer education and the participatory development of local communication tools such as billboards, pamphlets, newspaper articles, murals and other materials. The aim is to build individual and collective esteem and create an supportive environment of caring that enables individuals to reduce high-risk behaviour and lead healthier lives;
- Organising and implementing recreational programmes to increase social participation and social cohesion and improve the quality of farm workers' lives;
- Establishing and running wellness clinics to provide information, condoms, and health care services and referrals, including VCT and ART, to farm workers and their families;
- Improving the nutrition of sick workers by providing them with food grown in a community vegetable and herb garden; and
- Building partnerships with public and private entities to build capacity, attract resources, improve access to services and enhance sustainability.





- An independent study found the overwhelming majority of farm workers trust the confidentiality of the services offered through the Hlokomela project.
- In a competition held on the local Thobela FM radio station, listeners chose Hlokomela as the project making the most difference in their community.
- Hlokomela received a cash contribution from Shoprite/Checkers as Community Builder in 2007.
- Hlokomela received the prestigious Silver Impumelelo Innovation Award in 2008, and Star award in 2010, national awards granted by South Africa's Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust to recognise innovations in government and public-private partnerships, which enhance the quality of life of poor communities and address key developmental issues of national concern. Maruleng Municipality nominated Hlokomela as the best Non-Profit Organisation in the Mopani district. Forty four organizations were nominated and on the 22nd August 2008 Hlokomela brought "The Best Non-Profit Organisation" award back to Hoedspruit.
- Christine du Preez, director of Hlokomela, was nominated and selected as a finalist in the individual category of "The Southern Africa Trust and Mail and Guardian 2008 Drivers of Change - Investing in the Future" awards.
- In July 2009 Hlokomela received a cash award from the Mopani District Executive Mayor Charity Cup 2008.

Hlokomela was recognized by the Mail & Guardian "Investing the Future" awards selection committee with the 2009 "Investing in Life" award for its holistic innovative approach to medical and social service delivery for farm workers, migrants and their families in the greater Hoedspruit community.

In addition to receiving recognition in South Africa, Hlokomela has accepted invitations to present at local and international forums where we are able to fly the flag for the Hoedspruit farming community.

At the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City from 3-8 August 2008, Hlokomela was able to showcase its service delivery model. The presentation raised awareness about the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Limpopo and highlighted how our partnership with the commercial farming sector is helping to make a real difference to the lives of the people of Maruleng.

Hlokomela participated in the 2010 International Aids Conference in Vienna with the generous financial support of its member farms and the Hoedspruit community.

Hlokomela gave a poster presentation, "The Impact of Nutritional Supplements on Antiretroviral Treatment of Patients", at the 4th Annual South Africa Aids Conference in Durban, South Africa, April 2008.

Hlokomela gave a poster presentation, "Caring for Farm Workers' Children in Hoedspruit", at the 1st Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Conference in Africa, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 2010.

## What are Hlokomela's new activities?

The community garden at Bavaria Estate is utilizing sustainable conservation farming methods, which ensures a certain level of local food security. The vegetables produced in the garden are used to prepare food parcels for HIV-positive farm workers who have been identified as requiring nutrition supplements. Surplus vegetables are sold at a food stall near the farm and at the local Spar, Pick and Pay supermarkets and game lodges in the Hoedspruit area. The revenue generated is used to improve the garden's facilities, and purchase drip irrigation supplies, seeds and seedlings.

Hlokomela Community Garden Projects have continued to expand both in size and in service delivery. The programme - supported by grants from the National Development Agency (NDA) - has included the training of 40 community members in conservation farming methods ("Farming God's Way"), and the establishment in 2008 of the Fresh Herb Garden as an income generating initiative to enhance growth and sustainability.



**HLOKOMELA  
HERB GARDEN**

## What is Hlokomela's dream?

In addition to continually improving our services and making a real impact in preventing HIV and fostering wellness in the farming community, Hlokomela wants to establish a hospice/step down facility to offer a programme of specialised home based palliative care to terminally ill patients and support to their families. We would like to provide this care and support to persons in the last phases of incurable disease, making sure their lives remain as meaningful and comfortable as possible.

# Hlokomela's Gingirikani success story

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Hlokomela's Gingirikani Focus Groups have been a real success story in 2010. The name Gingirikani is a Xitsonga name that means "Working with more effort". The Gingirikani comprise volunteer farm workers and range in size from 4 members to 10 members. Gingirikani were first established in 2009 and there are now 36 Gingirikani groups on the farms. They work hand in hand with the Nompilos to disseminate information on health – HIV and other chronic illnesses - as well as to facilitate dialogue around the social and cultural drivers of HIV - issues such as gender identity, intimate partner violence and multiple partnerships – based on the theme and topic for the month. They also help with the organisation of recreational and cultural activities on the farms.

The Gingirikani have helped Hlokomela to reach out to many more people on the farms, enable many more people to participate directly in Hlokomela's programmes and provide valuable support and back-up to the Nompilos.

## Updated Clinical figures for 2010

- 255 000 male condoms distributed in a year
- 23 000 female condoms distributed in a year
- 2500 clients provided with HIV, counsel and testing (HCT) in a year
- 500 farm workers on Anti Retroviral treatment (ARV)
- 100 TB clients referred for treatment.
- 10 babies of farm workers born HIV negative, due to PMTCT intervention

## Follow us on Facebook

Hlokomela has more than 1 600 fans on our Facebook page. You too can become a "Fan". If you are part of the social networking world why not register your support for Hlokomela by joining our Facebook page. By becoming a fan of Hlokomela, you will receive updates in your news feed about what we are up to and you can join our discussion page and share your views with others. If you have a Facebook account already, it couldn't be easier – just search for the name Hlokomela. If you don't have a Facebook account already, don't worry - just use this link:  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hlokomela>

## Hlokomela in the Public Space

Hlokomela keeps a vibrant face in the public space  
Hlokomela has updated its billboard in the centre of Hoedspruit with a strong message from the Hlokomela family, and the farm workers it works with: No matter your age or race, you have to test regularly for HIV/AIDS. You may think that you lead a safe lifestyle and that you will never be at risk, but how certain can you be of the quality of choices other people in your life make from day to day? Are they safe? Take responsibility for your own life and the ones you love. Get tested for HIV today.



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### What the farming community has to say about Hlokomela

#### Local Government, Ward Councilor:

"The farm workers have been neglected for some times. There are many events such recreational activities such as soccer and netball, campaigns such as accessing identifications documents and birth certificates, HIV and AIDS awarenesses for farm workers to live positively, organised by Hlokomela. This has led to farm workers to think and live positively. Farm workers have developed, are matured and interacting very well with one another."

#### Farm Worker:

"My life of having lots of boyfriends for money and other materials has changed because I see it was laziness to look for a job to sustain you. Selling your body so that one can give you money at the month end is not a good thing. I dumped my boyfriend and started to see that I have to work for myself and get that what I wanted from the boyfriend on my own. I can do the things boyfriends were doing for me, I no longer wait for a boyfriend to take me to KFC whenever I feel like having it. I do tell myself that I must eat and enjoy it because no boyfriend is taking me there but myself."

#### Nompilo (Change Agent):

"Hlokomela came to the farm and I was chosen to be a CA. My life changed because I did not know my status and to condomise, I only heard about that. I joined Hlokomela and knew about testing and to condomise and was not scared anymore. It was important to me because I had to learn and teach others as well. I was scared because I have been practicing unsafe sex without testing, if I test and find that I was HIV positive, I then learned from Hlokomela that you can live a positive life when you condomise and take treatment and I was no more scared. Doing HIV tests now is like pap to me, I eat pap all the time and even the condom is nice."

#### Nompilo (Change Agent):

"My life changed when I listened to the advices on how to behave on our social life like the fact that when you are a person you should have one love to avoid collecting STIS. My most significant change was on my partner because he did not want to understand issues concerning Hlokomela and he did not care about that. But since we went to the municipality on the 27th of November 2009, he have learned and started to understand. I mean issues like STI, many sexual partners and condom use, he used to go around a lot but after that he understood and changed to live a better life. I think I am making a different on the farm because people are changing; they just need time with you for outreaches."

#### Department of Health and Social Development:

"The most significant change I have seen is the positive impact the organisation has in the region in the change of HIV and AIDS. It has been innovative and creative in dealing with HIV and AIDS. This is the first of its kind. It deals directly with health and social problems that are facing farm workers. It deals with life of people who are producers of food and feeding the nation. Farm workers are the community that is often marginalised and the health and social facilities are not adequate enough to address problems they have. The organisation has penetrated down to farm and reaching magnitude of farm workers. This has also impacted in good relationship of farmer and farm workers. The government cannot do this kind of work the organisation is running."



A Project of the Hoedspruit Training Trust  
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