

Catholic Church Partners with the Department of Health to Combat TB and Promote Quality Life for South Africans.



SACBC TB Screening Team Together with South Africa Medical Research Centre Team During their Meeting in Glenmore Catholic Pastoral Centre in Durban. (Photo by Paul Tatu)

Building and promoting quality life for all South Africans has been part of the uncompromised nature of the mission of the Catholic Church for the past 200 hundred years of her existence in the region. Millions of South Africans have benefited in the countless number of *pro bono* Catholic Church projects, which are still going on even today. To mention the few; the Church for the whole mentioned time has been the pillar of quality education, quality health services, in form and shape, and the pillar of quality leadership in the country. It is impossible; therefore to talk of a better developed South Africa today without acknowledging the ample contribution of the Catholic Church in making South Africa what it is today, hence the church continues to advance her mission by being a close partner a government can always rely to promote a quality nation.

Funded by Global Fund through the National Department of Health TB Directorate, SACBC has become a reliable and competent service provider for the National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD), in a project that screens TB contacts in Nelson Mandela Bay, Ehlanzeni and eThekweni. The project has been running from July 2017 and it will end in March 2019.

As part of the mitigating strategy for a high rate of employment in South Africa, through this project SACBC has employed the following people, who were totally not employed: Project Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Finance Officer. Further, it has employed a

total of 47 officers (3 Professional Nurses, 6 Linkage officers, 4 Team leaders and 34 TB screeners) employed in the districts mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, in the area of implementation, on behalf of NDoH, as part of contribution towards skill development, the project has created employment for the graduates and the qualified nurses that were not employed. Among others, SACBC has employed a qualified social worker, a qualified B.Sc. (in applied Maths and Chemistry) student, and 12 unemployed enrolled professional nurses.

The employees are responsible for different activities for the smooth running of the project: The professional nurses are responsible for the management of the site offices. They are the link between the site offices and the Department of Health in the area of operation. In each area the team is working very closely with the clinics, serving the community under which the project is taking place. Therefore it is the responsibility of the nurses to make contact, create and maintain quality working relationships with the health facilities and other relevant stakeholders.

The positive cases during screening of TB and other related diseases are referred to the health institutions nearby and they are closely monitored. So far there has been positive follow ups and clear evidence that the referred patients are reporting back to the relevant health facilities for treatment.

In the beginning the project experienced a slow start but through the active participation and collaboration of different stakeholders the project has shaped up and things have started running smoothly, except for some challenges here and there. In all three municipalities the project is performing beyond the set target which is measured on daily and weekly bases, a ground for hope that the project will be highly successful.

As partners of the Department of Health and other stakeholders in the fight against TB, we honoured the World TB day on the 24th March 2018 through awareness and screening campaigns, and we continued the same work throughout the TB month of March by doing the following activities added to our usual programs:

- ~ On the 5th of March 2018, we took part in the door to door screening accompanying the MEC for health in Kwa Zulu Natal, Bhambayi area.
- ~ On 6th of March, we held a consultative meeting with the religious in the eThekweni area. Agreements reached was that they will also take part in the prevention of TB, they will also invite the SACBC team to do advocacy and screening at their different Parishes throughout the year.
- ~ On the 9th of March, we were invited to address Catholic Youth at eNtshongweni Youth Pilgrimage 2018 on TB, HIV and STI as part of advocacy.
- ~ On the 22nd of March we participated in the screening activities during the World TB day commemoration in Carto Manor. This was a provincial celebration which was honoured by the Minister of Health Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi.
- ~ On the 27/03/2018 of March 2018, the team was invited by Msogwaba clinic (Mpumalanga Province) to be part of the organized **Community Dialogue** about TB. Msogwaba has been identified as one of the areas having high rate of TB cases reported to the department.

During all the campaigns the following important factors about TB were also explained to the communities:

- ~ The signs and symptoms of TB
- ~ The importance of screening for TB
- ~ Compliance to TB treatment after diagnosed

The SACBC team was given a chance to give an overview of their daily activities and explain the services they render in the places where they are working, such as around Msogwaba area where they do a screening for TB, HIV and STI, then after refer positive cases to the nearby health facilities.

During the campaigns some dialogues were initiated to give the communities an opportunity to raise up some of the challenges they are experiencing in relation to TB. At the end SACBC team was given the opportunity to do the screenings of some the attendees.

This report was compiled by Ms Maredi Modiba (Manager of the Project under SACBC Aids Office) in Collaboration with SACBC Communication and Media Office.

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