

# HLOKOMELA

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2014

# WHO WE ARE

Hlokomela was established ten years ago in response to research findings that highlighted the need for health care among farm workers in the greater Hoedspruit area. Guided by ongoing research and development, Hlokomela remains a prominent and respected role player in the health and well-being of a significant portion of the local community, reaching about 30 000 people annually (direct and indirect beneficiaries).

In our focus on farm workers, we include migrant workers and have recently extended our efforts to reach a growing sex worker market in our area. We value an inclusive approach and strive to have all our stakeholders shape and share a common vision for a healthy farming community.

# AREA WE WORK IN

We do most of our work in the greater Hoedspruit area, a major centre of the Maruleng Municipality, which is situated in the Mopani District of the Limpopo Province.

Maruleng nestles in the north-eastern parts of South Africa, at the heart of the Kruger to Canyon Biosphere and bordering the central region of the Kruger National Park.

Tourism, government services and farming are key to the economic activities in the area. The farming sector supports a significant section of the local population of seasonal and migrant workers.

# OUR VISION

To support farming communities towards stable and informed family units empowered to take responsibility for health, spiritual and educational issues and improve their quality of life.

# OUR MISSION

To empower farm workers and communities from the Kruger to Canyons Area with respect to health, spiritual and educational issues.





## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE TRUST

As we are celebrating our "Ten Years of Caring", it is opportune to reflect on how far we have come: In 2005 HLOKOMELA had two staff members. Today we have 45 in our employment. In the beginning we talked about 2000 beneficiaries, and today, a decade later, 30000!

This can be attributed to team work. The key characteristics of The Hlokomela Team, inclusive of their funding partners, are being mutually supportive, innovative and believing in the organisation's vision.

Most of all, the successes of the organisation can be attributed to the quality of the leadership that Christine du Preez, our director has. Her vision, persistence and the ability to inspire others keep us moving forward. We salute you, Christine.

The Hoedspruit Training Trust's Board is grateful to every person, from our workers' families to the workers themselves, the Wellness Clinic clients, the employers, the funders, the sex workers and stakeholders to staff for their demonstration of caring. It feels good to celebrate ten years of caring!



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's almost 10 years since we first opened our doors.

From June 2005 to December 2014 - it's been an awesome journey.

I would like to believe we have added some richness to many lives by easing physical, and sometimes emotional, burdens. I know we have met many strong, incredibly brave and remarkably giving people on our way - people who have become friends, rather than trustees, clients, victims, peers, staff and beneficiaries.

I am grateful for being part of a team that dedicates its time with so much commitment and devotion.

It's been a journey during which we have met many of our goals, came across some unexpected challenges and built many bridges. We have endured some daunting obstacles and absorbed valuable lessons to guide our way.

The unforeseen twists and turns, as well as successes and moments of pure joy have steered our pledge to our vision.

My deepest thanks to all who have brought Hlokomela to where we can celebrate 10 memorable years in the Hoedspruit community. I hope we keep our eyes on the horizon as we begin our second decade of service.

Thank you for being part of the Hlokomela journey.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

|               |                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Chairperson : | Marie-Tinka Uys                |
| Ex official:  | Christine du Preez             |
| Secretary:    | Vicky-Lohanzi Jansen van Vuren |
| Deputy chair: | Ernest Shai                    |
| Board Member: | Doris Malepe                   |

## OUR TEAM

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Programme Director:   | Christine du Preez   |
| Programme Manager:    | Antoinette Ngwenya   |
| Financial Managers:   | Marian Viljoen<br>Albert Matumbu   |
| Human Resource:       | Sphiwe Mazibuko  |
| HTA Manager:          | Teenage Rapatsa  |
| Clinic Manager:       | Lea Swart  |
| Medical Officers:     | Dr Louw du Toit<br>Dr Mark Blair   |
| Professional Nurses:  | Glenda van Wyk<br>Nomsa Mashile  |
| Pharmacy Assistant    | Emmanuel Mokati  |
| HBC Coordinator       | Daphney Mhaleni  |
| Coordinator:          | Candy Nkgogo   |
| Site Coordinators:    | Maria Mthomboti<br>Constance Rahlane   |
| HTA Coordinator:      | Innocent Sibuyi  |
| Clinic Data Capturer: | Sindy Nkuna  |
| Nursing Assistants:   | Merriam Ndlovu<br>Rachel Malapane<br>Modern Mnisi  |
| ART Supporter:        | Refah Mogakane   |
| Lay Counselors:       | Lucy Maile<br>Junior Mogakane<br>Doris Malepe<br>Constance Ngobeni<br>Lunghi Mathebula   |
| Drivers:              | Brilliant Ndlovu<br>Thapelo Namane   |
| General Assistants:   | Gift Nyambe<br>Winnie Serage   |
| HCT Data Capturer:    | Chris Sebuye   |
| HCT Driver:           | Lebogang Sambo   |
| HCT LAY Counselors:   | Bheki Malomola<br>Tinah Mashego<br>Julie Malope<br>Faith Mawela<br>Euginia Modise<br>Mangena Joyce                                 |
| Garden Assistants:    | Amina Nkgogo<br>Tebogo Modipane<br>Maria Sekgobela<br>Mpho Malatjie<br>Lawrence Malapane<br>Betty Makhubela<br>Elizabeth Sekgobela |



# WHAT WE DO

- Work with employers and management to develop a healthier work environment and to develop and implement work place HIV and Aids policies and programmes;
- Establish and run wellness clinics to provide HIV counselling and testing, anti-retroviral treatment, condoms, health care services and referrals, as well as health information;
- Provide primary health care through training, empowering and mentoring workers as care givers (Nompilos);
- Develop and implement an integrated social change communication programme to reduce high risk behaviour, using focus and support groups and media, such as billboards, pamphlets and promotional material;
- Provide peer education;
- Sensitise, train and mentor male role models to address issues such as gender-based violence, transactional sex and reluctance to seek health advice;
- Cultivate and sell fresh herbs, run a charity shop and host events for non-restricted income generation;
- Produce compost and cultivate fresh vegetables at our community garden, that are supplied to local restaurants, lodges, food outlets, the community and our clinic clients.
- Establish a wellness programme providing health services to mining-sector employees, sex workers, truckers and general community members at the roadside from Phalaborwa on the R40 towards Hoedspruit, Acornhoek, Bushbuckridge and Hazzyview.



# WHO WE SERVE

- Farm workers, including seasonal workers, in the Kruger to Canyons Area.
- Migrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and other South African provinces, notably Mpumalanga, Gauteng and the Free State.
- Sex workers in the Hoedspruit, Acornhoek , Bushbuckridge and Hazyview area.
- Farm owners and managers in the Kruger to Canyons Area.
- Our partners in government, the Maruleng Municipality, Mopani District and Limpopo Department of Health and Department of Agriculture, Limpopo.
- Our donors and funders, PEPFAR, USAID, IOM, ANOVA Health Institute, Global Fund through Right to Care and NACOSA /SWEAT, Farmers and Discovery fund.
- Our staff and board of trustees.





# THE PROGRAMME

## HEALTH CARE ACCESS

### CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Hlokomela facilitates the development and implementation of work place policies for HIV and Aids. At present, we assist 70 enterprises, 55 small and 15 large, to set out a management and worker endorsed policy that also includes a peer education programme.

Activities may include signing a memorandum of co-operation, setting up HIV/Aids committees, HIV counselling and testing (HCT) and social communication initiatives to reduce HIV transmission. During the year under review, Hlokomela reached about 15 071 people at their work place.

### WE FACILITATE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES, PROGRAMMES AND PRODUCTS

Hlokomela runs wellness clinics on a rotational basis at Richmond, Bavaria, Hlokomela, Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Ngala, Waterside, Phelwana, Singita Lebombo, Thornybush, The South African Wildlife College and Beretta School. A doctor and professional nurse provide health care services and referrals, information and condoms at the wellness clinics. In addition, Hlokomela provides HCT on farms to accommodate workers who cannot visit the clinics. In October 2014, Hlokomela acquired four testing booths to conduct confidential HCT on farms.

### During the year under review Hlokomela had:

**16 966** clients provided with HCT

**886** patients on ARVs

**1 280** HIV clients

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Clients discuss health related subjects during support group meetings held at the wellness clinics. Issues under the spotlight include tuberculosis, malaria and medical male circumcision services. In March, 45 support group members joined Hlokomela staff on an outing to Satara Camp in the Kruger National Park.

The Hoedspruit Clinic has teamed with Hlokomela to establish a support group for mothers. The group is assisted by a nurse and lay councillor. In 2014, change agents reached 18 762 people through one-on-one or small group discussions.





## HOME BASED CARE

Care-givers, also known as Nompilos and change agents, attend to patients on farms. During the year under review, 47 Nompilos Nompilos took care of 88 patients. Interventions range from primary health care to disseminating social and educational information.

Many of the patients are on ARV and TB treatment. During the year, care workers referred 255 individuals to hospitals through the clinic.

## CONDOM DISPENSERS

Hlokomela maintains condom dispensers at 82 locations, including high transmission areas such as truck shops, shebeens, taxi ranks, the hawkers' market, hotels and lodges. During the year under review, we distributed 1 552 400 male and 2 000 female condoms. The shortage in female condom supply is a matter of concern.

## SEX WORKER EDUCATION

In April, Hlokomela established two sites on the R40 to educate an increasing number of sex workers. The number of sex workers on this route increased dramatically since a regular fleet of 400 trucks a day started trucking magnetite from Phalaborwa to Maputo for export to China.

The sites, one in Bushbuckridge and one in Hoedspruit, have 10 peer motivators each. The programme aims to empower sex workers with skills that will enhance their capacity to speak for themselves, to address human rights concerns, to make informed choices and provide opportunities for them to test for HIV and Aids.

During the year, peer group motivators reached 2 790 sex workers at the two sites.



# CHANGE COMMUNICATION

## DIALOGUE THROUGH FOCUS GROUPS AND DAILY DISCUSSIONS

During the year under review, change agents facilitated creative discussions in which 7 602 people took part. Gender dynamics are often highlighted in these dialogues. The dialogues explore quarterly themes and monthly topics during lively sessions where participants are encouraged to discuss relationships and interactions, and social and cultural issues that affect their health. The sessions are embedded in ongoing efforts to build trust and confidence to deal with the impact of the issues at hand.

### The quarterly themes and monthly topics were:

#### It will be sweeter if we condomise (theme)

- Don't fall into the trap
- We can stop TB in Maruleng

#### Defend your rights (theme)

- Know your rights and responsibilities
- Do not use your culture as an excuse
- Proudly circumcised

#### End gender based violence (theme)

- Speak out
- Become a partner for change
- We can end gender inequality in Hoedspruit



## OUTREACHES

During the year, Hlokomela reached more than 171 538 farm workers and migrants through various outreach activities that included awareness campaigns and regular health information sessions on farms. Topics ranged from hygiene, TB, malaria, cancer, nutrition and condom use to sexually transmitted diseases, migration rights and community capacity growth. We link appropriate activities with special days, such as World TB day, worldwide candle light memorial and World Aids Day.

## MEDIA

### INFORMATION MATERIAL

During the year we distributed 18 405 pamphlets at events and activities on the farms. We source material from providers like Soul City that encourages learning on the prevention of mother to child transmission, soul sex, alcohol abuse, medical male circumcision and healthy relationships.

### PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL AND OTHER MEDIA

We shared motivational messages in Xitsonga, Sipedu and English on 1200 shopping bags that were handed out since March.

T-shirts with messages about condom use, were also distributed to create awareness on the importance of practicing safe sex.

### PUBLICITY

The local newspaper, Kruger2Canyon News remains a valued supporter of Hlokomela and publishes regular articles about the organisation, its events, people and achievements. On average, the paper carries about four Hlokomela stories per quarter.

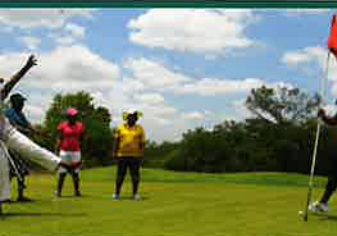




## SPECIAL EVENTS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

During the year under review, we organised a number of special events to mark issues of interest, also allowing Hlokomela stakeholders to get to know each other in a different setting than usual. These include:

- Condom and STI week
- Malaria awareness
- Valentine's Day celebration
- Candle Light memorial
- World Aids Day, in partnership with Mopani District Department of Health
- Migration Day at the Redelinhguys and Abram Joubert farms on December 12 and 21 respectively.
- Annual Awards: The seventh annual Nompilo awards ceremony took place at the Blyde Wildlife Estate Clubhouse with more than 105 Nompilos sharing anecdotes of happenings during the year. Elizabeth Mathebula took the honours, while 10 other Nompilos received certificates of recognition.
- School Health Week: Hlokomela facilitated an outreach to schools during the School Health Week in March. Topics covered included the importance of health care, sex education, interpersonal and communication skills, as well as values like respect and tolerance.
- Hlokomela Women's Golf Day was held at Drakensig Golf Course. This annual event is held to highlight health issues like TB and breast cancer. Farmworkers, Hlokomela staff and Drakensig Golf Club lady golfers combine for the nine-hole fun day.
- A cycling race over 10km and 30km was held at Bavaria Fruit Estate farm in January in which farm workers and owners took part.













## CHANGE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS

Every month, change agents meet to discuss challenges and progress of the wellness programme. During these discussions, feedback on the quarterly and monthly dialogues and group discussions is reviewed and integrated to keep our activities relevant and effective. Also on the agenda are analyses of formal reporting tools like patient records, referrals, and home based and health promotion tally forms.

**Migration:** Peer motivators and International Organisation of Migration (IOM) officers attended workshops with IOM to broaden their understanding of human trafficking and migration. Hlokomela staff attend regular workshops with IOM to review progress on the Ripfumelo programme.

**Department of Health workshops:** Change agents and staff attend regular workshops organised by the Department of Health on programmes for pregnant women and mothers, conflict management, reporting tools, mental health and other organisational and health issues.

**Gender and migration:** Hlokomela facilitates workshops on gender and migration to empower migrants and local farmworkers about access to health services, human rights and other support services. Hlokomela extends its gender empowerment programmes to the youth through sessions where issues such as bullying, gender based violence, alcohol abuse and poor health are discussed.

**Community capacity enhancement:** HTT coordinators attended community capacity enhancement training provided by Project Literacy in Pretoria.



## MEETINGS AND VISITS

On-going contact and updates are maintained with the Department of Health on district and provincial levels through forum participation, regular meetings and visits. Many of the visits focus on evaluation and assessment to ensure all partners remain on the same wavelength. At a local level, Hlokomela is represented on the clinic committee to ensure coordination.

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

Hlokomela supports community savings groups (stokfels) where group members pay shares to the group, and one member collects a lump sum a month. Many members have started small businesses or built houses through their stokfel memberships. To date, seven savings schemes have been established on different farms.

## SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIUMS

The director and a trustee attended the 20th international Aids conference, which took place in Melbourne, Australia.



# ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

### FUNDERS

Hlokomela receives funding and technical support from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), as well as the Government's local, district and provincial offices of the Department of Health. The Department of Health honours a service level agreement with Hlokomela for home based care, high transmission area services and service delivery. Hlokomela aims for an integrated relationship with all levels of government. At a district level, regular contact, workshops and campaigns ensure that programmes like condom distribution, HCT, organisational governance and management are in line with the partnership goals.

### NEW PARTNERSHIP

We established a new partnership with Global Health Fellow, Department of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Reproductive Sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai, New York. The focus of activities will be on screening for cervical cancer for sex workers, farm workers and migrants. Training and implementation will start in the new financial year.

### COMMUNITY

We value and build our relationship with the local community through regular meetings and joint campaigns with the Kruger2Canyon network, the Hoedspruit Air Force Base, NGO partners and the Maruleng Municipality.

### HLOKOMELA STAFF

Our staff drive our success. We have a committed team of 45 people, and strive to empower them through appropriate training programmes, workshops, seminars, networking and enabling peer contact.

Our annual general meeting (AGM), at the beginning of November, featured presentations of progress reports for all Hlokomela activities and new programmes like Sex Workers and LGBTI. Farmers and government sector department officials from Labour and Health attended.





Outcomes: Hlokomela will continue to promote HCT on commercial farms and surrounding communities to increase the uptake of HCT and to increase the early initiation of treatment, care and support.

Antoinette Ngwenya scooped our EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR award for 2014.

## **FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING**

HTT relies mainly on donor funding and governmental assistance to keep our doors open. In addition, Hlokomela runs income generating activities to supplement our income. Detailed audited financial statements are available on request.

### **THE GLOBAL FUND**

The HTT is a service provider secured by Right to Care (RTC) to do HIV counselling and testing and TB screening supported by a grant from the Switzerland based Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Phase two of the performance based grant ended on 30/09/2014. This grant is based on performing 15 000 HCTs per annum.

### **DISCOVERY FUND**

This is a multi-award grant towards the running cost of Hlokomela from 01/06/2012 until 31/05/2015. Hlokomela is in stage two of this award which will end at the end of May 2015. Our director, Christine du Preez and program manager Antoinette Ngwenya were selected to participate in "Fit to Lead" Leadership Development Training which was presented by Discovery Fund.

### **NATIONAL LOTTERY DISTRIBUTION FUND**

Funding to cover operational cost and development of a compost project and community garden was extended until depletion of funds in 2014.





## **GOVERNMENT**

Hlokomela, a sub-recipient under the fund management of Ndlovu Medical Trust, acts as a service provider for the Limpopo Provincial Department of Health's HIV/ Aids and tuberculosis programmes. Funding is provided by Government to cover operational costs for Hlokomela wellness clinics in the Kruger to Canyons area of operation. This contract started on 01/04/2014 and will run to 31/03/2016.

The Department of Health and Social Development in the Mopani District granted Hlokomela funding on a three year basis. Contracts are subject to annual assessment and renewal, based on the discretion of Government and include a stipend for community home-based care givers, service delivery and paying laboratory tests. Contract term: 01/04/2013 - 31/03/2015

Funding from the Limpopo Department of Health and Social Development was also granted to Hlokomela on a three year basis. Contracts are subject to annual assessment and renewal based on discretion of Government. This funding includes a stipend for high transmission area based peer educators and service delivery cost, as well as condom distributor agents. Hlokomela is a major condom distributor for the Department of Health and Social Development (HTA) in Limpopo Province. We deliver condoms to distribution points in the whole Maruleng Municipal area. Contract Term: 01/04/2013 - 31/03/2015.

## **INCOME GENERATING VENTURES**

### **HLOKOMELA HERB GARDEN CO.**

The Hlokomela Herb Garden was established in 2008. It received funding from the National Development Agency (NDA) in 2009 for development and growth towards self-sustainability.

Since August 2012, under the management of Angie Rowles, the Herb Garden has grown towards self-sustainability and has reached a remarkable monthly turnover of R50 000.00 plus, in a year and six months.

Angie Rowles was awarded ENTREPRENEUR FARMER OF THE YEAR, Maruleng, by the Department of Agriculture, while general assistant, Amino Nkgogo, won BEST FEMALE FARM WORKER OF THE YEAR award

### **HLOKOMELA HOSPICE HAVEN/ CHARITY SHOP**

The Hlokomela Hospice Haven, better known as The Charity Shop is in its fourth year and settled well into its new premises in 2013. The shop mainly sells second hand clothes donated by the community. Clothes not sold are distributed to the needy through our wellness clinics in the Kruger to Canyons area. It also serves as a distribution point in town, where lodges and other customers collect their herb orders from our Hlokomela Herb Garden.



## **COMPOST/COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT**

The first Hlokomela community garden was established in 2005. The compost and community garden project started in October 2012 with seed funding from the NLDTF.

The community garden is situated on a portion of land made available by Bavaria Fruit Estate. Though the funding was for the compost project, it was evident that there was a greater need to cultivate fresh vegetables in the community. The focus shifted towards the development of a community garden with self-sustainability a primary concern.

## **HLOKOMELA FOOD BANK**

The Hlokomela Community Garden will also support the Hlokomela Food Bank. The Hlokomela Wellness Clinic is a distribution point for Hlokomela Food Bank parcels, which are distributed to farm workers. Local farmers also donate fresh fruit and vegetables to supplement shortfalls. This contributes greatly towards our nutrition support system for farmworkers and patients from our wellness clinics.

## **EVENTS**

Hlokomela's annual Herb Bush Party has become a well-supported greater Hoedspruit calendar fixture. This event is held annually and supported by most of our local customers which include lodges, restaurants and food outlets in the Kruger to Canyons area.

This year nine lodges and restaurants participated by creating finger foods using our fresh herbs. Sponsors include 11 wine producers and an Amarula sponsor. All together 200 tickets were sold and more than R75 000 was raised during this event, that was hosted by Thornybush Lodge.



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE CHANGE AGENTS' EXPERIENCES

## KEEPING TRACK OF MEDICATION BY CONSTANCE RAHLANE

Three years ago Sinah Ndlovu from Chavalagaza in Acornhoek was bed ridden, but today she looks much healthier - like an athlete, all thanks to Hlokomela's Nompilo Dayina Morema and Hlokomela staff's intervention in her life.

Dayina, 52, who has been a Nompilo since 2010 and a farm worker for a decade, said that Sinah, a farm worker and suffering mental health problems, used to be very aggressive towards Hlokomela staff when visiting her. "She would even throw stones at them, refusing to test for HIV claiming that she has been," Dayina explained.

However, while Sinah worked at Abram Boerdarg farm, her sickness caught up with her and she had to stop working in 2011. She was also pregnant at the time. She came back in October 2014. "She approached me as a Nompilo telling me that she had HIV and also her daughter (who is now three). She showed me her pills and after consulting with another Nompilo, I found she was not taking the medicine because there were so many," Dayina explained.

The Nompilos took the medicine to Sister Lea Swart at the Hlokomela Clinic, who confirmed that Sinah was not taking her medicine as required. "Sister Lea took all her medicine and started her on new medicine. She also taught me how to take them. Ever since then, I make sure that Sinah and her daughter do not skip even a single tablet," she said. She ensures this by going to Sinah's room five minutes before her time of drinking medicine and gives her the tablets. "She is very cooperative now and not as aggressive as before. I also make sure that I remind her of the date of collecting her medicine. She asked for a referral from her old clinic, because it was very far and she spent a lot of money to go there. Now she gets the medication at Hlokomela clinic, a walk of a few kilometres."

Diyina said Sinah's first born son was also taught how to use the medicine, for when Diyana is on her weekend off or at holidays.

"She has been very good so far, all thanks to Hlokomela and their clinic staff. If it was not for Hlokomela, many people could have been dead now. I am very grateful and love my job," Dayina concluded.

The 39-year-old single mother of five, Sinah, had few words: "I hope that Hlokomela continues doing what it is doing so that my daughter and I can get help."

# SEX WORKER STORIES

BY CONSTANCE RAHLANE

Growing up as a little girl Dinah Seerane says she never dreamt of working as a sex worker. Just like any other little girl, she had a vision of having a good job and stable family one day. However dreams don't always come true, as in Dinah's case. Fast forward into 2014, from just a little girl next door, Dinah's life has turned into an unexpected path, the path which caused her to have HIV at 25 and to work as a sex worker.

She said her path used to be much dimmer before, but now thanks to Hlokomela and SWEAT her life is brighter with fewer thorns. "Sometimes I used to harass men and beg them to buy sex from me just to get money," she said. "I risked my life, because I didn't always use condoms. I would do anything to get money. I sometimes even stole from my clients, but ever since I started working at Hlokomela I no longer have unprotected sex and I know my rights as sex worker."

Dinah started working as a peer motivator since the sex workers' project began in April 2014. Her job is to teach other sex workers about a healthy lifestyle, provide them with condoms and refer them to a clinic when there is a need. She checks and reports on new sex workers and makes sure that sex workers attend risk reduction workshops, once a month.

Her life changed in 2008 when she visited her mother, who sells vegetables and snacks in Hoedspruit town. "I used to visit here during school holidays. I had a friend who is a sex worker and she used to give me money and show me things that men gave her in exchange of sex. I longed for a good life, that is how I started being a sex worker." Her friend's luxury life was not her only reason that led her to become a sex worker, being born in a family of seven and raised by a single parent, who only generates her income by selling vegetables and snacks, also contributed.

"We didn't even have a school uniform sometimes - my mother was struggling to raise us." She says. The situation forced her to leave school at grade 9.

Dinah started living in Hoedspruit in 2008 and to work as a sex worker that year. She also tested HIV positive that year. "I first tested with Hlokomela staff, who provided HCT here. I didn't believe the result and tested again at another clinic, and the result was still the same."

The mother of a five-year-old says she now thanks Hlokomela for giving her a job. With the money and lessons she is receiving her life has changed around. "I am now able to send money home for my daughter, and I am able to say no to unprotected sex because I know I am risking my life. I no longer harass clients, because I know their rights and my rights. I am monitoring my health every day," she said.

Her wish is that Hlokomela builds a clinic for sex workers and truck drivers around Hoedspruit. All in all she thanks Hlokomela for giving her a sense of belonging. Dinah Seerane is not the only sex workers who praises Hlokomela for giving her a home.



Precious Shai, 33, also a sex worker and peer motivator, can't thank Hlokomela enough for changing her life around. Just like Dinah, Precious says poverty led her to sell her body for money at the age of eighteen in 1996. "My parents died in 1995 and that same year I came here looking for a work. I worked as a domestic worker for a year until my bosses moved to another town."

Their move changed everything. She didn't want to go back home and be a beggar to her nine siblings, whom, she says were not working. With not many skills to help her find other work and only a grade 8 academically, selling her body was her only option.

"It was not easy because police were very tight. We used to run every day, sometimes the police took our money and beat us, but as it was only our job we would go back on the street the same day," says the mother of an eight-year-old son.

However, she says today sex workers around Hoedspruit have good relationships, thanks to Hlokomela and other organisations. She says they are able to report bad clients. "They are used to us, and know that there are organisations that stand for us.

Although she had tested HIV positive in 2004 and started living on ARVs since 2011, she says she appreciates her life and knows that there are organisations that care for them and consider their job.

"Many sex workers appreciate our work, and volunteer to test for HIV after lessons at Hlokomela. We no longer rely on sex work for income as we are able to pay for our food and our clothes with the money we receive. We are also able to help other sex workers with information and lessons we receive from Hlokomela."

She said the sex workers project also improved her friendship with other sex workers, from Phalaborwa, Acornhoek, Gravelotte and local areas. Before they used to fight like cat and dog, but now she says they are one big family, like siblings, all thanks to SWEAT and Hlokomela. Just like Dinah, Precious also wished to see a clinic that only works with sex workers, especially at a busy location.

After our interview both sex workers disappeared into their small plastic shacks that they call a home.

Nevertheless, they say they feel honoured to have a second place to call a home, which is Hlokomela.



# HLOKOMELA HONOURS

- 2007:** Independent study finds farm workers trust confidentiality of services offered
- 2007:** Oral presentation at South African Aids Conference in Durban
- 2007:** Cash contribution from Shoprite/Checkers as Community Builder
- 2008:** Maruleng Municipality's Best Non-Profit Organisation in Mopani district
- 2008:** Christine du Preez is a finalist in The Southern African Trust and Mail and Guardian Drivers of Change Investing in the Future awards
- 2008:** Poster presentation at the 17th International Aids Conference in Mexico City
- 2008:** Poster presentation at the 4th Annual South African Aids Conference in Durban
- 2009:** Cash award from the Mopani District Executive Mayor Charity
- 2009:** Hlokomela received an award from Mail and Guardian "Investing in 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 and their families
- 2010:** Hlokomela participated in the 2010 International Aids Conference in Vienna with the generous financial support from its member farms and the Hoedspruit community
- 2010:** Silver Star Award from Impumelelo for innovations in government and public sectors
- 2011:** Board member presentation on the herb garden at the Peace Corps South Africa Health Symposium in Johannesburg
- 2012:** Denmark based television crew films an episode of a cooking series by the winner of Master Chef Denmark, using ingredients from Hlokomela Herb Garden
- 2012:** Poster presentation at the 19th International Aids Conference in Washington DC, USA.
- 2013:** The Director of Hlokomela received the award and was the winner of the SA's Most Influential Women in Civil Society Organisations and Related Services.
- 2013:** Poster at the 6th SA Annual Aids Conference in Durban
- 2014:** Director accepted as Ashoka Fellow.
- 2014:** Herb garden manager and general assistance awarded Entrepreneur and Female Farm Worker of the Year, respectively by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture





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