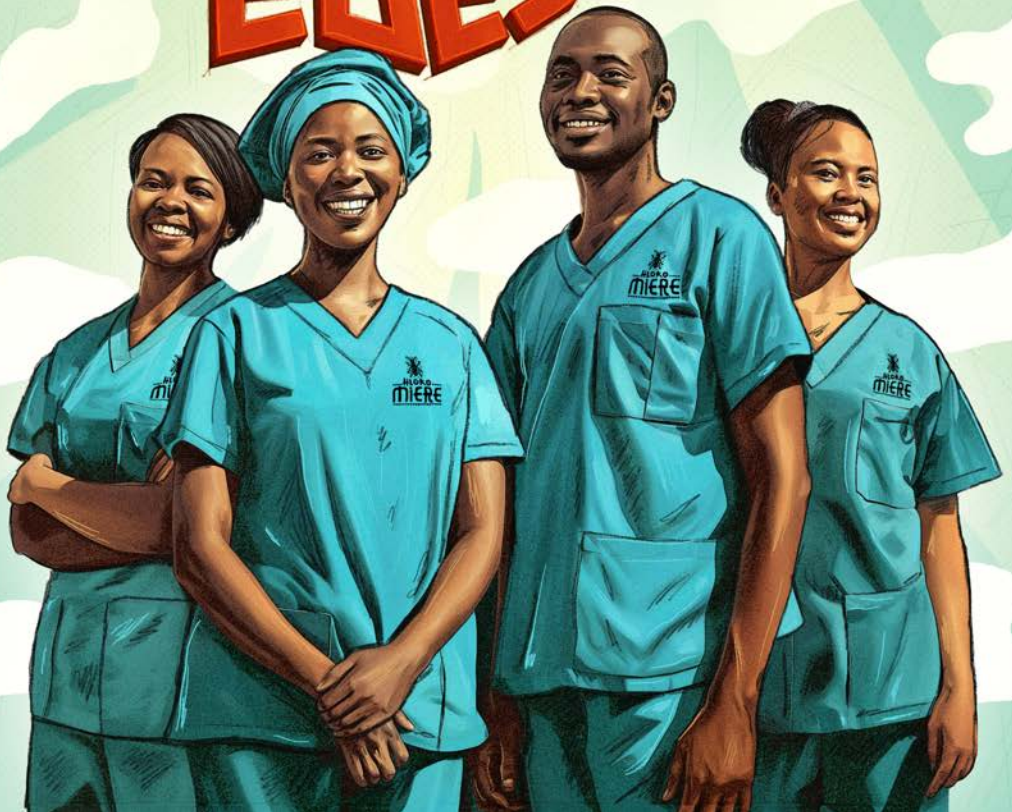


HOKOMELA

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| AFSA       | AIDS Foundation South Africa                           |
| AIDS       | Acquired Immunodeficiency Virus                        |
| ART        | Anti-Retroviral Therapy                                |
| AVI        | Australian Volunteers International                    |
| CC         | Citizen Connect  |
| COVID-19   | Corona virus disease, 2019 novel coronavirus           |
| DABLAPmeds | Central Chronic Medication Dispensing and Distribution |
| CPR        | Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation                          |
| GL         | Gracious Living Retirement Haven                       |
| GST        | Greater Stellenbosch Trust                             |
| HERD       | Hoedspruit Elephant Rehabilitation and Development     |
| HTS        | HIV Testing Services                                   |
| HIV        | Human Immunodeficiency Virus                           |
| HRA        | Human Rights & Advocacy Programme                      |
| KNP        | Kruger National Park                                   |
| MUAC       | Mid-upper arm circumference                            |
| NGO        | Non-governmental organisation                          |
| NPO        | Non-profit organisation                                |
| NIMArt     | Nurse Initiated Management of Antiretroviral therapy   |
| PEPFAR     | President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief             |
| PrEP       | Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis                               |
| PPS        | Partial Payment System                                 |
| SACLC      | South African Certified Lactation Consultant           |
| STIs       | Sexually Transmitted Infections                        |
| SyNCH      | Synchronised National Communication in Health          |
| TRE        | Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises                   |
| TB         | Tuberculosis   |



# FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE TRUST

On behalf of Hlokomela, it is my privilege to introduce our Annual Report for 2023. This report reflects our unwavering dedication to making a meaningful impact on the lives of people and communities in Maruleng District.

Over the past year, Hlokomela has worked tirelessly to address pressing health and social challenges faced by our community. Our passionate and dedicated team of healthcare professionals, volunteers, and partners collaborated to provide essential medical services, education, and support to those most in need.

Our vision—to create a culture of caring that empowers all—has been the driving force behind our successful endeavours. Despite extraordinary challenges, such as limited financial resources and poor economic outcomes in the country, Hlokomela has remained resilient and adaptable and grew stronger. Showing our commitment even in the toughest times.

Our partnerships with local communities, government departments, other NGOs, and funders have been instrumental in expanding our reach and effectiveness. Together, we have implemented sustainable solutions, strengthened systems, and empowered individuals and families to take charge of their own health and welfare.

We express heartfelt gratitude to our donors, volunteers, and staff. Their dedication, generosity, and expertise have made our accomplishments possible. We are indebted to everyone who contributed their time, resources, and knowledge to further our mission.



As we move forward, Hlokomela remains committed to providing quality, all-inclusive healthcare to everyone in the Kruger2Canyon Biosphere Region. We will continue to adapt, innovate, and collaborate to address emerging health and social challenges in our communities.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our work. Together, we can make a lasting difference and build a healthier, more resilient future for all.

DR MARIETTE SLABBERT

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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Chairperson: Dr Mariette Slabbert
- Deputy Chair: Prof John Gear
- Secretary: Vicky-Lohanzi Jansen van Vuuren
- Board member: Doris Malepe
- Board member: Dr Lindie Botha
- Board member: Tebogo Mametja
- Executive official: Christine du Preez



# FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

CHRISTINE DU PREEZ

On the day your child turns 18 they become legal adults and it means they can take more decisions. This year Hlokomela turned 18.

As Founder and Managing Director I realised it is important to be flexible and willing to let go as Hlokomela the teenager matures into an adult. The team of managers are ready to take more responsibility and make the important decisions.

We partnered with Citizen Connect and the Greater Stellenbosch Trust to take on our most ambitious volunteer project - HlokoMiere. Hlokomela is not a job creation organisation, but this project gave us the opportunity for young people at the age of 18 to be a volunteer, build their CV and gain experience in a work environment.

I want to thank Discovery Fund again for investing in Hlokomela to start the Partial Payment System. Without the initial research we would not have been able to achieve this; a sustainability project that delivers meaningful results in a tough climate. A special thank you to MJ du Preez, who was the positive, relentless drive behind this project, giving a 120% to make this work. The PPS is now another "18-year-old adult" who is still learning but has the skills to be a success.

Another new skill for the 18-year-old Hlokomela was the Tyto project. This pilot project gave us the opportunity to learn about digital health care - the future in health care in low resource settings.

Supporting an initiative by WWF South Africa, we co-developed a course for community liaison officers who work in conservation, to assist in "transforming the fence line" in the Greater Kruger area. Through Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE)<sup>®</sup> we taught them the skill to self-regulate their central nervous system to be calmer, clearer and more creative in conflict resolution while taking care of themselves.



Over the past 18 years we used this guideline: "Before you start some work, always ask yourself these questions: Why am I doing it? What will the results be? Will I be successful? Only when you think deeply and find satisfactory answers to these questions, go ahead" - Chanakya (politician known as the Indian Machiavelli). These questions remain in our thoughts as we tackle the year ahead.

# WHO WE WERE

Hlokomela was established in 2005 in response to research that highlighted a critical need for health care among farm workers and other vulnerable populations in the greater Hoedspruit area. Since then, Hlokomela has been a prominent and respected role player in the health and well-being of the local community, serving about 30 000 people annually (direct and indirect beneficiaries).

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# WHO WE BECAME

In 2023 Hlokomela celebrated 18 years of caring. We partnered with Citizen Connect and the Greater Stellenbosch Trust to take on our most ambitious volunteer project - HlokoMiere - since implementing the Nompilo project in the early years of the organisation. All the groundwork was done for expanding Hlokomela's services to the Letsitele farming community while we opened 3 new clinics in the greater Hoedspruit area, all while going digital through offering health consultations through telemedicine devices. We really took our vision to the next level through preliminary work with the rangers of Kruger National Park, to offer health care services and trauma debriefing to those working in conservation. We co-developed a course for community liaison officers who work in conservation, to assist in "transforming the fenceline," improving relationships between local people and nature reserves.





# OUR VISION

A culture of caring that empowers all.



# OUR MISSION

To provide quality, all-inclusive health care to everyone in the Kruger2Canyons Biosphere Region.



# OUR VALUES

A strong organisational culture is what makes Hlokomela work and we hold each other to our core values every day:

- Integrity and honesty
- Sense of belonging
- Respect
- Trust
- Love
- Sense of ownership
- Passion for taking care of others
- Taking pride and giving praise





\* SEX WORKER PROJECT RUNS ACROSS THE WHOLE OF THE MOPANI DISTRICT



# WHERE WE WORK

We do most of our work in the greater Hoedspruit (Maruleng Municipality) and Letsitele (Greater Tzaneen Municipality) areas, which are situated in the Mopani District, Limpopo Province. Hlokomela implements the Sex Worker Programme and Human Rights & Advocacy Programme across the entire Mopani District.

Tourism, government services and farming are key economic activities in these areas. The farming sector offers employment to a large portion of the local population of seasonal and migrant workers.



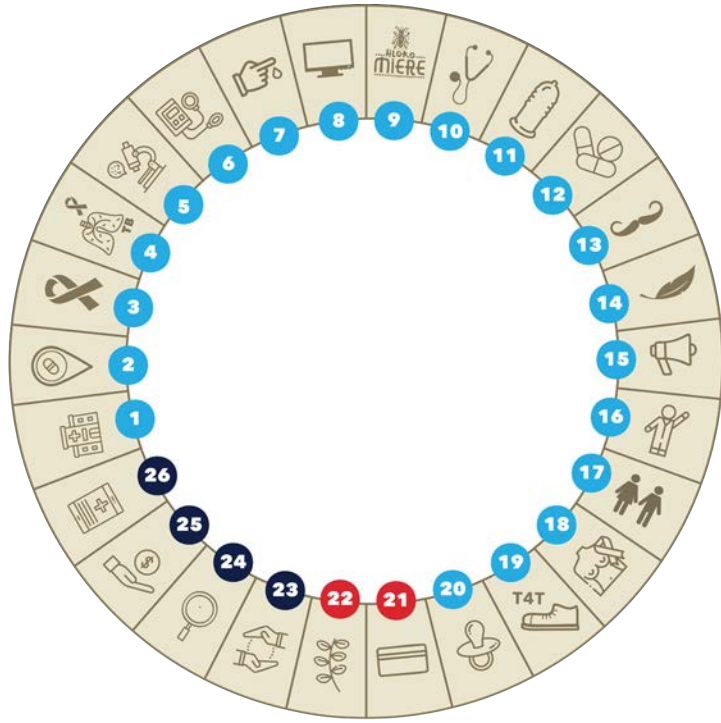
# WHO WE SERVE

- Farm workers, including seasonal workers, in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region.
- Farm owners and managers in the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region.
- Employees of local game lodges notably in the Greater Timbavati.
- Migrants from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other provinces in South Africa.
- Sex workers in the entire Mopani District of Limpopo Province.
- Mothers and babies.
- The elderly
- Community members.
- Our government partners in the Maruleng and Greater Tzaneen Municipalities, Mopani District, Limpopo Department of Health.
- Our donors and funders.
- Our staff and Board of Trustees.



# WHAT WE DO

THE WORK WE DO IS GROUPED UNDER THREE MAIN HEADINGS:



## HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

1. Health Care Services
2. DABLAP Meds
3. HIV
4. TB
5. STIs
6. Hypertension
7. Diabetes
8. Telemedicine
9. HlokoMiere
10. Tshemba volunteers
11. Condom distribution
12. Pre-exposure prophylaxis
13. Men's Health Awareness
14. Gracious Living
15. Outreach on farms
16. Human Rights & Advocacy Programme
17. Sex worker programme
18. Hlokomela Women's Clinic
19. Breast Cancer Awareness (Tekkies4Tieties)
20. Baby Clinic

## SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMMES

21. The partial payment system
22. Hlokomela Herb Garden

## OPERATIONS

23. Strategic partnerships
24. Research
25. Funding and fundraising
26. Employee Wellness Programme



# 1 HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

Our health and social care programmes offer biomedical, social and structural interventions to reduce the transmission of HIV, TB and STIs. Our services cover the continuum of care, ranging from combination prevention to treatment and retention, as well as sexual and reproductive health. Social programmes include psychosocial support and programmes to reduce gender-based violence and human rights violations.

## Specific activities:

- Working with farm management to create a healthier work environment, supported by workplace HIV policies and workplace wellness programmes;
- Providing peer education on farms (Nompilos) and in the sex worker programme (peer educators);
- Training and mentoring of caregivers recruited from the community;
- Training, and mentoring male role models to address gender based violence, transactional sex, and poor health-seeking behaviour in men;
- Promoting safer sexual behavioural through an integrated social behaviour change communication programme, using outreach, billboards and pamphlets;
- Sensitising health care workers, the police and the community towards sex workers and migrant populations;
- Promoting human rights awareness, legal literacy, and documentation of human rights violations amongst key and vulnerable populations;
- Provide a safe and secure environment for the elderly of the Hoedspruit area to reside at and interact with others;

- Providing services to babies and children up until the age of 14 which includes immunisations, infant growth and development screening (milestones, MUAC), assisting the mother to start solids with the baby, vitamin A supplementation and deworming.
- Offering recreational programmes to increase social participation and improve the quality of life of farm workers and their families;
- Promoting healthy lifestyles, condoms, and primary health care services and referrals at fixed clinics, during mobile outreach and through telemedicine devices;
- External pick-up point for patients registered on DABLAPmeds.
- Monitoring nutritional status and providing malnourished clients with food donated by farmers;
- Running a dedicated women's clinic for cervical and breast cancer awareness, prevention, screening and treatment.
- Offering pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to people at risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV, including sex workers and their clients.
- Addressing gender-based violence through the Hlokomela Ambassadors project.
- Offer trauma debriefing to staff and patients through Trauma & Tension Releasing Exercises (TRE), offered at Hlokomela and in the communities by certified TRE providers.
- Facilitating volunteers, such as the HlokoMiere, to work in the community and gain valuable knowledge and experience.
- Facilitating employer wellness days for employer groups at their place of work.

# 2 SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMMES

These projects aim to support Hlokomela to become more sustainable in future:

- The Partial Payment System (PPS) has three legs; the Hlokomela Employers' Health Club (HEHC), walk-in clients and Hlokomela Health Cards.
- Growing and selling fresh herbs, herb products, vegetables and dried fruit in the Hoedspruit and Ba-Phalaborwa area.



# 3 OPERATIONS

Good administration is the backbone of our organisation. The operations department supports the health, social and sustainability projects to run smoothly by ensuring that the administration, maintenance on buildings, procurement and finances are all in order. An organisation is nothing without its staff and Hlokomela supports its employees through the Employee Wellness Programme.



# 1 HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

## Health Care Services

In 2023, Hlokomela continued to develop and implement HIV workplace policies for local farms and businesses. By the end of 2023, we assisted 72 enterprises with improving their employment policies, supported by a peer education programme. We facilitate access to health services, programmes and medical products. Activities include signing a memorandum of co-operation, setting up HIV&AIDS committees, HIV testing services and social communication initiatives to reduce HIV infections.

Hlokomela runs wellness clinics at Richmond Farm, Hlokomela, Bavaria Fruit Estate, Klaserie Private Nature Reserve, Phelwana, Singita Lebombo, Thornybush, Elephants Alive, Ngala Safari Lodge, the Southern African Wildlife College, Camp Jabulani, HERD and Kapama Private Game Reserve. Doctors and professional nurses provide health care services and referrals, information and condoms at these wellness clinics.



**72**  
ENTERPRISES ASSISTED



## DABLAP Meds

(previously Central Chronic Medication Dispensing and Distribution - CCMD)

By December 2023, 1396 clients were enrolled on DABLAP Meds of which 962 were active.



**1396**  
CLIENTS ENROLLED  
ON DABLAP

## HIV

96.4% of clients who visited Hlokomela know their status  
100% of patients who tested HIV positive were initiated on treatment  
89% of patients on ART had a suppressed viral load after 6 months on treatment

\*Hlokomela is working towards achieving "95-95-95", an ambitious treatment target that was set by UNAIDS to help end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.




**7104**  
PATIENTS TESTED

 **+ 148**

PATIENTS HIV POSITIVE

## TB


Hlokomela screened 99,2% of 16 378 patients who visited our clinics for TB. Only 2 of the 220 sputum samples collected, tested positive for TB and all newly diagnosed TB clients were initiated on treatment with a 100% TB cure rate.



**220**  
PATIENTS TESTED

## STIs


Out of 13 806 patients (15 years and above) screened for STIs, 286 tested positive and were treated for STIs.



**13 806**  
PATIENTS SCREENED

## Hypertension

Between the ages of 18 and 44, we screened 9 044 clients for hypertension. We also screened 4 045 clients who are 45 years and older. This year, 74 clients were newly diagnosed with hypertension and initiated on treatment, and 1 257 collected treatment.



**9 044**  
PATIENTS SCREENED

## Diabetes

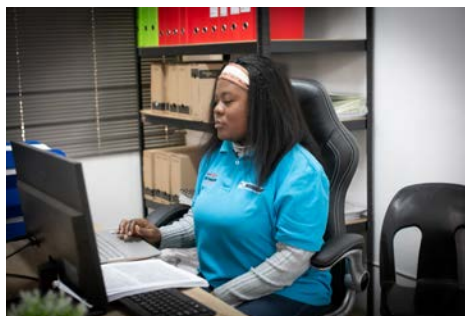
Between the ages of 18 and 44, we screened 9 167 clients for diabetes. We also screened 4 396 clients who are 45 years and older. This year, 23 clients were diagnosed with diabetes and initiated on treatment, and 416 collecting treatment.



**9 167**  
PATIENTS SCREENED

## Telemedicine

In 2023 Hlokomela served as a pilot site for the Tytocare telemedicine device. The purpose of the pilot was to test the device in a low resource rural setting.



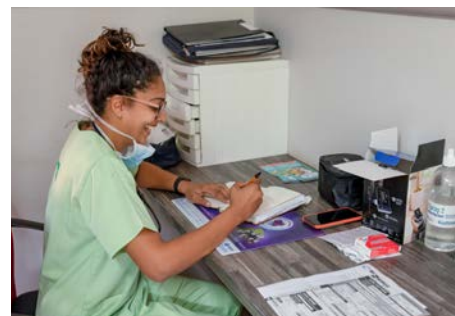
## HlokoMiere

In October 2023 we partnered with Citizen Connect and the Greater Stellenbosch Trust to implement the HlokoMiere volunteer project. The project's aim is to provide opportunities for unemployed people and prepare them for the workplace. We started out with 50 volunteers earning a small stipend but soon grew to 70. The HlokoMiere assist the organisation with community health work, infection prevention and control, data capturing, clinic duties, planting and harvesting at the Herb Garden and home-based care at Gracious Living.



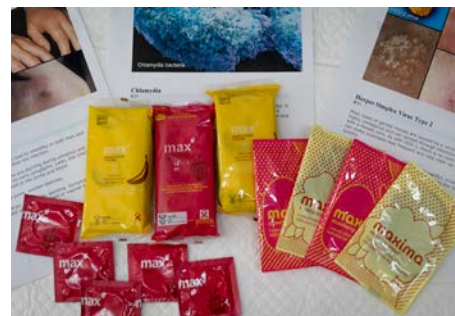
## Tshemba volunteers

Hlokomela's clients benefit from the services of volunteer doctors and specialists who visit Hlokomela on a weekly basis, made possible through their volunteerism at the Tshemba Foundation. Professionals from all over the world continue to add great value to the health care services we offer and we take great pride in our partnership with the Tshemba Foundation.



## Condom distribution

Hlokomela maintains condom dispensers at 150 locations, mostly high HIV transmission areas such as truck stops, shebeens, taxi ranks, hawker markets, hotels and lodges. During the year, we distributed 1 326 000 male and 9 500 female condoms.





## Pre-exposure prophylaxis

Hlokomela offers Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to people at high risk of HIV. During 2023 of the 3590 sex workers reached, 3139 were tested for HIV and 1402 of these sex workers that tested HIV negative for HIV 669 were initiated on PrEP and 884 retained on PrEP. Out of those who were tested, 25 sex workers tested HIV positive, of which 25 were initiated on ART and linked to care.



  
**884**  
PATIENTS RETAINED  
ON PREP

## Men's Health Awareness

On 30 November 2023 we hosted "Boeries for Prostates", an event for men's health awareness where 56 men had health assessments done which included screening for prostate cancer and chronic conditions.

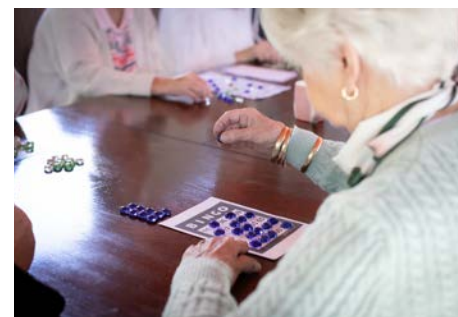


  
**56**  
MEN SCREENED

## Gracious Living Retirement Haven

Registered as a non-profit organisation in 2015, Gracious Living Retirement Haven comprises of two adjacent properties in Hoedspruit that provide a safe and secure environment for the elderly of the Hoedspruit area to reside at and interact with their peers.

Hlokomela is very proud of this project where we employ one live-in nurse and a coordinator for the 16 elderly residents.



  
**16**  
ELDERLY RESIDENTS

## Outreach on farms

During the year, 80 Nompilos rendered home based care services to 552 clients who are on chronic and short course treatment. Interventions ranged from primary health care to distributing health and social educational information. Many of these clients are on ARV and TB treatment; Nompilos referred 368 individuals to clinics for further health care services.



  
**368**  
PATIENTS REFERRED

## Sex Worker Programme

In 2023, AFSA recognised Hlokomela as the best performing sub recipient on the implementation of the Sex Worker Programme.

The programme aims to empower sex workers with skills that will enhance their capacity to speak for themselves, to address human rights violations, to access psychosocial support, to make informed choices and to provide opportunities for them to test for HIV. Sex workers also have an opportunity to be screened for non-communicable diseases, sexual reproductive health and mental health issues.

Hlokomela implements the sex worker programme across the entire Mopani District. A team of 22 place based peer educators work closely with 10 HTS & linkage officers. Three site coordinators manage the peer educators, 3 professional nurses and an enrolled nurse manage the linkage to care through the HTS & linkage officers and attend to sex workers in the field. The clinical specialist oversees all clinical activities. When needed, sex workers are referred to a doctor in the clinic.

The programme's social worker and social auxiliary worker offer psychosocial support to sex workers while an advocacy officer advocates for their rights by sensitising stakeholders about the programme.

During the year, peer educators reached the cohort of 3590 sex workers per quarter, at 106 hotspots in the District.



**3590**




**SEX WORKERS  
REACHED**

## Human Rights & Advocacy Programme

The purpose of the programme, which supports National Strategic Plan Goal 5 (Ground the response to HIV, TB and STIs in human rights principles and approaches), is to lower violations among the key and vulnerable populations. The programme promotes human rights awareness, legal literacy, and documentation of human rights violations amongst key and vulnerable populations in the Mopani District.

The programme is implemented by a Project Officer, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Paralegal and 5 Reactors (Human Rights Defenders) across the entire Mopani District.

Below is the programme performance for January - December 2023:

| INDICATORS<br> | TARGET<br> | ACTUAL<br> |
|---|---|---|
| Number of human rights violations reported  | <b>780</b>  | <b>977</b>  |
| Number of human rights violation cases referred   | <b>772</b>  | <b>704</b>  |
| Number of cases successfully resolved   | <b>1476</b>   | <b>801</b>  |
| Number of referrals for human rights violation cases that requires legal support                  | <b>NO TARGET</b>  | <b>116</b>  |
| Number of interventions conducted on stigma and discrimination                                    | <b>8</b>  | <b>15</b>   |



## Employer Wellness Days

As employer groups continue to place more value on the health and wellness of their employees, Hlokomela responded to their call in 2023 by offering well organised wellness days at their place of work. Wellness days are designed according to the employer's needs and may include a variety of different stations for employees to check their vital signs (blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, weight), learn about breast self-examination, participate in gender awareness and gender-based violence dialogues, ask questions about their health and participate in Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE).

To book a wellness day, please contact our Clinic Manager on [laverne@hlokomela.org.za](mailto:laverne@hlokomela.org.za).



## Hlokomela Women's Clinic

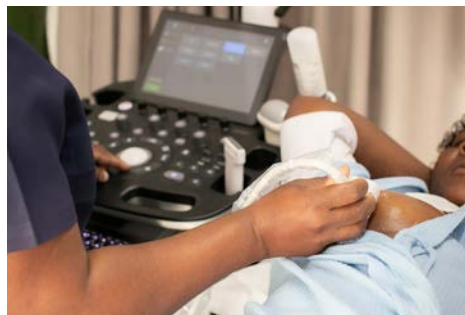
Hlokomela Women's Clinic has reached thousands of women through outreaches, trained and educated, screened and treated many more in the clinic and out in the field.

During the year, 87 clients were screened for breast cancer. Of these, 34 were referred to the hospital for further management; 7 of these women were positively diagnosed and treated for breast cancer. Other scans done at the Women's Clinic include 34 abdominal scans, 66 pelvic scans, and 162 pregnancy scans.

During 2023, 430 patients were screened for cervical cancer. Nine clients were referred for biopsies.

1 348 Clients were assisted with contraception.

Donated bras were handed out to women in need who come to Hlokomela Women's Clinic as clients and sanitary pads were handed out to clients and young girls during clinic outreaches. Hlokomela Women's Clinic further supported vulnerable mothers by giving them baby clothes, nappies and baby formula that was donated to the clinic throughout the year.



87

PATIENTS SCREENED  
FOR BREAST CANCER



## Tekkies4Tieties

On 28 October 2023 Hlokomela Women's Clinic hosted the second annual Tekkies4Tieties, a fun walk in aid of breast cancer awareness and fund raising to support patients with breast cancer who cannot afford mammograms and travel expenses to and from hospitals. The mobile clinic was on site for participants to have their vital signs checked while getting more information about breast cancer from our friendly nursing staff.



## Baby Clinic

“Immunization has been a great public health success story. The lives of millions of children have been saved, millions have the chance of a longer healthier life, a greater chance to learn, to play, to read and write, to move around freely without suffering.” - Nelson Mandela Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1993

Hlokomela’s Baby Clinic has been running for more than a year - assisting mothers and babies in our small town.

The baby clinic provides services from a child’s first few weeks up until the age of 14. Services include immunisations, infant growth and weighing and development screening (milestones, MUAC), breastfeeding assistance, or guidance with starting solids, vitamin A supplementation and deworming. We also refer to the necessary multidisciplinary team if needed.

Did you know that in South-Africa we have two vaccination schedules? One driven by the government and the other is a private schedule which includes a few more vaccinations for example; Onvara/Varilrix (chicken pocks), Menactra (meningitis), Avaxim/Havrix jnr (hepatitis A), Priorix (measles, mumps, rubella) and more.

Which schedule to follow can be a daunting decision for first time parents and Hlokomela’s Baby Clinic, which offers both schedules, assists parents in making an informed choice.

From January to December 2023 we gave 357 doses of vaccines.



**357**

VACCINE DOSES GIVEN



# 2 SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMMES

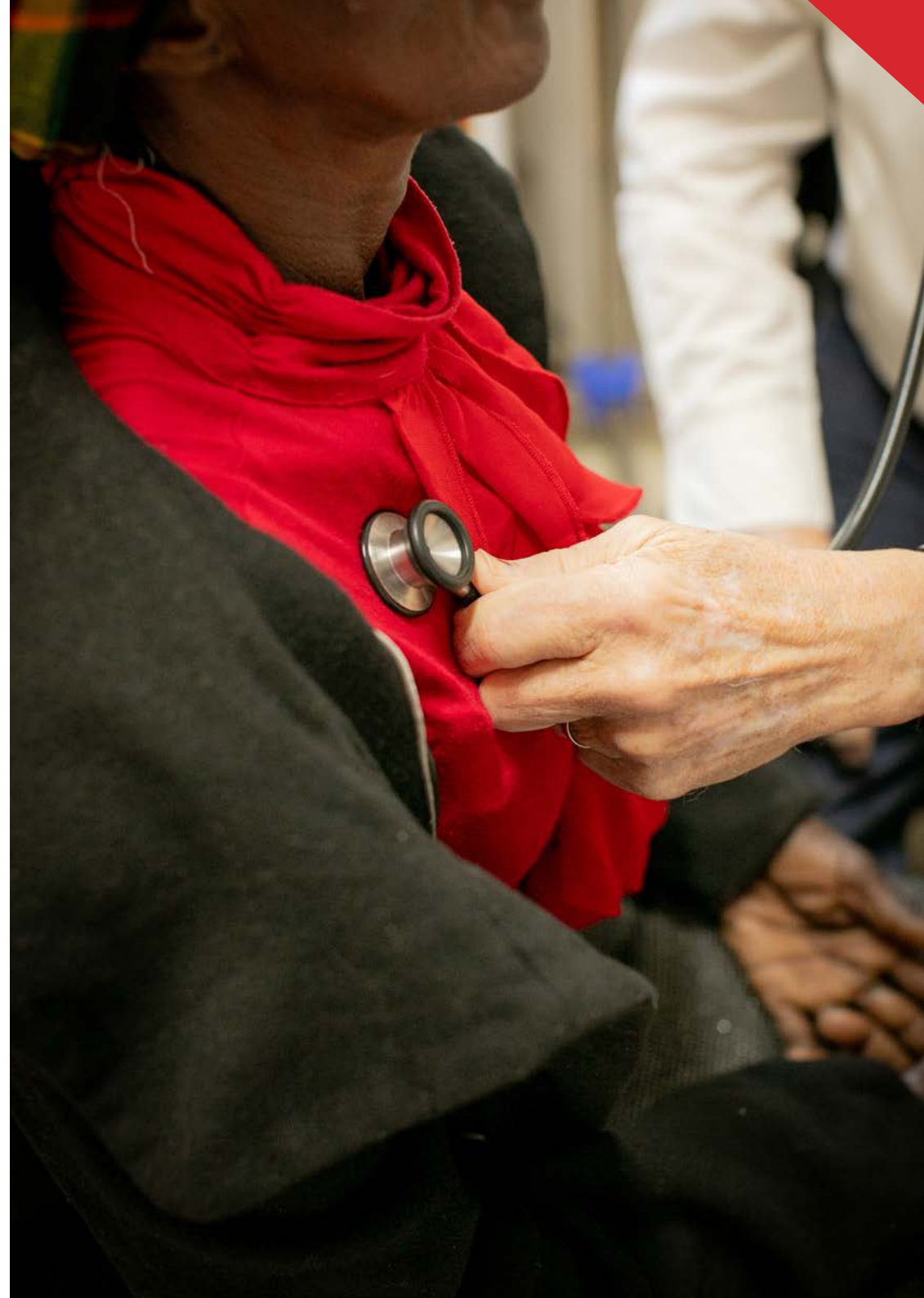
## The partial payment system

The PPS consists of three legs; the Hlokomela Employers' Health Club (HEHC), Hlokomela Health Cards and walk-ins.

The Hlokomela Employers' Health Club (HEHC) offers employers the unique opportunity to access Hlokomela's services at a discounted rate by becoming part of the HEHC through a monthly subscription fee. By means of accurate recordkeeping of their employees who access our services, we are able to offer the employer up to date information on the number of clinic visits per month and generate a monthly invoice to employers in the club. Another benefit of becoming part of this club is that the employee is responsible for 30% of the cost of care, while the employer covers the remaining 70%. By December 2023, 16 employers representing 2000 employees had signed up to and were benefiting from the Hlokomela Employers' Health Club.

The Hlokomela Health Cards have proven to be more popular than were expected. This option is offered to employers as well as individuals. For a once off fee of R650 per year, an individual receives a unique card with his/her information printed on the reverse side of the card. This card allows the owner free access to most Hlokomela services and discounted rates to more specialised services for an entire year. Many employers also preferred to take this option for their employees. 554 Hlokomela Health Cards were sold in 2023.

Clients who are not part of the HEHC or have a Hlokomela Health Card, are still welcome at our clinics and are able to access services at walk-in client rates.



## Hlokomela Herb Garden

In 2023 the Hlokomela Herb Garden benefitted from the additional labour support provided by HlokoMiere volunteers who, in turn, gained knowledge on how to grow their own vegetables and herbs at home. The imminent replacement of critical infrastructure, such as the shade net tunnel and irrigation system, is in dire need of external funding support.



66

COMMERCIAL AND  
HOUSEHOLD CUSTOMERS  
SERVED THIS YEAR





# 3 ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Strategic partnerships

In 2023 Hlokomela strengthened partnerships with funders for the implementation of existing programmes. Discovery Fund continued to support us for the second phase of the clinic expansion programme. Discovery Fund also funded the organisation to pilot the Tytocare telemedicine device. We partnered with Citizen Connect and the Greater Stellenbosch Trust for the HlokoMiere volunteer project. We collaborated with Realife Learning to co-develop a course for community liaison officers who work in conservation.

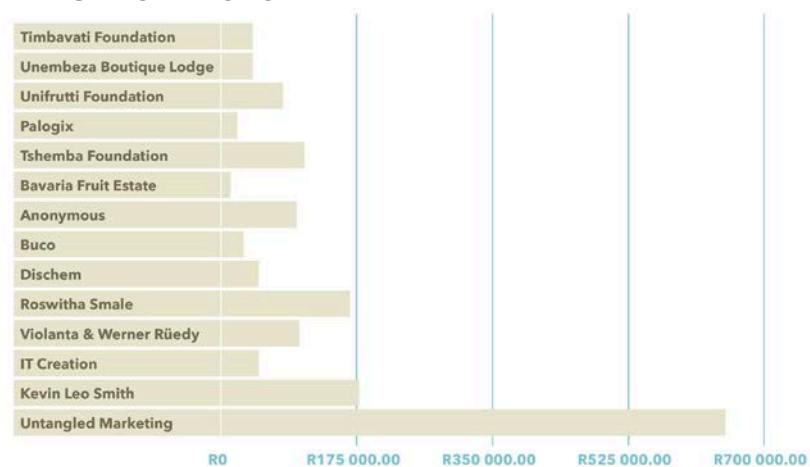
## Research

No research was conducted at Hlokomela this year.

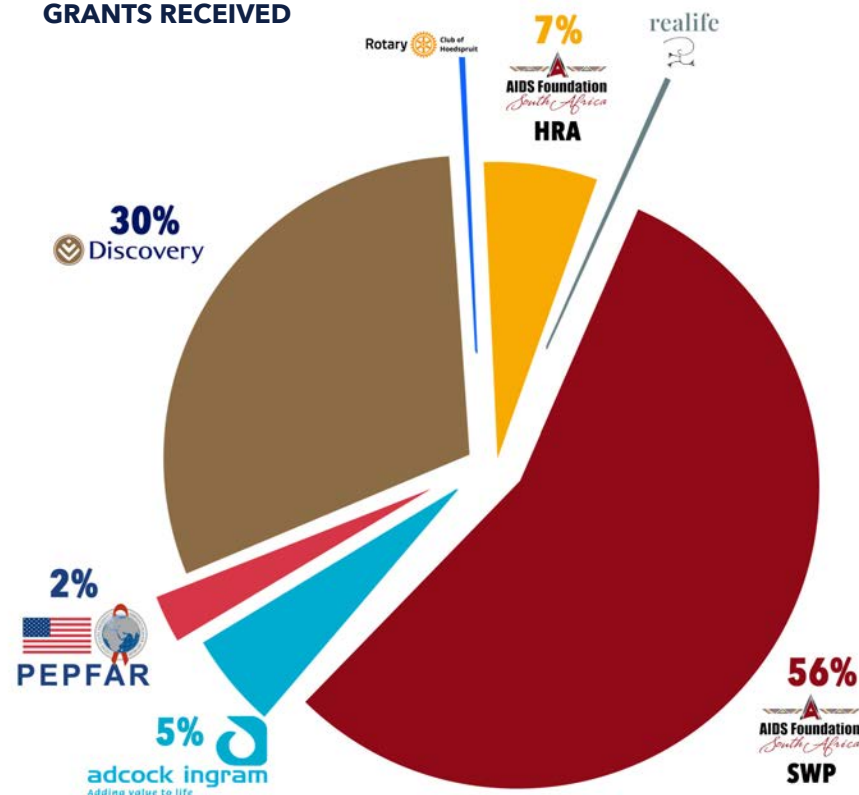
## Funding and fundraising

Hlokomela relies mainly on donor funding for its activities. Hlokomela's sustainability activities supplement donor income and government in-kind contributions. Detailed audited financial statements are available upon request.

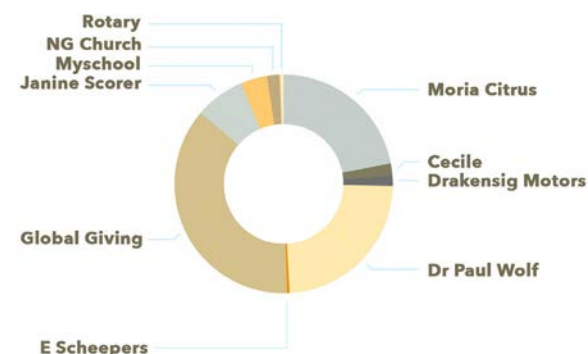
### LARGE DONATIONS



### GRANTS RECEIVED



### SMALL DONATIONS



## Employee Wellness Programme

In 2023 the Hlokomela Employee Wellness Programme worked for its beneficiaries as they enjoyed participating in incentivised wellness activities. Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises (TRE)<sup>®</sup> sessions were offered to employees regularly throughout the year. Employees had access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for counselling, financial and legal advice as well as an annual medical assessment.



  
**98**  
EMPLOYEES REACHED



# HLOKOMELA HONOURS

- 2007: Independent study finds farm workers trust confidentiality of services offered.
- 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 & Guardian Drivers of Change Investing in the Future awards.
- 2008: Poster presentation at the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico City.
- 2009: Hlokomela received an award from Mail & 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 assistant awarded Entrepreneur and Female Farm Worker of the Year respectively by the Limpopo Department of Agriculture.
- 2015: Christine du Preez receives a Recognition Award in the category International Community Workers Recognition at the Women4Africa Awards UK 2015.
- 2016: Poster presentation on behalf of the Discovery Fund at the 21st International AIDS Conference in Durban.
- 2017: The Herb Garden entered the Limpopo Province Department of Agriculture Maruleng Municipality 2017 Female Farmer of the Year competition and took second place in Top Entrepreneur Processing at the awards ceremony in August 2017.
- 2018: The Hlokomela Women's Clinic wins Gold at the Community Chest Impumelelo Social Innovations Awards ceremony in Cape Town, November 2018.
- 2020: Christine du Preez and the Hlokomela team were awarded the 2020 Women's Day award by the DA Women's Network (DAWN) <https://limpopo.da.org.za/2020/08/dawn-honours-hlokomela-and-its-founder-in-hoedspruit-to-commemorate-womens-month>.
- 2022: Hlokomela featured in Discovery's book, Changing Tomorrow For Good - The ripple effect of collaboration, compassion and connection.
- 2023: Hlokomela is recognised by AFSA as the best performing sub recipient on the implementation of the Sex Worker Programme.



# The healing power of Hlokomela

By MJ du Preez

After about 9 years, today (29 February 2024) marks my last formal day at Hlokomela.

On this leap year day, as I leap into a new chapter of my life, I can't help but reflect on the incredible opportunities Hlokomela has given me during my time at the organization. While my journey with Hlokomela is not truly over, and the prospect of the future is exciting, today is undeniably a bit emotional for me.

We've accomplished some incredible things together, and I am extremely grateful for the support Hlokomela has provided for my unconventional ideas over the years.

What started as a short stint as part of the Vodacom Change the World project became so much more.

We built Herb Gardens, Spaza shops, and sewing projects. We established Charity Shops and Hlokomela Tours. We created HlokoMiere and Hlokomela Ambassadors. We hosted Herb Bush Parties in the wild where elephants danced on the dance floor, leopards hunted impala near the restrooms, and hyenas playfully stole guests' handbags—all while people danced in silence under the African starry night.

We partied on the back of a truck with Yvonne Chaka Chaka - Princess of Africa in the rain, as she sang her heart out to farm workers. Together, we distributed thousands of mosquito nets in rural communities with the Kingsley Holgate Foundation. We organised rock shows and comedy

events (Francois van Coke and Schalk Bezuidenhout) to persuade farmers that we were "lekker" people and that they should support us.

We produced mountains of buffs when COVID hit to protect farm workers who still had to go to work. We distributed mountains of food when people working in cities moved back to their families in rural Limpopo due to job loss. We implemented antigen testing when there was nothing available in our area. We organized vaccination days to help build herd immunity. Towards the end, I experienced vaccination fatigue, but I think we administered over 30,000 shots in about a year.

We devised innovative funding models to save our organisation from closing its doors (multiple times). We implemented complex management systems that were initially beyond our staff's capabilities, but somehow, they mastered them! I witnessed colleagues pushing themselves to become more than they could ever have imagined. Partial payment systems. Hlokomela Health Cards. Employers Health Clubs...

We lost many people, yet we managed to buy time for so many more.

I learned how to work with and communicate with farm workers and rural families. I learned how to engage with CEOs from the largest companies that wanted to support us. I almost got into altercations with local government officials, yet almost kissed them for saving our asses. I had dinner with ambassadors and enjoyed vetkoek

with migrants. I learned about "Blue Jobs," sex workers, LGBTQ, and MSM. I dealt with millionaires in the morning, foreign volunteers at lunch, and by knock-off time, I was almost murdered by commuters with cinder blocks aimed at my head.

I saw how humans could destroy each other, and experienced how you could be saved by a stranger. I witnessed people caring for each other, and the human spirit prevailing. People rally. People perform. People care.

I learned how to discuss every imaginable topic in meetings without flinching. From prostate exams to child abuse, from Tekkies4Tieties to trauma release exercises. From bestiality to spirituality. (jip...)

I filled potholes, removed rubble and shotgun shells after police dispersed protestors, lost crops to a monstrous hailstorm, and tried to design top-of-the-line washable sanitary pads. We brewed kombucha and painted murals.

We received awards and lots, and lots of abuse. I had to learn how to fire employees and how to be less of a devil's advocate.

This place has been amazing!

It's been a source of inspiration and serenity, and my heart overflows with gratitude for the memories, the challenges, and the unwavering support from everyone at Hlokomela, but also those in the Hoedspruit community.

Hlokomela means "to take care," but to me, it meant "healing." This place healed me, my family, and my belief in humans in so many ways. For that, this glorified graphic designer will be eternally grateful. You made me more than I would have been without you.

Hlokomela staff will come and go, but the spirit of Hlokomela will live forever.

And in the words of Dricus du Plessis: "Hulle weet nie wat ons weet nie...."





**HLOKOMELA**

**FARM WORKERS CARE FOR EACH OTHER**



**A HTT PROJECT**

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