



# USIZO News

Usizo = Zulu for aid

Volume 2, Issue 1

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*USAID South Africa's newsletter, "Usizo"—Zulu for "aid", Reports important and timely news about activities supported by the American people.*



Photo: RZurba, USAID/SA

**U.S. and S.A. Search and Rescue trainers and trainees**



Photo: RZurba, USAID/SA

**U.S. Search and Rescue trainers providing training**



Photo: RZurba, USAID/SA

**A simulated rescue attempt**

## U.S. Search and Rescue Specialists Train South Africans



Photo: RZurba, USAID/SA

**Clifford assists Adele in a simulated rescue attempt**

From May 23-30, 2007, U.S. search and rescue teams from Fairfax County, Virginia, and Los Angeles County, California, came to South Africa to conduct urban search and rescue training for their South African counterparts. Both U.S. teams have extensive experience with urban disasters around the globe. Rescue South Africa, founded by Ian Scher, hosted the training program with funding provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The program was designed to support South Africa's desire to improve its search and rescue teams for the 2010 World Cup and other major events. In the program, 26 new local trainers and 60 technicians were taught essential search and rescue skills. Rescue South Africa began operations in South Africa in 1999 and since then has assisted other countries such as Iran, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, and Mozambique with their emergencies. Rescue South Africa is a public service that is free of charge. They approached USAID to ask for help with funding. USAID arranged all of the training, selecting trainers from America. According to Scher, the Americans

brought helpful information and Rescue South Africa learned a lot.

*"I'm proud to say I was trained by the best. Without USAID, this would not have been possible. I am glad to be a part of this experience."*

Two of the South African training participants, Adele Swanepoel and Clifford Mokgatle found the experience rewarding. Adele, the only woman trainee, remarked, "I'm glad USAID taught me and South African colleagues how to save lives when buildings collapse or similar disasters occur. Searching for patients and rescuing them is very complicated and if you don't do it the right way, people will die." Adele has worked through the ranks to become a full-fledged firefighter, health and safety coordinator, and now training coordinator at the Potchefstroom Fire Department. She considers her job a "calling" to fight fires and save peoples' lives. She is proud of her accomplishment as the only woman participant in the Rescue South Africa's program with USAID, "I've proven myself and consider this experience a very good achievement." Clifford, who is an Advanced Life Support Practitioner, attended to the "victim" during the simulated rescue effort. He stated, "Guys, you're the best. Thanks a million for all the time, preparation and knowledge shared. I'm proud to say I was trained by the best. Without USAID, this would not have been possible. I am glad to be a part of this experience."



Photo: RZurba, USAID/SA

**Training in session**

## Harvesting The Future Of Investigative Journalism



Without the help of USAID, South African journalist Gloria Edwards might never have been able to advance her career. Financial constraints prevented her from obtaining a formal qualification in journalism, but after completing a USAID-funded Investigative Journalism course at Rhodes University in 2006 several doors have opened for the 24-year-old small-town woman. She was recently announced the Caxton Community Newspapers 2006 Journalist of the

Year and won second place in this national competition's Investigative Journalism category. She also won eighth place in Investigative Journalism at the 2006 Sanlam Community Press Awards.

*"We at USAID are pleased to see the difference made by the United States Government assistance for Gloria and other participants' lives."*

Nomea Masihleho of USAID remarked, "USAID is proud to be associated with the Rhodes' Investigative Journalism program and the excellent results achieved by participants like Gloria. We at USAID are pleased to see the difference made by the United States Government's assistance for Gloria and other participants' lives."

One of Edwards' biggest successes had come just a few months after completing the USAID-funded course when she investi-

gated and exposed a woman posing as a doctor who prescribed fake sick notes and medication to the public. Through Edwards' newly acquired investigative skills, the bogus doctor was sentenced to three years.

Edwards, from the small town of Heidelberg, Gauteng, and married for almost two years, has since won several other awards. She is currently completing a mid-career Honors Degree in Journalism after being chosen from an international pool of applicants as one of 12 students to further advance her tertiary education at the Witwatersrand University, thanks to the USAID-funded course. This program is chiefly designed for journalists with little to no qualifications, where past experience and courses, such as the USAID-funded one, count towards acceptance into the program.



Carleene Dei, USAID Director, (right), presents Gloria with a certificate

## Walking Away From Death's Door



Soweto Hospice staff outside their new building

The young man lay on what everybody thought would be his deathbed in Soweto's only hospice. We will call him Tshepo" (not his real name). While serving a jail sentence for a minor registration offence he was molested and contracted HIV. Prison hospital care was poor. Tshepo's hands got gangrene, so eight of his fingers were amputated. The 28-year-old was released but he didn't know where to go or what to do. Somehow, he found his way to Soweto's Hospice, known to care for those at death's door.

Hospice staff helped the ailing man with medicine and access to antiretroviral treatment (ART). They offered him a bed and gave him healthy meals, proper medical care and counseling. That was three years ago. The medication, care, support and his own determination have saved Tshepo's life.

Ella Danilowitz, of the Hospice Association of Witwatersrand responsible for the Soweto branch, reported: "Tshepo is okay now, showing no symptoms of HIV. He is learning to feed and wash himself. We got a disability grant for him. He was a Hospice resident, but we've discharged him so that he is now in a home care program...he is healthy, chirpy and looking for work."

The Hospice has evolved from a place for those inevitably going to die to a life-saving program.

Ella explains, "We are trying to get patients to a healthier physical state so they can return to be homemakers and parents of their families." USAID, through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), support Soweto Hospice to expand the care available for patients at home.

Soweto Hospice can access AIDS treatment and has trained

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## Walking Away From Death's Door

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Photo: R.Zurba USAID/SA

Hospice staff takes care of a sick babies

caregivers who are helping to rehabilitate patients. Staff members administer medicine, help patients manage their pain, observe patient progress, and step in to treat any side effects. Ella reports, "Of 1000 homecare patients last year, between 20 and 30 people died a month at home or in the patient unit." Despite the country's AIDS epidemic, Ella says, "This year, it looks like the death rate is going down."

The Soweto Hospice has developed the country's first pediatric palliative care ward. Ella calls the homecare program that USAID and PEPFAR support "the core of our activities." Caregivers find children in homes who desperately need the help that the Hospice can provide through a comprehensive program that addresses home-care, preschool, hospital admissions, rehabilitation, and return to society.

The Hospice links nearly 100 children to a nearby nursery

school. Ella said, "They would have been disadvantaged; they are the children of our HIV and AIDS parents in our community." Homecare staff monitors the children's health, ensure vaccinations, and treat any sicknesses. According to Ella, at least 25 percent are likely to be HIV positive, with high Tuberculosis (TB) co-infection. Children receive food to eat with their medication and, along with families, are educated about TB and AIDS prevention and treatment.

USAID has supplied a bus for Hospice staff to visit homes and transport children from school to their homes. The Soweto Hospice has made immense progress this year, moving out of a structure made from metal shipping containers into a brick building.

Hospice's work has also shifted. Many patients are recovering after receiving Hospice staff's professional attention. Many, like Tshepo, who arrived at Soweto Hospice to die, are waving good-bye to the dedicated staff that are glad to see them walk off the premises alive.

*"We are trying to get patients to a healthier physical state so they can return to be homemakers and parents of their families."*

## New Community Courts Increase Access To Justice

USAID supports the South African Government's efforts to address the staggering case backlog by establishing six well-equipped Courts within targeted communities that are in need of more immediate access to the judicial system.

The new Community Courts ease unmanageable caseloads because accused criminals can be arrested, tried and a ruling delivered generally within 24 hours. USAID's Team Leader for Governing Justly and Democratically, Katherine Liesegang, says "USAID's support to develop a national network of Community Courts will enable more people to access justice quickly and equitably."

The Courts deal mainly with minor crimes that cause extensive backlogs. Magistrates use alternative forms of sentencing to promote rehabilitation and avoid overcrowded prisons. One such method is called "Diversion" and helps juvenile lawbreakers to avoid the crime cycle.

*"USAID's support to develop a national network of Community Courts will enable more people to access justice quickly and equitably."*

***Mankweng Community Court in Limpopo Province was the first Court to be formally handed over for South African Government management on May 22, 2007.*** The Court serves a population of more than 205,000.



Photo: R.Zurba, USAID/SA

Ms. Belinda Molamu, Chief Magistrate of Polokwane with Harold Motshwane, from USAID

The other five Community Courts are in the Western Cape, North West, and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces. USAID support includes providing mobile office units, developing community courts guidelines, workshops for stakeholders, a community courts coordinator, printing of carbonized court referral forms, and translating the Diversion Manual from English to Zulu.

President Mbeki's 2004 State of the Nation speech promoted this new way of administering justice: "We will establish at

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# New Community Courts Increase Access To Justice

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least two Community Courts in each province modeled on the Hatfield Community Court [that USAID also supported]... which, in the first month of operation, finalized 200 cases with a 100% conviction rate." The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development Minister and Deputy Minister heeded the President's call to fulfill this initiative and enlisted support from USAID through the South African organization Business Against Crime. The process is well underway with the first six test Courts showing evidence of improving court performance to specifically dispense justice efficiently.

Community Courts are visible, accessible, and proactive. Social services providers and criminal justice professionals work together. The buildings are easily accessible by local people, including the elderly and the disabled. Court procedures are easy for everyone to follow and promote community involvement.



Mankweng Community Court in Limpopo Province

## HIGHLIGHTS



### Tsha Tsha Has Won Again

The African Network for Strategic Communication in Health and Development (AfriComNet) announced the television drama series *Tsha Tsha* as the *best mass media winner in the 2007 AfriComNet awards* in May 2007. The award ceremony took place at the Hilton Hotel in Johannesburg. The awards honour individuals and organisations for innovation and excellence in HIV and AIDS communication in Africa.

*Tsha Tsha* focuses on the challenges faced by young people living in a world of HIV/AIDS. The drama series is set in the fictional rural town of Lubusi in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Professor Patrick Coleman of Johns Hopkins University Health Communication Partnership (JHUHCP) and Johns Hopkins Health and

Education in South Africa (JHHESA) is quoted as saying: "*Tsha Tsha* embodies the best of entertainment education programmes. It has high quality production values and engaging scripts based on solid audience research." *Tsha Tsha*'s approach to entertainment education emphasises the concept of lessons as opposed to messages, as well as audience learning through identification and creative problem-solving approaches.

*Tsha Tsha* is produced for SABC Education by Curious Pictures and the Center for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation (CADRE). Support is provided by Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health Center for Communications Programs and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The drama series has been the recipient of several awards over the years. In June 2007, *Tsha Tsha* won three awards at the 40<sup>th</sup> U.S. International Film and Video Festival. The awards included: First place Gold Camera award in the general education category; the Silver Screen award in the community development category; and a Certificate of Excellence in the social issues category.

The series was broadcast on SABC 1 between 2003 and 2006 and 78 episodes have been broadcast in total. Extensive qualitative and quantitative research have shown that drama series has an impact on positive behavior change in relation to HIV/AIDS.

*The U.S. Agency for International Development provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance worldwide. USAID supports people's efforts to develop themselves and their countries. USAID projects in South Africa move the country closer to its goal of equality and a better life for all. USAID programs from the American people aim to strengthen South Africa politically, socially and economically. Historically disadvantaged South Africans are assisted to improve their abilities in key areas:*

◆ *Governing Justly and Democratically* ◆ *Education* ◆ *HIV/AIDS and Health* ◆ *Economic Growth* ◆ *Peace and Security*

*Americans working with South Africans for South Africans*