Nkathalo Wellness targets taverns with HIV and migrant health messages

It is said, necessity is the mother of innovation and creativity. This is true for Nkathalo Wellness (Nkathalo), one of the partners working with the USAID-funded Building Local Capacity for Delivery of HIV Services in Southern Africa Project (BLC), which has gone the extra mile to share HIV prevention messages and distribute condoms in taverns.

Under the Migration Corridor project, BLC delivers HIV prevention services to migrants and communities affected by migration through providing civil society partners with performance-based grants and strengthening the organizational and program capacity of partners delivering these services. BLC encouraged Nkathalo to identify key focus areas to disseminate information and screen *Inside Story*¹, a film which combines the fictional story of a rising soccer star with an animated journey of HIV inside his body when he is unknowingly infected. The film was created for an African audience to unravel the mystery of HIV and empower people with the knowledge they need to make informed health decisions.

Nkathalo identified local administrative offices, churches, and taverns in Madibeng and Rustenburg in the North West province of South Africa to target for services.

Nkathalo believes that taverns are prime locations where HIV prevention, treatment, and care messages should be shared. While there are frequently health messages provided in clinics, women are the primary clients. Very few men visit clinics regularly, so there is a need to find strategic and innovative platforms to disseminate these messages to men in communities.

In Madibeng, the taverns are a busy place. During the day, unemployed people of all ages, especially men, visit the tavern to socialize. Sex workers also frequent the taverns.

1 *Inside Story* was produced in 2011 by Quizzical Pictures, a leading South African production company, for the Discovery Learning Alliance through funding from USAID/RHAP, Chevron, Access Bank, Discovery Communications, SEACOM, and UNAIDS. To access the film visit: www.insidestorythemovie.org

Launched in 2010, the USAID-funded Building Local Capacity for Delivery of HIV Services in Southern Africa Project (BLC) strengthens government, parastatal, and civil society entities to effectively address the challenges of the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Throughout the Southern Africa region and with specific activities in six countries, BLC provides technical assistance in organizational development, including leadership, management, and governance in three key program areas: 1) care and support for orphans and vulnerable children; 2) HIV prevention; and 3) community-based care.
To ensure the program is effective, Nkathalo decided to conduct the program in the middle of the month and during the day because people are generally less likely to be intoxicated and may pay more attention to the messages.

The owner of one of the prime taverns in Madibeng, Paul’s Tavern, agreed to host the first session. Because this was their first attempt at this initiative, Nkathalo chose a three minute migration sensitization film from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at a workshop held in March 2014 to test the feasibility of this innovation.\(^2\)

The film was appreciated by the people at the tavern: “the video made participants aware of the need to plan their journey to South Africa. It also made them aware of the difficulties that migrants experience along the way and on arrival in the new community,” said Dakile Ndiwalana, the Director of Nkathalo Wellness. Nkathalo also used the discussion session at the tavern to share information on HIV and risky behavior.

Nkathalo will continue to use this innovative method to reach out to communities in Madibeng and Rustenburg under the Migration Corridor project.

\(^2\) The Building Local Capacity for Delivery of HIV Services in Southern Africa Project and the International Organization for Migration facilitated a migration sensitization workshop in March 2014 for BLC’s Migration Corridor partners to help partners improve their programs to cater for migrants and communities affected by migration. During this session, IOM shared a three-minute movie on how to better prepare for migration.

Nkathalo Wellness (Nkathalo) is one of five organizations receiving small grants under BLC’s Migration Corridor project. Nkathalo operates in Madibeng and Rustenburg, districts of North West province, South Africa. Under this project, Nkathalo offers HIV prevention messages, HIV counseling and testing services, referrals, and tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infection screening.

For more information on Nkathalo, visit: [http://nkathalo.co.za](http://nkathalo.co.za)

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