

# HIV and AIDS

## NELSON MANDELA BAY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY'S RESPONSE

HIV/AIDS is much more than a health problem: it is a developmental challenge that affects local government in various ways. In the last issue, we looked at how municipalities can apply the concept of mainstreaming as a strategic way to address this enormous challenge and eThekweni Metro shared their experiences and lessons learnt. In this issue, we highlight Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality's (the Metro's) response to HIV and AIDS. The Metro recognises the developmental implications of the epidemic and as a result has identified HIV and AIDS as one of the 'key priorities' in the third draft of its 2007–2011 Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

### Background on Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

The Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, with its main city of Port Elizabeth, has an estimated population of 1.3 million and approximately 265 109 households. It is the

economic hub of the province, contributing 44% to provincial GGP. The Metro is an important port. Manufacturing is the largest sector and tourism is also growing. Despite this economic activity, unemployment is high (the 2001 Census put it at 41%) and many households still live without basic necessities such as water, proper housing and sanitation. These characteristics have a negative impact on HIV and AIDS vulnerability and increase the susceptibility of individuals, households and communities. Other characteristics that pose a risk for the spread and impact of the epidemic include:

- **Youthful population:** 37% of inhabitants are younger than 20 years. While constituting a risk factor, this feature also presents the opportunity of preventing new infections among the next generation.
- **Labour migration:** Port Elizabeth is a port and an important industrial area. This attracts migrant labour, who are a high-risk group in terms of HIV infection.
- **Areas close to main transport routes:** Truck drivers and communities living close to the transport routes are vulnerable to HIV infection.
- **High incidence of crime and rape:** The Metro has among the highest rape statistics in South Africa.

To address these risks and counter the epidemic's adverse effects, prevention, care and support strategies have been put in place.

## The Metro's response to the epidemic

The Metro's response can be summed up as follows:

- a response well-embedded in the IDP;
- extensive research as the foundation for several projects;
- an integrated HIV and AIDS Plan with a workplace (internal) component and a service delivery (external) component that goes beyond health issues;
- HIV and AIDS as part of the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework;
- a Metro AIDS Council (MAC);
- an interdepartmental HIV and AIDS forum to coordinate HIV and AIDS mainstreaming; and
- partnerships with several organisations, including technical support agencies.

## An integrated HIV and AIDS Plan well embedded in the IDP

The implementation of the integrated HIV and AIDS Plan, which is currently under revision, is one of the five-year

deliverables of the 2007–2011 IDP. Its aim is to mainstream HIV and AIDS within the Nelson Mandela Bay area and to provide strategies that address the priority areas identified by the new National Strategic Plan for HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (2007) (see box). In the Third Draft of the 2007–2011 IDP, the Metro acknowledges that the epidemic has an impact on strategic developmental indicators and draws the conclusion that this has implications for service delivery planning in various areas such as housing and land usage, public healthcare and social welfare and development. The Metro thus has a developmental rather than a purely health-focused approach to the epidemic. Its commitment to counter the developmental effects of HIV and AIDS is further expressed by the fact that departmental mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS has been set as a deliverable for March 2008 in the 2007–2011 IDP.

The Metro's HIV and AIDS internal response is driven mainly through the Occupational Health and Safety and Environment Unit (OHSE) under the Business Unit: Health Services. The response is informed by several research projects, such as an HIV prevalence study, a study on knowledge, attitudes and practices, a cost impact study, an assessment of the Metro's mainstreaming of HIV into the IDP and an assessment of the existing HIV and AIDS workplace programme activities.

Currently, the main components of the internal response are:

- an HIV and AIDS policy and strategy;
- an Employee Wellness Programme; and
- prevention and awareness activities including a peer education programme that involves people living with HIV and AIDS.

The peer education programme, with one peer educator per 25 employees, targets staff within all the departments of the Metro and supports interventions implemented through the Employee

### The new Strategic National Plan

The new South African National AIDS Council, chaired by Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, has endorsed the new comprehensive National Strategic Plan for HIV, AIDS and STI for 2007–2011 (the NSP). The primary goal of the NSP is to reduce the rate of new HIV infections and mitigate the impact of AIDS on individuals, families and communities. The NSP strongly advocates for leaders in all sectors in society to promote the NSP goals. Many of the interventions that are needed take place at the decentralised, local level and therefore confirm the crucial role of local government. The document can be downloaded from the HIV and AIDS section on [www.salga.net](http://www.salga.net).

Assistance Programmes office. Furthermore, the following initiatives are planned in order to develop an integrated employee wellness and occupational safety management strategy, one of the strategic objectives in the third draft of the Metro's IDP:

- mainstreaming HIV and AIDS activities through the Interdepartmental Forum;
- an ARV rollout plan for employees by July 2008, with no contribution from the workers. The provision of this service to family members might be considered in future;
- a workplace HIV / AIDS impact assessment;
- an anti-substance abuse programme;
- establishing a 24-hour counselling service for shift workers;
- implementing a psycho-education programme, addressing mental and related illnesses; and
- maintaining a system of medical surveillance for employees.

The Metro's external programme is largely managed from the AIDS Training Information and Counselling Centre (ATTIC) under the management of the Executive Director for Health. However, in line with the principles of mainstreaming, other directorates are also becoming increasingly active in addressing the effects of HIV and AIDS on their core business. Projects aimed at different target groups that are run from ATICC include:

- **The High Transmission Area Programme:** Initially implemented in 2001 as a pilot project in Walmer township to deliver health messages and condoms through peer educators, this programme was gradually expanded to three more sites. Sites targeted are places that are considered high transmission areas in terms of unsafe sexual practices and include truck stops, taverns and shebeens.
- **The Back to School AIDS Orphans Project:** This project, which was adopted by the Metro AIDS Council, identifies

#### **Importance of mainstreaming confirmed by Deputy-President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the Third South African AIDS Conference**

The third South African National AIDS Conference was held from 5 to 8 June 2007 at the International Convention Centre in Durban. In her opening speech, Deputy-President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka confirmed the importance of municipal mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS by highlighting the deliberation of SALGA at its recent conference regarding the mainstreaming of the NSP in municipalities. The full speech is available at [www.salga.net](http://www.salga.net) (HIV and AIDS section).

AIDS orphans who are subsequently linked up with the Department of Social Development for support grants, foster care etc. They also receive school uniforms funded by donations from business, individuals, municipal employees, councillors and community members.

- **The PWA Support/FACES Programme:** This programme involves people who are openly HIV positive in community outreach and HIV counselling.

Supported by the Centre for Municipal Research and Advice (CMRA), the Metro is also planning a project on HIV and AIDS prevention in youth using sports.

As the Metro has a Service Level Agreement with the Eastern Cape Department of Health, it is also responsible for the management of clinical programmes. This includes managing 42 clinics and providing training to nurses on issues such as voluntary counselling and testing and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

## **The Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework**

The focus on special needs groups such as people affected by HIV and AIDS are among the development goals and principles for spatial planning in the Sustainable Communities Project (SCP) of the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework. As the Third Draft of the IDP states, the SCP's aim is to ensure that all residential areas in the Metro provide residents with a good minimum standard of living. This includes amenities, facilities and job opportunities, public transport within walking distance as well as access to public transport.

## **Metro AIDS Council**

The municipality has an active MAC which meets bi-monthly. The MAC is a multi-sectoral coordinating body chaired by the Executive Mayor, who also attends meetings from time to time. Its mission is to promote, support and monitor a coordinated and combined effort among all those involved in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS and to work towards the alleviation of the social, economic, cultural and political challenges resulting from HIV and AIDS. Sectors represented include councillors, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, the youth, traditional health practitioners, the South African Business Coalition against HIV and AIDS (SABCOHA), Volkswagen South Africa, Metro sub-district representatives and academic organisations. Sectors that are not yet well

represented include the hospitality industry, media, labour unions, sports and the disabled.

The body's functioning has recently been strengthened after two workshops aimed at capacity building, offered by CMRA in partnership with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa). Some of the targets that were set at the last workshop include the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system and the involvement of ward-based councillors.


### Interdepartmental Forum

The Metro's Interdepartmental Forum (IDF) was launched recently. Its mandate is to provide a central structure to coordinate and promote the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS throughout the Metro. The focus of the Metro's IDF is on mainstreaming HIV and AIDS externally through departments' programmes and projects. Representatives from almost all municipal business units participate in the forum, such as Budgets and Treasury, Housing, Engineering and IDP, as well as Strategic Planning. Departmental action plans for mainstreaming are currently being finalised and these will be integrated into one IDF mainstreaming strategy which will then be submitted to Council. Some examples of proposed mainstreaming activities are:

- **IDP and Strategic Planning:** Set key performance areas for each business unit to incorporate HIV and AIDS mainstreaming into their business plans;
- **Waste Management:** Promote and train communities to make compost from refuse & make backyard gardens; and
- **Budget and Treasury:** Access to the indigent subsidy.

### Challenges and lessons learnt


No HIV and AIDS programme is without challenges and the Metro's response is no exception. Due to the growing needs and the many programmes that are being implemented, understaffing at ATTIC and a high workload remain a reality. There is also a lack of sufficient funds and expertise within the Metro. The Metro has thus successfully built partnerships with external technical organisations and the private sector. To other municipalities that are looking into establishing an IDF, the Metro recommends that for optimal functioning all departments should take part in the forum and the representatives should have decision-making authority. Furthermore, to help strengthen departmental



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responses to the epidemic, it is recommended that HIV and AIDS issues are part of the performance scorecard of management. Finally, a high commitment among the management teams of municipalities to assist with HIV and AIDS interventions is an imperative for the success of the overall response to the epidemic.

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