



FROM THE HEAD

and the heart

More men test than ever before

Increasing the number of men who test for HIV in the post-schooling sector has been a key challenge since the launch of the First Things First (FTF) Programme in 2011. The FTF Programme, which contributes to the objectives of the National Strategic Plan for HIV, STIs and TB, seeks to maximise opportunities for testing for HIV using rapid finger prick tests.

Over the past few years, female students have dominated the testing numbers, with males always falling at 30% or below of those who tested. Last year saw this number rise for the first time, with the uptake of males who tested nationally at universities reaching a new precedent of 36%.

Alex Semba, HEAIDS Project Manager said a couple of strategies assisted in increasing male participation in testing drives. Mr Semba and his team planned and facilitated thematically targeted interventions for young men. This included dialogues and targeted initiatives at sports days on various campuses.

The targeted testing facilities at locations that are frequented by men on campuses also assisted, with emphasis being placed on male residences and faculties that have majority male students. Proximity and accessibility remain central to all HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies.

"It took several integrated approaches to increase the number of males testing. The location, messaging and deliberate targeting has yielded results. The dialogues aimed specifically at male students also proved to be really fruitful spaces for men to mobilise and engage in safe places about fears, concerns and lived experience" according to Mr Semba.

He added that: "In 2018, we plan to strengthen these initiatives so young men can begin to take decisive action in ensuring their own health. We implore all young men on campus to feel free to add and advise around what could make testing more young male friendly. We look forward to working with our peer educators, learners and staff to keep the number rising."

As we look back on 2017 and look forward to 2018, we as HEAIDS have much to celebrate and prepare for. The past year brought many unprecedented strides; including the first of its kind HEAIDS National Youth Conference, which saw over 4500 young delegates, academics, political and government heads and stakeholders attending the conference, which was covered live by all the media houses. It also saw a successful rollout of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to eleven clinics in seven universities across the country in partnership with the Department of Health.

Our flagship programme, First Things First, continues with its objective to maximise opportunities for testing for HIV in the post-schooling sector. The campaign provides for the testing of large numbers using HIV rapid finger prick tests. Last year saw 200 000 students testing for HIV, TB, STIs and other health, wellness and sexual reproductive health services across the sector. Within universities alone, a significant increase from the previous year was noted. Another encouraging sign was that more men tested than ever before within this pool due to targeted lobbying at various universities. The men testing numbers increased from 28% to 36%, which probably puts HEAIDS as a best practice model to bring more men to change their health seeking behaviour. We will continue with this trajectory and intensify efforts to incentivise students to prioritise their health.

The TVET college sector managed to test 87 567 students nationwide, with the significant majority being female students. HEAIDS will continue to lobby for more support within the TVET college sector as limited resources, lack of equipment and shortage of resources in outreach teams continue to be a challenge.

Our HIV Curriculum Integration Project has come to a close, having exceeded its target and reaching 2154 university academics, college life orientation and nursing lecturers. You can look forward to two critical publications that will give you a snapshot of the body of knowledge that was developed and documented through this project.

We are proud of our Future Beats Programme, which has shown results of an increase in the uptake of health services and will be presented as a best practice programme at the second International Social and Behaviour Change Communication Summit in Indonesia in April 2018. Recognising that behaviour change remains a key priority for HEAIDS, we are excited to invest in a new partnership with the German International Cooperation to roll out a national behaviour change communication campaign in 2018.

Gender-based violence remains a key concern for HEAIDS in the post-schooling sector, with many students expressing dissatisfaction in support mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence on campuses. HEAIDS will solidify its objective to develop a sector-wide policy framework on addressing sexual and gender-based violence. This year will see the finalisation of consultations with students and the distributing of a sector-wide policy framework to support institutions of higher learning to curb this ongoing gross violation of human rights.

Yours in good health.

Ramneek



Men's Dialogue at Vaal University of Technology



HEAIDS to present paper at the 2018 International Social and Behavior Change Communication Summit

“Tomorrow matters, today! The impact of the HEAIDS Future Beats Radio and Social Media Programme on university and college listeners in South Africa” is the title of the poster presentation that HEAIDS Technical Advisor, Miriam Behrendt, will be presenting at the 2018 International Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Summit.

Ms Behrendt has been working as Technical Advisor to HEAIDS since July 2013. She has supported HEAIDS in conceptualising the Future Beats Programme that explores the potential of creating awareness of HIV/AIDS and related issues within the student community through campus radio and social media. The German radio journalist holds a Master’s Degree in Journalism and Culture Studies and has been working in the field of HIV and media in South Africa for the past six years.

The 2018 SBCC Summit, featuring Entertainment Education, is organised to better understand what works in shifting social norms, changing behaviours and in amplifying the voice of those who have most at stake in the success of development efforts. It is designed to wrestle with the profound issues of social justice and agenda setting that affect these decisions.

HEAIDS will be contributing to the conference by presenting the impact of the innovative Future Beats Programme. Supported by the German International Cooperation (GIZ), the Higher Education and Training Health, Wellness and Development Centre (HEAIDS) has implemented an innovative programme called “Future Beats” that established unique radio and social media programmes at 14 campus and community radio stations in six provinces of South Africa, reaching a total of 720 000 young radio listeners.

The HEAIDS Future Beats Programme, which was rolled out in six provinces of South Africa, is based on the theory that when it comes to communication “one size does not fit all”. This means that instead of creating one radio programme that is aired across the country, Future Beats capacitates young radio journalists to develop their own unique radio and social media programmes that speak to their target communities in the different parts of South Africa. The objective of the cutting-edge programme is to create awareness concerning HIV/AIDS and related social drivers of the pandemic among the higher education student community.

An evaluation was undertaken to determine whether the Future Beats Programme contributed to HIV knowledge, attitude and behaviour change amongst student listeners. Data were collected from 2 000 student listeners at two campus and two community radio stations – Barberton Community Radio (Mpumalanga), Emalahleni FM (Mpumalanga), Forte FM (Eastern Cape), and Rhodes Music Radio (Eastern Cape).

The evaluation found that radio and social media were considered as important tools to deliver HIV prevention messages to the South African student community. The knowledge of students on HIV and related social drivers of the pandemic increased through the radio programmes. The evaluation elaborated that over a period of eight months the production of the radio and social media content did motivate students to speak about HIV (40%) and related sexual taboo issues with their peers and even take action to increasingly make use of health services at their local campus or community clinic (18% increase of using services regarding contraception).



Students address sexual and gender-based violence at Umfolozi College

Students and youth gathered at Umfolozi TVET College in Mandeni, KwaZulu-Natal to discuss their concerns and challenges regarding gender-based violence (GBV) in their communities and on campus. The dialogue initiative, organised by HEAIDS in cooperation with the Department of Higher Education and Training, under the theme “Count me in: Together moving a non-violent South Africa forward” formed part of a series of dialogues convened by government to focus on the problem of violence against women, which seems to be pervasive in the post-schooling space. The aim is to provide a platform for students, staff and government to come together to unpack challenges and solutions to the scourge of GBV.

Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize, the then newly appointed Minister of Higher Education and Training, led the dialogue with students, with a clear purpose of wanting to hear student voices on student-led solutions.

The South African Police Services reports that a total 47 069 cases of sexual violence, the majority of which were incidents of

rape, were reported in 2011/12. Of that total, 36% of the cases were reported in KZN. Students account for about 10% of all rapes reported in 2012, which is the most recent year these statistics are available.

“The trauma survivors of gender-based violence deal with compromises to their access to education. Equality and the protection of women’s rights must be the core business of our higher education sector,” said Minister Mkhize. She headed a panel that included Dr Ramneek Ahluwalia, CEO of HEAIDS; Mr Sam Zungu, Principal of uMfolozi TVET College; GBV expert and researcher Professor Nqabomzi Gawe; and TVET college student representative, Miss Manesi Mahlangu, as well as university student representative, Miss Thubelihle Mtshali.

Student leaders agreed that issues such as culture, patriarchy and male privilege are drivers of GBV in South Africa that need to be addressed more in-depth if we want to move forward as a society. Programmes on GBV furthermore have to include the protection of members of the LGBTI community. Many students outlined their experiences of violence on campus and

urged government to increase security measure on campus and create a survivor friendly service to report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence.

On the event panel, Dr Ahluwalia described GBV as “...a massive problem in our higher education sector... the most efficient and effective way to reach millions of households across South Africa, is to empower the students in higher education institutions. As with the HEAIDS peer education model for HIV prevention, I believe that students, well-educated on matters of GBV, will be highly effective agents of social change within our communities.”

Minister Mkhize stated that she was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem of GBV in the higher education sector. “GBV affects individuals from all walks of life, no matter their sexual orientation, age, social standing or gender. It’s about time that this issue receives the serious attention it deserves. We need to increase our budget to ensure the safety of our students and staff on campus,” Minister Mkhize concluded.



Rhodes Music Radio campaigns for gender equality

In the wake of trending hashtags #MenAreTrash and #RURreference, Rhodes Music Radio as part of their Future Beats Programme, embarked on a campaign to highlight the underlying issues these hashtags brought to their campus community. In order to tackle patriarchal norms and values, the campus radio station hosted "Men's Week". "The campaign aspired to push men to give their privilege up in the name of equality," said Chelsea Ogilvy, the station Programming Manager. The idea of the campaign is a result of a Future Beats National Workshop Programme that challenged all participating Future Beats radio stations to engage listeners on toxic masculinity and patriarchy as one of the enablers of gender-based violence in a gender-based violence sensitisation workshop.

The workshop was held on 8 September 2017 in Pretoria and was facilitated by Thulani Greyville Grey, a mental health specialist and HIV expert, who is part of the Future Beats capacity development component that allows the stations to network, share best practices, discuss lessons learnt, and receive information on current issues in the student community.

The Men's Week Campaign conducted by Rhodes Music Radio included the station hosting a talk show facilitating conversation that encouraged men talking honestly and openly about their views on patriarchy. The week ended with a walk creatively called the "lipstick pain walk". The station invited everyone to participate in a social experiment that was aimed at helping men understand the female experience for a brief moment. Participants were required to wear lipstick and had people planted along the route catcalling at those walking down the designated road. The end of the campaign saw men voluntarily pledging to give up their privilege by wiping off their lipstick from the walk as an embodiment of their change.



PrEP officially launched

HEAIDS, in partnership with the Department of Health, has begun to roll out pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to twelve clinics in seven universities across the country. PrEP is a preventative treatment in which HIV negative people at very high risk of HIV infection take anti-HIV medicines daily to lower their chances of being infected. Pre-exposure prophylaxis is now a universally accepted prevention methodology. PrEP is available to students at Nelson Mandela University, Rhodes University, University of Limpopo, University of the Free State, University of Venda, University of Zululand, and Vaal University of Technology. All of these clinics are ARV accredited sites, which is a prerequisite for the roll out of PrEP.

The specific drug that is being distributed is Truvada, as well as a generic drug; which is fixed-dose combination table that reduces the amount of HIV in the body. It is a combination of tenofovir and emtricitabine, and when taken daily it can lower the risk of an HIV infection by 90%. Truvada has been recommended by the World Health Organization as an additional HIV prevention choice for people with a high risk of being infected.

At the University of Zululand, PrEP was officially launched by the MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Maxwell Dhlomo, in partnership with HEAIDS on 23 February 2018. Approximately 2 500 students were present and given comprehensive knowledge about how the treatment works. The MEC stressed that PrEP works in conjunction with other preventative methods, encouraging students to prioritise their health in order to achieve their goals of education.

Veronica Mqwathi, HEAIDS Provincial Coordinator, who was present at the launch, emphasised that, "rolling out PrEP is a great initiative, because it gives students the power to prevent themselves from becoming HIV positive. PrEP is effective as patriarchal norms make young women incredibly vulnerable to transactional relationships where condom negotiation is tricky. The accessibility to PrEP means the most vulnerable in our communities can now empower themselves and take their health into their own hands."

Meanwhile at the University of Venda, a fully packed sport hall of students and university staff engaged with the Director of Health Services in Vhembe District, Robert Sirwali, who encouraged the Univen community to take responsibility for their own health. "I advise you to seek medical assistance whenever you notice the signs and symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases," said Mr Sirwali.

When explaining how PrEP works, Mr Sirwali said that the pill should be taken daily at more or less the same time like your family planning pill. "When you start PrEP medication, it takes seven days for the drug to be effective in preventing HIV and you should continue using condoms whenever you engage in sexual activity as PrEP does not prevent pregnancy or STIs," he added.

HEAIDS Provincial Coordinator, Shibashiba Moabelo, explained that PrEP should not be seen as a substitute to the traditional HIV prevention strategies, it should rather be seen as an additional strategy to prevent people from contracting HIV.

"HEAIDS fully supports the additional prevention strategy to allow youth access to the various prevention strategies. We believe this programme will ensure that students graduate alive and prepare them to live a meaningful and healthy life after graduating as well as contribute positively towards the economic development of the country," Mr Shibashiba concluded.



HEAIDS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GIZ TO CAPACITATE LIFE ORIENTATION LECTURERS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

The results of a baseline survey by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ – German Development Cooperation), implemented at the end of 2017, showed that only a minority of TVET college lecturers are capacitated to teach on issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender diversity and disability.

These findings verified the findings of the HEAIDS baseline study from 2015 which was undertaken to better understand how HIV and related issues were addressed through the TVET life orientation curriculum. Due to these, two studies, GIZ has decided to invest funds and technical expertise in the area of developing toolkits and training TVET college life orientation lecturers in these areas to build on the successes of the HEAIDS NSF Curriculum Programme.

The HEAIDS-GIZ cooperation focuses on the capacitation of TVET college lecturers to teach life orientation at a provincial

and district level in the Eastern Cape, with a specific focus on the three GIZ target districts of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM), Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality and Alfred Nzo District Municipality.

The following five TVET colleges were selected to form part of the pilot programme: Buffalo City TVET College, Lovedale TVET College, East Cape Midlands TVET College, Port Elizabeth TVET College, and Ingwe TVET College.

GIZ has supported HEAIDS with the expertise of two technical advisors, Ms Miriam Behrendt (SRHR and behaviour change communication) and Ms Tanja Siebert-Moloko (gender diversity and disability). The team will assist in reviewing existing lecturer training modules and lecturer training materials with a specific focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender diversity and disability, as well as to capacitate lecturers in workshops on these key issues.

The main aim will be to develop IEC, teaching and learning support material that addresses issues of SRHR, gender diversity and disability. This will be coupled with knowledge and support to make sure that gender diversity and people living with disabilities are mainstreamed by coordinating perspectives of governmental and civil society stakeholders.

The pilot project, which commenced in January 2018, will run until March 2019. All lecturer toolkits and IEC material produced as part of this new initiative will be tested in GIZ target districts in the Eastern Cape and will be reviewed for upscaling after the finalisation of the pilot project phase. This initiative is being undertaken in collaboration with the Curriculum Development and Support Unit at the DHET.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION ON CAMPUSES THROUGH INNOVATION

During the 2017 HEAIDS Youth Conference, UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA and HEAIDS, hosted the two-day Ideathon Workshop to explore innovative solutions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence on campuses.

The event brought together more than 321 students over the two days of idea generation. The workshop harnessed the knowledge, experience and creativity of students, who generated 31 innovative solutions leveraging the power of technology, new systems and processes that could prevent and respond to the challenge of gender-based violence at higher education institutions across South Africa.

Most brainstorming activities result in the generation of a number of ideas. However, in most cases, only one idea – or a collection of ideas combined into one bigger idea is implemented. This does not mean that any one of the solutions is actually the right solution. The idea is to explore a solution that is feasible and

which can leverage existing resources and systems. As part of the development and selection process, a focus group discussion themed “Idea to Prototype” was held on 7 March 2018 at the HEAIDS offices in Centurion, a selected number of divergent partners were present to contribute to a build-up of the project to co-create solutions for addressing gender violence on campuses with young women and men from universities and TVET colleges.

The focus group comprised energetic, diverse and experienced governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, students and academics, telecommunications industry representatives, local and international advocates and government representatives. The 77 original solutions presented were classified into four categories: campaigns, infrastructure, interpersonal interventions, education and digital. These original ideas were tested and whittled down to six innovative design ideas.

During the focus group, participants were requested to select one solution that will be based on one idea or a combination of elements from the six shortlisted ideas. The session was facilitated by Mr Marlon Parker, from R Labs, with support from UN Women in partnership with HEAIDS.

The key design elements for the solution agreed upon will be shared with young people as co-creators of the solution to prevent incidences of gender violence on campuses.

This initiative follows HEAIDS’s establishment of a Technical Task Team to draft a policy for universities and TVET colleges to address gender-based violence at their institutions. The exciting thing about this work is that it gives articulation to much of the intentions of the policy framework.

Photos sourced from UN Women/Otae Mkandawire



BOARD MEMBERS

The new HEAIDS Board was recently appointed and are as follows:

Dr M Price

Vice Chancellor
University of Cape Town

Professor T Mayekiso

Vice Chancellor
Mpumalanga University

Mr M Mabizela

Department of Higher Education and Training
Universities Branch

Ms H Ntlatleng

President
South African College Principals Organisation

Mr SZ Zungu

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Dr R Ahluwalia

Chief Executive Office
Higher Education and Training,
Health, Wellness and Development Centre

Ms M Pillay

Board Secretariat
Higher Education and Training,
Health, Wellness and Development Centre



HEAIDS is a non-profit company under the leadership of the Department of Higher Education and Training that aims at:

- Developing HIV/TB/STIs/SRH prevention programmes for students and staff of post-school education and training system and support the development of institutional capacities and facilities for the treatment, care and support of students and staff living with HIV//TB/STIs/SRH and/or suffering from some other related disease or condition falling within the broad sphere of public health.
- Educating and equipping students in the post-school education and training

system to make a contribution to the national HIV//TB/STIs/SRH response, as well as that related to other related diseases and health conditions identified from time to time, in their future career fields.

- Conducting research and investigative studies that will, through its emphasis on the post school education and training system, strengthen society’s ability to resist and ultimately overcome the HIV//TB/STIs/SRH pandemic, as well as successfully overcome the other public health related conditions as identified from time to time.

- Assisting the post-school education and training system in providing HIV//TB/STIs/SRH services, as well as services related to other conditions in the field of public health, to communities related to these institutions, through outreach projects and practical training programmes.
- HEAIDS works in partnership with Universities South Africa and the South African College Principals Organisation.



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