



Project background:

In April 2011, in partnership with the KZN Department of Health (DoH), MSF started an HIV/TB project called 'Bending the Curves' in uMlalazi Municipality, King Cetshwayo District. The coverage zone provides an opportunity to demonstrate the outcomes of the activities in both the urban setting of Eshowe and the rural setting of Mbongolwane.

Program background:

HIV Testing Services (HTS) is the most important entry point for HIV-related prevention, support, care and treatment. A large majority of school-aged children in South Africa are HIV negative. HIV prevalence in South Africa is estimated to be 12.7% among the general population although it varies markedly between regions. In Eshowe and Mbongolwane one in four people aged 15-59 is HIV positive.

HTS in schools provides an essential opportunity to promote HIV prevention among students by giving health education and to allow students to know their status and start a long-term habit of regular HIV testing.

In view of the high prevalence of HIV in South Africa, particularly among adolescents, MSF and the Department Of Health, in collaboration with Department of Education have initiated an HTS Campaign to reduce HIV infection and sexually risky behavior amongst school aged children. Implementation of the schools program is held in 38 schools in Eshowe and Mbongolwane, wards 1-14 uMlalazi Municipality in King Cetshwayo District. The program covers both students and teachers.

MSF commenced HTS services in schools in 2012; providing health education and testing services at schools. Each visit commenced with health education in the classes, pre-approved together with the Department of Education and age appropriate; the health education was followed by HIV counselling and testing for those students who chose to test. Schools allocated three days per visit. The allocated time proved insufficient for ongoing support and care and/or continued education and awareness activities. This challenge gave birth to the training of Learner Support agents and/or teachers as HIV/TB focal persons in schools. Learner Support Agents are employed by the Department of Education to provide social support to all students in high schools and primary schools; their original task was to support social cases and/or refer children to other institutions such as Department of Social Development. They are well known by students and physically and psychologically close to enable students to share their private issues; adding HIV/TB issues into their role seemed a logical extension of their duties.

The program provides HIV Testing services, Youth health dialogues, Youth health Camps and health promotion reaching the total 17,160 enrolled students in 2016.

Main objectives:

- ✂ Raise awareness on knowing your HIV/TB status and provide HIV Counselling and Testing services to a maximum number of students
- ✂ Support high school students with key prevention messages in order to take proactive steps to a healthy life style irrespective of HIV Status (such as use of condoms)
- ✂ Raise awareness among students on issues around HIV/TB (including sexual behaviors, Sexually Transmitted Infection, Sexual Gender Based Violence)
- ✂ To reduce stigma amongst HIV Positive Students
- ✂ Increase access to care , improve support and care for high school students who are tested HIV positive
- ✂ Work together with the Department of Education to increase support for the Learner Support Agents program and to assist schools to develop school health policies surrounding HIV/TB.

Main activities and achievement in 2016:

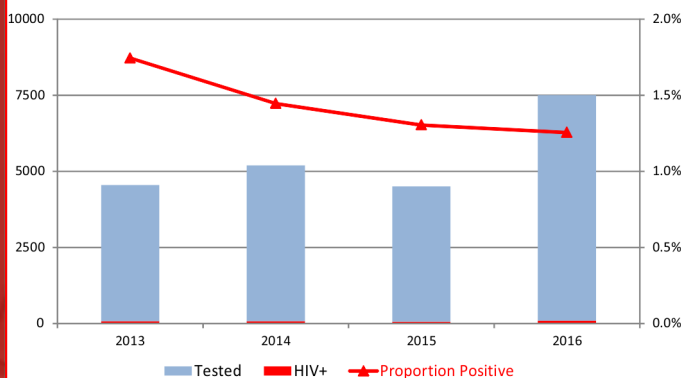
- ✂ Health education for grade 8-12 children, including class education, information desks, materials for distribution;
- ✂ HIV Counseling and Testing in 38 schools by means of a Mobile HIV testing Van; 43% of the children were tested;
- ✂ Training of 32 Learner Support Agents to serve as HIV focal points
- ✂ Facilitated HIV/AIDS training for LSAs and Life Orientation Educators for six districts in KZN upon request of District & Provincial DOE.
- ✂ Facilitated HIV/AIDS component of Family Health Society trainings held for school governing bodies in King Cetshwayo District
- ✂ Medical Male Circumcision recruitment conducted in all schools;
- ✂ Youth dialogues on HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy which were conducted in 12 schools;
- ✂ Awareness campaign on HIV/AIDS and substance abuse in two Primary schools;
- ✂ A youth camp, attended by 68 children aged 13-18, was held in June 2016;
- ✂ Other HIV testing and health promotion services

Plans for 2017:

- ✂ Increase numbers of students who are able to access testing services by visiting each school twice per year
- ✂ To provide initiatives that will assist HIV negative students to remain negative and reduce teenage pregnancy.
- ✂ To continue with initiatives that create a HIV/TB stigma free environment in schools
To continue working with Learner Support Agents / Teachers
- ✂ To reinforce relationships across all sectors in schools: Educators, School Governing Bodies, LSA School Health Services and NGOs working with schools

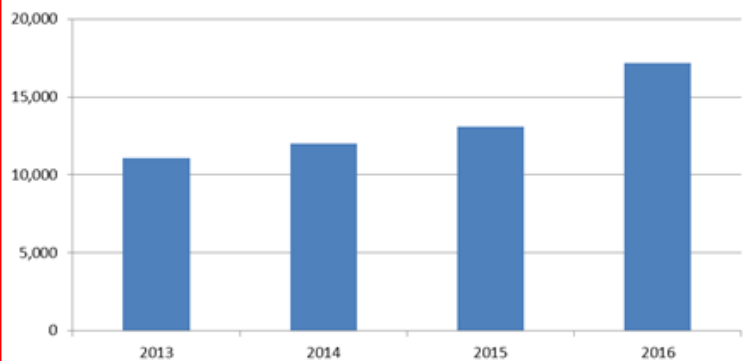


HIV Counselling and Testing Numbers Tested and Proportion Positive



Health Education

Number of Children Provided with Health Education per year



Nokwethemba Dladla,
HIV AIDS coordinator,
KZN Dept of education:

"Our partnership with MSF
is coming with a new
strategy whereby they
take the services
from the offices to
the community"

Nozipho Ndlovu, Learner Support Agent,
Hhashi High School, KZN:

"When MSF has done testing, my job is to
support that child who tested HIV positive and
cannot cope with the situation, so I'm here to support
the learners."

Ziyanda Gazu, Learner,
Hhashi High School KZN:
"Today I chose to test for HIV
because here in our
area the clinics are far and
MSF makes it easier for all
the learners to test"

**THE PROGRAM PROVIDES HIV TESTING SERVICES,
YOUTH HEALTH DIALOGUES
YOUTH HEALTH CAMPS
AND HEALTH PROMOTION
REACHING 17,160
ENROLLED STUDENTS IN 38 SCHOOLS IN 2016.**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
HIV+	78	74	58	93
Tested	4,474	5,120	4,703	7,412
Proportion Positive	1.7%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%
Health Education	11,088	12,008	13,071	17,160