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CIPIOS DE LOS PAÍSES BAJOS  
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## Municipal Partnerships in Combating HIV and AIDS

*Municipal cooperation  
between Namibia,  
South Africa and  
the Netherlands*

HIV and AIDS is a huge threat to development of every layer of society. Its impacts are felt on all levels. To address this complex problem, strong leadership, commitment and action are needed from all levels of government. It is increasingly being recognised that the involvement of local government in particular is crucial. Several local governments in the Netherlands are offering assistance to municipalities in Namibia and South Africa in strengthening their capacities to respond to HIV and AIDS. This brochure shows how this is being done, with eight examples of twinning projects between Namibian, South African and Dutch municipalities.



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worldwide

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**GOINGELING  
CAN HELP  
YOU TO  
EXCEPT  
YOUR**

**STATUS**



## Introduction

The number of people living with HIV around the world continues to grow, as does the number of deaths due to AIDS. In 2006, a total of 39.5 million people were living with HIV – 2.6 million more than in 2004. This figure includes the estimated 4.3 million adults and children who were newly infected with HIV in 2006. In many regions of the world, new infections are heavily concentrated among young people (15-24 years of age). In 2006 among adults 15 years and older, young people accounted for 40% of new infections.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the brunt of the global epidemic. Two thirds (63%) of all adults and children with HIV globally live in sub-Saharan Africa, with its epicentre in southern Africa and 34% of all deaths due to AIDS in 2006 occurred there.<sup>1</sup>

HIV and AIDS is a huge threat to development of every layer of society. Its impacts are felt on all levels. It affects individuals, households and communities. It affects many basic services provided by government, such as housing and education. To address this complex problem, strong leadership, commitment and action are needed from all levels of government. Globally, HIV and AIDS is more and more being seen as a governance issue.

It is increasingly being recognized that the involvement of local government (municipalities) in particular is crucial. As the level of government closest to the people and as provider of many basic services such as housing, water, sanitation and healthcare, local governments have a crucial role to play in the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, they often lack the human and financial capacities to do so.

Several local governments in the Netherlands are offering assistance to municipalities in Namibia and South Africa in strengthening their capacities to respond to HIV and AIDS. This brochure shows how this is being done, with eight examples of twinning projects between Namibian, South African and Dutch municipalities.

## The relationship between local government and HIV and AIDS

In recent years, the national governments of Namibia and South Africa have developed elaborate national HIV and AIDS policies and strategic plans to address the challenge. One of the core ideas is that the success of the multi-sectoral response to fight HIV and AIDS will to a large extent depend on effective and coordinated management of the many activities implemented by all levels of government and civil society. Local government is one of these levels.

While affecting countless individual lives and livelihoods, HIV and AIDS also have the potential to undermine local governance. Through its profound impact on health and human resources, HIV and AIDS undermines the capacity of local governments to carry out their core functions of local service delivery (particularly to the poor) and local economic development. As more people are infected with HIV and AIDS, a municipality sees a decrease in labour productivity, increased demand for services, lower capacity of users to pay for these services, greater household vulnerability and increased numbers of absolute poor (e.g. orphans, people living with HIV and AIDS). The climate for private investment deteriorates and local government itself suffers the absenteeism and productivity losses that result from increasing prevalence.

Not only are municipalities faced with the changing needs of communities and households, but the epidemic also directly impacts municipalities as service provider and employer. Municipal revenues required for service delivery are affected as households lose breadwinners, and income and savings are spent on HIV and AIDS-related needs. As a result, less income is available to pay government levies. In the workplace, municipal employees are infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, just like workers in any other organisation. The effects range from increased absenteeism, morbidity and mortality to a drop in morale and the loss of skills and experience, which worsen the municipality's capacity to deliver services.<sup>2</sup>

# What can municipalities do?

Municipalities respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic by taking action at three levels recognised by multilateral donors and governments. Each level applies to a particular municipal function.

## 1 The municipality as employer

It is the responsibility of an employer to provide its employees with a healthy and safe working environment and to support them in this. As HIV and AIDS affect this, local governments must therefore develop an internal response by integrating HIV and AIDS as a priority in their workplace policies. A good workplace policy should include activities in the field of prevention, care and support.

## 2 The municipality as service provider

The HIV and AIDS pandemic changes the needs for both existing and new services. HIV and AIDS change the municipal service needs of individuals and households and affect the social and economic development of communities. Communities that lack basic infrastructure services, such as clean water, good quality housing and sanitation, are particularly vulnerable to the disease. To give a few examples, unsafe water increases the risk of diarrhoea, while poor solid-waste management enhances the chances of transmitting microbiological infections and viruses. High population density, such as in informal settlements, increases the opportunities for sexual networking and thereby the risks of contracting the virus. The greater number of child-headed households, with their related vulnerabilities and special needs, is another implication of the HIV and AIDS epidemic that requires municipal attention.<sup>3</sup>

All this suggests municipalities should mainstream HIV and AIDS in their overall service provision and municipal policies. For municipalities mainstreaming means that each municipal department should prioritise HIV and AIDS in all municipal processes from planning, implementation and budgeting to monitoring and evaluation. Municipal departments should consider which interventions might exacerbate the epidemic in the area and which might help slow it down and reduce its impact.<sup>4</sup> Mainstreaming requires strong cooperation and consultation between the various departments in the municipality.

## 3 The municipality as coordinator

In many municipalities, there are multiple organisations helping fight HIV and AIDS. They include churches, foundations, community-based organisations (CBOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector initiatives. Municipalities are often in the best position to act as coordinators of all the many activities that the organisations above are undertaking within their locality. This does not mean that they have to target all issues themselves, but that they should be aware



of all initiatives on HIV and AIDS in order to broaden the scope of the spin-off and avoid duplication.

One way in which municipalities can act as coordinator is by establishing a local HIV and AIDS Committee in which all organisations locally active are represented. These committees meet regularly and act as a coordinating vehicle between all organisations involved, so bridging possible gaps in effort. The committees can also function as a local knowledge network, in which the several member organisations share knowledge and information about for example funding possibilities, local policies concerning HIV and AIDS, and the like.

## Assistance by twinning: the colleague-to- colleague approach

In developing and implementing their response to HIV and AIDS, municipalities in South Africa and Namibia face many challenges. Pressure on the often limited available human and financial capacity is high. External advice and assistance from trusted partners is often welcome.

One way this assistance can be provided is by international municipal cooperation. Such cooperation, often referred to as *twinning*, has existed for many decades. Extensive experience has been acquired. Such international cooperation has become highly professionalised and is now valued as a constructive approach complementary to other approaches. Since the early nineties, Namibian and South African municipalities have had twinning arrangements with Dutch municipalities to support capacity development of local government.

Although the consequences of HIV and AIDS are different in the Netherlands and southern Africa, the theme is certainly worthy of South-North knowledge sharing. For example, the models for cooperation between Dutch municipalities and institutions responsible for health care, education and municipal management, can be used by municipalities in the South in their integral response to HIV and AIDS. Here all organisations cooperate to reach the same goal and this requires careful and skilful coordination. Dutch municipalities also assist in more specific policy areas, such as the design of workplace policies (employer function) and special services related to HIV and AIDS and youth (service provider function).

The approach used in twinning is also known as the colleague-to-colleague approach. This approach is non-hierarchical and implies sharing of know-how and so investing in people and instilling confidence. The colleague-to-colleague approach increases the sense of understanding, trust, and above all partnership, which is essential for success. The approach involves short term assistance which is provided by municipal experts to their colleagues abroad who have similar tasks and responsibilities in their municipalities.

Twinning partners from the Netherlands and Namibia after signing their cooperation agreement



## LOGO South Programme (2005-2010)

The LOGO South Programme seeks to strengthen local government by developing capacity. LOGO South has a strong focus on human capacity, so target groups include local governors (politicians and decision makers) and civil servants (policy-makers and implementers). The programme consists of three main components: *Municipal International Cooperation, Association Capacity Building and Research.*

The Municipal International Cooperation component (currently being implemented in 12 countries) involves municipalities implementing projects on one subject with their Dutch partner municipalities in so-called *twinnings*. Regular exchanges between the partners in the beneficiary country and dissemination of lessons learnt from these projects to other municipalities are key elements. Besides the 12 country programmes, there are four thematic programmes, in which South-South exchanges are a central element. The *Thematic Programme on HIV and AIDS* is one of these programmes. The aim of the programme is to strengthen the local government HIV and AIDS response in Southern Africa by improving local

government strategies in the field of HIV and AIDS. At this moment, three Namibian, five South African and eight Dutch municipalities are participating in this programme.

The LOGO South Programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by VNG International. VNG International is the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG). Its mission is to strengthen good local government worldwide. For more information, please visit [www.vng-international.nl](http://www.vng-international.nl)





Materials used in HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns in Namibia

## HIV and AIDS in Namibia

Namibia ranks among the five countries in the world most heavily affected by HIV and AIDS. It has a population of about 2 million; in 2006, overall prevalence in the country was 19.9% with regional variations from 7,9% in Gobabis to 39,4% in Katima Mulilo.<sup>5</sup>

The impact of the epidemic has been profound: AIDS is now the leading cause of death in the region, and as a result, Namibia has one of the highest proportions of orphans in the world. Life expectancy fell from 60 in 1991, to 42 in 2002. It is expected to further decrease to below 40 by 2010. In addition, Namibia is feeling the effects of the epidemic in terms of stagnating economic development and production.

The Namibian government has demonstrated willingness to invest both political and financial resources to respond to HIV and AIDS.

The national response is guided by five-year strategic frameworks (Medium Term Plans).<sup>6</sup> Primary objectives are reducing infection and thus transmission, and expanding the capacity of multi-sectoral responses to mitigate socio-economic impacts of HIV and AIDS. The government has called for strong leadership from regional and local governments, civil society and the private sector. Substantial inputs are channelled through the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MOHSS), whose main role is to coordinate and manage the programmes within MTP III and support to other partners. Regional and local governments are recognized as important partners.

## HIV and AIDS in South Africa

South Africa suffers a mature and generalized HIV and AIDS epidemic, described as one of the worst AIDS epidemics in the world. AIDS-related death rates are rising, with mortality among females aged 20–39 more than tripling between 1997 and 2004. Over the same period, deaths due to AIDS-related conditions, such as tuberculosis, in the age group 25–29 years increased six-fold among females and tripled among males.<sup>7</sup>

In 2005, according to a 2006 United Nations (UNAIDS) report, South Africa's population was over 47 million and an estimated 5.5 million South Africans were living with HIV. It was further reported that 320,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses in South Africa in 2005 or about 900 deaths daily. Life expectancy at birth is forecast to continue to decline as a result of the epidemic.<sup>8</sup>

As its contribution to the national response to HIV and AIDS, South Africa's Department of Provincial and Local Government (the DPLG) published the Framework for an Integrated Local Government Response to HIV and AIDS to serve as guide for municipalities on how to respond to the epidemic in partnership with other spheres of government and other stakeholders.<sup>9</sup>

# The projects

# The Otjiwarongo Multi-Purpose Help Centre

## Twinning partners:

- **Otjiwarongo municipality (Namibia)**
- **Heusden municipality (the Netherlands)**

Otjiwarongo is a town with about 30,000 inhabitants and a strong regional function. It is situated to the North of the capital Windhoek at the junction to the northern part of Namibia. In 2003, with financial support from the Netherlands, the municipality built a Multi-Purpose Help Centre (OMPHC) as the central coordination point for many HIV and AIDS-related activities. Managers from Heusden trained the Centre manager who is now responsible for many different projects. Orphans and vulnerable children are taken care of, receive a daily meal, do their homework and are taught hygiene. The Centre manager also handles the training of HIV and AIDS counsellors, home-based care givers and a milk formula project (distribution of milk powder for babies of infected mothers).

The centre is raising funds through income generating projects such as bread baking, sewing and gardening. The OMPHC is an important place for support groups, peer education and awareness campaigns. It is a central place where citizens and young people come for information and contact. As a result of the twinning project with its Dutch partner Heusden, Otjiwarongo appointed a coordinator of the many HIV and AIDS activities in Otjiwarongo. The municipality of Heusden assists colleagues in Otjiwarongo in many areas including developing a business plan for the centre and advising on how to incorporate the centre in the municipal structure.



NAMIBIA



# Coordinating HIV and AIDS Activities in Rundu Town Council

## Twinning partners:

- **Rundu Town Council**  
(Namibia)
- **Municipality of Nieuwegein**  
(the Netherlands)

In the Kavango region in North East Namibia, where Rundu is situated, an estimated 22% of the adult population is HIV positive. This brings many challenges to the municipality. Since 2005, the twinning between Rundu and Nieuwegein (dating to 1994) has focused on mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS in Rundu. Experts from Nieuwegein are providing assistance in two fields: the establishment and operation of the local HIV and AIDS Committee and the implementation of a Small Grants Fund.

The HIV and AIDS Committee brings together a variety of local organisations operating in the field of HIV and AIDS. They meet regularly to exchange information, discuss their activities, seek cooperation and avoid work overlap. The secretariat of the Committee is hosted by Rundu Town Council.

The Small Grants Fund funds local organisations in Rundu in work which relates to HIV and AIDS, such as small income generating activities. The fund is administered by the HIV and AIDS coordinator of Rundu Town Council. At this moment, 15 applications have been approved, among which projects on gardening, poultry, a soup kitchen for orphans and vulnerable children, community capacity building activities and a prevention and awareness project.

## HIV and AIDS Prevention in Gobabis Municipality

### Twinning partners:

- **Gobabis municipality**  
(Namibia)
- **Smallingerland**  
(the Netherlands)

Gobabis is the capital of the Omaheke Region in the East of Namibia. Close to the border of Botswana, it is also the stopover for truckers on the Trans Kalahari Highway before or after crossing the Kalahari Desert. This makes it a high risk entry point for HIV and AIDS. Gobabis and Smallerland have been partners for over twelve years. After the Independence of Namibia, Smallerland was one of the first foreign municipalities to establish a partnership with a municipality in Namibia. The first visit of local leaders from Gobabis to Smallerland took place in November 1992.

Since 2005, the LOGO South funded part of the twinning focuses on assisting Gobabis in playing a more active role in the mitigation of HIV and AIDS-related problems in the municipality. Early 2006, a local HIV and AIDS coordinator was appointed. After extensive training by experts from Smallerland, she is now conducting awareness raising activities, information sessions and condom demonstrations throughout the town. She is also an active member of the Municipal HIV and AIDS Committee of the municipality. Under the twinning project, the municipal HIV and AIDS policy has been reviewed, information visits to school AIDS Clubs have been undertaken and a knowledge survey among municipal employees has been conducted.

The municipality distributes HIV and AIDS information materials and is providing home-based care services to people affected. Recently, Gobabis has also started a Small Grants Fund on HIV and AIDS for small income generating projects. Smallerland provides assistance and advice on all these activities.

## Educating the Youth in the City of Tshwane

### Twinning partners:

- City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (South Africa)
- Delft Municipality (the Netherlands)

The City of Tshwane (former known as Pretoria) has about 1.8 million inhabitants. It is one of South Africa's largest cities and, with an AIDS prevalence of about 10 percent, has a special AIDS Unit. This implements municipal policies on HIV and AIDS, and acts as a strategic structure to ensure the most appropriate interventions in the prevention of HIV infection. The AIDS Unit is responsible for the implementation of the municipal HIV and AIDS strategy for youth, one of the largest vulnerable groups in the municipality. The AIDS Unit cooperates with so-called *caretakers* who support, assist, and educate youth on HIV and AIDS-related topics. This is a complex task, and the caretakers' limited experience in communication with the young caused several challenges. Experts from the municipality of Delft, with extensive experience in the development of educational programmes for youth, are assisting their colleagues in Tshwane. They have together developed a manual on life skills and an educational plan to train the caretakers. The staff of the AIDS Unit is also trained how to use these methods in the most efficient way to make sure that the youngsters in Tshwane know they have a choice and can prevent getting infected with HIV.



SOUTH AFRICA



## Improved Coordinated Response in Buffalo City Municipality

### Twinning partners:

- **Buffalo City Municipality**  
(South Africa)
- **Leiden Municipality**  
(the Netherlands)

The twinning between Leiden and Buffalo City Municipality (BCM) focuses on how to assist the most vulnerable groups in the HIV and AIDS response: orphans and vulnerable children, youth at risk, women, the aged and disabled. Among other initiatives Buffalo City adopted the *One Stop Centre approach* from Leiden. Staff and citizens of BCM can actually access various services offered by BCM from three different locations. Services include expanding databases with important municipal forms, information on HIV and AIDS, a multi-sector AIDS forum which includes all organisations dealing with health, care and welfare within the municipality, and a youth forum. Through training and workshops, Leiden assists BCM staff in strengthening their project management and customer care skills, developing a plan for initiating youth-friendly services, and defining municipal staff policy in relation to gender and disability. For rural areas a mobile One Stop Centre is being created, which will provide information and HIV and AIDS-related services to those who currently have poor access to it.

# Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in Emfuleni municipality

## Twining partners:

- **Emfuleni municipality**  
(South Africa)
- **Eindhoven municipality**  
(the Netherlands)

Emfuleni faced several challenges in responding to HIV and AIDS. The main ones were the existence of programmes which are not community-based, the lack of a proper platform to discuss ideas and activities in the field of HIV and AIDS within the municipality, NGOs and the private sector, and mainstreaming the existing Interdepartmental Forum in the policies of municipal departments and different sectors.

To increase Emfuleni's capacity to fight HIV and AIDS, a local coordinator was appointed in the municipal structure. Eindhoven assisted in training this coordinator to strengthen her role in the municipality. Eindhoven also advised how to establish and keep functioning an Intersectoral AIDS Forum in order to address the problem of HIV and AIDS from the local level in a coordinated and effective way.

A local youth initiative on HIV and AIDS that de-stigmatizes and creates awareness has been formulated and is being implemented in a community-based pilot. Here training materials are being developed. Based on these, the youth policy project team, health workers, youth and the project coordinators will be trained to facilitate empowerment training for youngsters within the community as part of the community-based pilot. Experts on lobbying and networking, communication and coordination from the municipality of Eindhoven are advising Emfuleni on how to coordinate existing policies and the stakeholders involved, how to work together to come to effective results, how to work with donors and how to approach and cooperate with the press.

# A Workplace Wellness Programme for Employees in Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Municipality

## Twinning partners:

- Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBMM, South Africa)
- Oostzaan in cooperation with Alkmaar, Heerhugowaard, Amstelveen, and Zaanstad (the Netherlands)

Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Municipality (NMBMM) recognises that HIV and AIDS is a social and business risk which can negatively impact its workforce. The HIV and AIDS pandemic is diminishing the municipality's ability to deliver on its service provision and developmental agenda. NMBMM identified the need to integrate wellness with other workplace programmes to protect and support its employees and communities in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The purpose of the project is to attempt to prevent the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on the staff of NMBMM. In 2007, Oostzaan started to advise their partner in the implementation of a Workplace Wellness Programme for Employees by mainstreaming the Interdepartmental Forum and the Institutional Plan on HIV and AIDS for the municipality. This will be realized by developing and implementing a cross-cutting strategy, based on lessons learned by the City of Cape Town and Buffalo City Municipality. Through Peer Educators within the municipality, employees are trained on HIV and AIDS-related topics to increase staff awareness on the risks of infection.

# An HIV and AIDS Policy for Oudtshoorn

## Twinning partners:

- Oudtshoorn municipality  
(South Africa)
- Alphen aan den Rijn municipality  
(the Netherlands)

The prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the municipality Oudtshoorn led to the demand to cooperate within an existing partnership with Alphen aan den Rijn in integrating the topic HIV and AIDS thinking in the municipality. In order to raise awareness within both the municipality internally as well as within the community of Oudtshoorn, a municipal policy on HIV and AIDS has been formulated. As a result various activities are being implemented, including a communication plan, educational programmes and creating a service point for coordination and direction of local community initiatives and facilities. These initiatives will raise municipal employees' and community's knowledge on HIV and AIDS.

The HIV and AIDS  
coordinator of Gobabis  
Municipality informs  
citizens on HIV and AIDS







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- LOGO South Thematic Programme Local responses to HIV and AIDS, VNG International, May 2006
- The National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS (MTPIII) 2004-2009, Republic of Namibia

## Further reading

Alphen aan den Rijn: [www.alphenaandenrijn.nl](http://www.alphenaandenrijn.nl)  
Oudtshoorn Municipality: [www.oudtmun.co.za](http://www.oudtmun.co.za)  
Delft: [www.gemeentedelft.info/gvscriptvk/dspage.asp](http://www.gemeentedelft.info/gvscriptvk/dspage.asp)  
City of Tshwane: [www.tshwane.gov.za](http://www.tshwane.gov.za)  
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Emfuleni Local Municipality: [www.emfuleni.gov.za](http://www.emfuleni.gov.za)  
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VNG International: [www.vng-international.nl](http://www.vng-international.nl)  
Centre for Municipal Research and Advice: [www.cmra.org.za](http://www.cmra.org.za)  
South African Local Government Association: [www.salga.net](http://www.salga.net)

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VNG International supports decentralisation processes and facilitates decentralised cooperation. The organisation strengthens local governments, their associations, training institutes and decentralisation task forces both in the developing countries as in countries in transition. In addition, our Service Bureau Europe assists municipalities from the Netherlands and other EU countries in accessing European subsidies. We have a large network of internationally experienced experts, most of whom are municipal practitioners. Our home office counts 45 dedicated staff. Ten more work for our project offices. We have two daughter companies: MEPCO and CMRA. MEPCO is a joint venture of VNG International and the Union of Towns and Municipalities in the Czech Republic; CMRA is a joint venture of VNG International and the South African Local Government Association.

