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#### **Track 4– Best Practices and Programme**

**Requiring a Uniting Response – together making a difference.**

#### **Social Grants and Community Mobilisation with Local Government Services**

##### **Background:**

**“It is the children who suffer.”**

**(Mail & Guardian February 25 to March 3 2005; p10)**

A Youth community project taking the initiative to address the link between Poverty and HIV/AIDS. A major factor contributing to the link between Poverty and HIV/AIDS is that many people, especially children who are living with HIV/AIDS in poorer semi-urban/rural communities, face the daunting task of not having basic nutrition and food support. The Youth HIV/AIDS Programme under the Catholic Justice and Peace in the Diocese of Rustenburg started the Identity and Birth Certificate Campaign in 2002 to reduce poverty within local communities through accessing Social Grants provided by the Department of Social Development.

##### **Methods:**

The programme started with community meetings aimed at addressing the needs of youth and teenagers, especially in the field of HIV/AIDS. The outcomes of these meetings showed that many communities who had Orphans and Vulnerable Children – especially those with Child Headed Households affected by HIV/AIDS - had no birth certificates and no identity documents. Therefore social grants were not accessible to assist them. The project obtained the necessary information through the Home Based Carers in the different villages and informal community surveys. The project used this important information to lobby and meet with the local Departments of Home Affairs and Social Development. The project subsequently advocated that these departments rollout their services by bringing their local personnel and machinery to these different villages, rather than have people travel long distances to offices in urban areas

##### **Results:**

Reduction of poverty within affected communities and families through access to identity documents and social grants. Many children who had no birth certificates and identity documents have now obtained them via this programme. Some of these families and children have accessed social grants and most of the children have been registered at their nearest community school. This programme has assisted many people to have a sense of identity.

##### **Conclusions:**

This method of community mobilising and partnership with the local government services have shown that these initiatives can work when full collaboration and co-ordination takes place. It fosters unity and the accountability of all stakeholders involved in this process. This programme has now been replicated in the Catholic Dioceses of Klerksdorp and Bethlehem. As a leading practice model, this project strives to grow and extend into other geographical areas.