

Combating HIV and AIDS with nutrition

National food security is a critical issue in Swaziland. Currently, more than one quarter of the population is living on World Food Aid due to poverty, drought and the effects of HIV and AIDS on the yield of traditional subsistence agriculture. The number of orphans and vulnerable children in the country is increasing annually and is estimated to reach more than 100,000 by 2010.

Skillshare International's development worker, Sam Hodgson, works at the Moya Centre which was established in 2001 to address the issue of food security locally through sustainable community interventions and related education on nutrition and HIV and AIDS.

With Sam's assistance, the centre is improving food security and nutrition for the most vulnerable groups through the development of community vegetable gardens using trench gardening. This is a drought tolerant organic method of growing vegetables, developed as a low cost sustainable method of enhancing food security and boosting nutritional intake at household or community level.

Nearly 300 school teachers, students, rural communities, community health workers, volunteers and other non governmental organisation staff who work with over 5,000 children have attended the agricultural training programme which culminates in the establishment of community vegetable gardens, owned and managed by a local committee.

This produce enhances local nutritional intake for children orphaned or made destitute by HIV and AIDS in a way which is financially sustainable for even the poorest communities. School kitchens also use the fresh organic vegetables year round and about 80 per cent of enrolled children take school meals from the kitchens. The result is an improvement in community health which is not dependent on emergency food aid or expensive medical services.

Bonginkhosi Mndzebele who is the Agricultural Trainer at the Moya Centre and works with Sam explains, "This method of empowering communities to become more self-reliant is suitable for poor rural people because it is low cost,

▶ Child at the Moya Centre pre-school

▼ Sam Hodgson (right) with his dad Tony



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drought-resistant and low maintenance. Organic food with a high nutritional value is being produced which boosts the nutritional intake for the most vulnerable people in Swaziland which is essential for maintaining immune health when living with HIV and AIDS." Sam adds, "Agriculture is a way of life in Swaziland so the programme is usually well received and enthusiastically adopted."

Sam's partner Emma Granville is also a development worker in Swaziland and works as the HIV and AIDS programme coordinator at the Media Institute of Southern Africa. Sam said, "I was born in Swaziland when my parents worked here as volunteers with International Voluntary Service in the 1970s. My father was a soil scientist and my mother worked as an English teacher at a local mission school. I had always wanted to spend some time here and get to know the country of my birth."

Returned Development Workers

'Know your status' in Lesotho

When mother-of-three Masintle Motseone finally plucked up the courage to have an HIV test in Lesotho, the nurse revealed her result by blurring out, 'you've got AIDS.'

Masintle's experience was one of many that informed the work of Purity Ngare, a Skillshare International Ireland development worker at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in Lesotho. Purity played her part in tackling the country's extremely high HIV and AIDS rate – 23.2 per cent of adults – by strengthening the government's 'Know your status' campaign to increase public use of HIV and AIDS services.

Arriving in 2005 from Kenya where she'd worked with children with HIV and AIDS, Purity said, "The Basotho (people) expected me to speak their language, even soon after arrival! They thought that since I am an African, I should know (the language of) Sesotho." Purity learnt quickly. Skillshare International Ireland's director Fran Flood, who visited Lesotho in August 2006, said, "Her work was hugely impressive and it was clear that she was very highly regarded by her colleagues."

Purity's job as behaviour change communications adviser, supported by Irish Aid, was to strengthen services by training health professionals in counselling skills, developing education materials and contributing to the government's strategy. The communications

▶ Purity Ngare

aimed to change people's behaviour to prevent infection, encourage them to take an HIV test and deal with the result, access treatment, banish myths and encourage them to support others living with HIV and AIDS.

Purity said, "I later visited a health facility and met a nurse-counsellor I'd trained who told me the communication skills I'd taught her were very useful. She said she listened to patients more keenly and observed their non-verbal behaviour more. I felt completely valued and that my contribution made a real difference to people's lives."

The greatest barrier to HIV and AIDS treatment in Lesotho however is poverty, said Skillshare International's country programme officer in Lesotho, Lydia 'Mapaballo' Mile. She added people living with HIV and AIDS "do not have a regular supply of food, essential for successful antiretroviral therapy, and cannot pay transport costs and fees for health services because most are unemployed and living in very poor socio-economic conditions."

Despite these hurdles Masintle, who has known she is HIV positive for five years now, has started two support groups and educates people in an antenatal clinic and local villages about HIV and AIDS. Before Purity left Lesotho this May she asked Masintle what challenges she has faced as a result of her HIV status. "Many", Masintle replied, "but they have helped make me stronger."

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JARGON-BUSTER ANTIRETROVIRAL (ARV) DRUGS:

Antiretroviral drugs are medications for the treatment of infection by the retrovirus HIV. Different antiretroviral drugs act at various stages of the HIV life cycle. Various combinations of three or four drugs are known as HAART or Highly Active Anti Retroviral Therapy.

Antiretroviral drugs have the potential to dramatically improve the health and extend the lives of some people with HIV and AIDS.

Source: www.wikipedia.org

Development Workers

NEW

- Zoe Walker, Lecturer in General Medicine at UCH, Mozambique
- Sarah Tamulumbye, Programme Manager at SWANNEPHA, Swaziland
- Eri Taniguchi, Gender Adviser at WDC, Nepal
- Caroline Sande Amakobe, Political Dimensions Programme Manager at SARPN, South Africa
- Juliet Muzundo, Occupational Therapist at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Rehabilitation Unit, Lesotho
- Katrine Musgrave, Advocacy Adviser at the Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association, Lesotho
- Adam Musgrave, Advocacy Adviser at the Lesotho National Confederation of the Disabled, Lesotho
- Stephen Donaghy, Programme Management and Development Officer at SCCC, Swaziland
- Gloria Karungi, Capacity Development Officer at GHARP, Kenya
- Caragh Filose, Occupational Therapy Trainer at KCMC, Tanzania

COMPLETED PLACEMENT

- Anju Kumari, Legal Expert at UNIFEM, Nepal
- Kokku Sureshbabu, Community Health Care Trainer at Simajiro District Council, Tanzania
- Purity Ngare, Behaviour Change and Communications Adviser at the Ministry of Health, Lesotho
- Francesca Scott, Regional Capacity Building Officer at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Swaziland
- Meg Schoch, Community Based Tourism Technical Aid at the Swaziland Tourism Authority, Swaziland
- Amechi Wigwe, Doctor at Angoche Hospital, Mozambique
- Pietro Berardi, Renewable Energy Officer at REASWA, Swaziland
- Dereck Jakobi, Organic Farmer at Manav Seva Sansthan, India
- Lynette Jakobi, HIV and AIDS Counsellor at Manav Seva Sansthan, India
- Joanne Inman, Occupational Therapy Trainer at KCMC, Tanzania

Skillshare International News in brief...

Share Your Skills for Skillshare

Share Your Skills is a fundraising initiative we are running in the UK and Lesotho in October. Participants will carry out favours for family and friends – wash a car, bake a cake, mend a bike – in return for pledges towards Skillshare's programmes. Rosemary Conley, the diet and fitness expert, has pledged to take two fitness classes and donate the proceeds to Skillshare International. Further information and pledge sheets are available to download from www.skillshare.org, email fundraising@skillshare.org or telephone +44 (0) 116 254 1862 (UK) or +266 (0) 22 314 292 (Lesotho). **Please join in – even a small amount can make a difference.**

Visiting Leicester to Raise Awareness of HIV and AIDS in India

Sanghamitra Iyengar is the director of Samraksha, an organisation that works in Bangalore, India to reduce the spread of HIV and support people affected by the pandemic. Skillshare International staff, supporters and members met with Sanghamitra at Leicester's New Walk Museum on Tuesday 12th June 2007 and Sanghamitra was also interviewed for Leicestershire's Asian TV station, MATV. Samraksha runs a hospice in Bangalore which has 15 in-patient beds and a clinic which sees 40 out-patients a day. As a result of the dedication and expertise of the hospice staff, 70 per cent of in-patients are able to return to their homes. It costs £120 per day to keep these facilities open. Skillshare International is working with Samraksha to secure long-term funding, but in the meantime the hospice and clinic must rely on donations from the public.

Find out how to donate (online, by post or by phone) at www.skillshare.org/news.htm

Volunteers' Voices Against Poverty

Skillshare International volunteers joined forces with VSO, International Service and Students Partnership Worldwide to make their voices heard at a rally in London on June 2nd. It was a great chance for international volunteering organisations to work together to raise the voice of volunteers – people uniquely qualified to speak up about the causes and impact of poverty. Along with many other organisations we wanted to show politicians that poverty is still an issue of huge concern for the public. We were also joined 'virtually' by supporters and development workers around the world who pledged their voices by email.



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©Skillshare/Jonny Gutteridge

New Workplace Partner

Guidance Ltd (Leicester).



▲ Norman Cook at CFH school in Mali.

Coaching for Hope joins Skillshare International

In July 2007, the innovative Coaching for Hope (CFH) programme which uses football to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, formally became part of Skillshare International.

The CFH programme started in Burkina Faso two years ago by linking football clubs in the UK with coaches in West Africa, and now also has a programme in Mali. Its football schools and art workshops empower young people in developing countries and teach them about HIV and AIDS and key issues affecting their lives. The programme works with girls and boys, able-bodied and those with disabilities. Local youth workers are trained as peer educators and football coaches, connecting the themes of HIV awareness and sport with the young people they work with. This is a new and exciting model of international volunteering for Skillshare International, with coaches from English football clubs spending a week or ten days training local coaches to FA standards in West Africa and then delivering development awareness activities back in the UK.

Skillshare International's CEO, Cliff Allum, explains: "A significant part of the CFH programme focuses on development awareness activities with football clubs, coaches and supporters in the UK. Through football clubs'

community outreach programmes, CFH reaches people who wouldn't normally engage in international development issues."

In June 2007, CFH ran a pilot school for coaching and refereeing in Ramotswa, Botswana. Following its success, the programme is being extended to South Africa where we will open the first coaching school in December 2007 in partnership with Sports Coaches Outreach (SCORE), a South African based NGO leading on sport and development. Cliff Allum, explains "Coaching for Hope has a flagship programme in West Africa, which achieves fantastic results with limited resources. Skillshare International hopes to build on this established programme and extend it to Southern Africa. With South Africa hosting the World Cup in 2010, there is a huge opportunity to build a development profile for sport in the whole region."

The CFH programme, which is supported by DJ Norman Cook (Fatboy Slim), has received significant funding from the English Football Association, FIFA, UK Sport and Adidas. So far, about 120 coaches have been trained in Burkina Faso and Mali and have run HIV awareness and football sessions for over 1,000 young people. For more information, please visit www.coachingforhope.org

G8 PROMISE ON AIDS STILL UNMET

In 2006, an estimated 4.3 million people were newly infected with HIV, and 2.9 million people died from AIDS. The HIV and AIDS crisis is wrecking the lives of people and communities across the world, so when the 2005 G8 promised, "as close as possible to universal access to treatment for all those who need it by 2010," campaigners felt that here was a glimmer of hope. With swift action perhaps by 2010 nobody would be left to die because of lack of treatment.

For the last two years Stop AIDS Campaign members, including Skillshare International, have been keeping the pressure on the UK government to do their bit to keep their word. This year G8 leaders reiterated their promise and made welcome additional promises but non-governmental organisations are hard-pressed to find firm commitments in their words. Perhaps most concerning in its vagueness was the projected \$60 billion to be provided "in the coming years".

The G8 seem reluctant to say exactly what they will do, and when, so the Stop AIDS Campaign has called for the UK to take a definite step with a three-year pledge of £703 million at September's meeting of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Make a difference ... take a photo

It's the second year of our annual photography competition, so why not enter your photos...

Skillshare International prides itself on capturing strong, positive, accurate images of development work and the people touched by our activities. We are looking for strong photos showing how Skillshare International works with its partners.

As well as being featured in our newsletter, the winner – wherever you are – will also receive an **Apple iPod Shuffle**. Two runners-up will receive a **Corsair 2GB Flash Drive**.

A competition is a good way for us to get pictures that will help us raise more money, and it's much more cost effective than employing professional photographers.



Courtesy of Apple

This competition is open to everyone: development workers, partner organisations, trustees, staff and supporters and everybody else involved in our work!

Competition deadline: 31 October 2007. So take them and send them in quick!

Terms and Conditions. Please visit www.skillshare.org to view the terms and conditions of the competition.

Email your photos to: editor@skillshare.org

Or send on a disk to: 126 New Walk, Leicester, LE1 7JA, UK

Editor's Note

Welcome to our third themed edition of Skillshare News. The focus this time is HIV and AIDS.

As one of Skillshare International's themes we aim to mainstream HIV and AIDS in all the work we do. The articles in this issue show you some of the ways we achieve this.

Please feel free to address your comments about this edition and suggestions for future articles to me at the UK office, or by email to editor@skillshare.org

Best wishes

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