

## **A BETTER LIFE DESCENDS ON THE PEOPLE OF MQATSHENI**



**HAPPY: Ms Neliswa Nkonyeni MEC for Health in KZN (middle in black dress) greets jubilant community members at her arrival in the sod-turning event at Mqatsheni village in Underburg**

**A** glimmer of hope for the better life shone on the people of Mqatsheni village when Ms Neliswa Nkonyeni, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health, turned a sod for a clinic to be built in the area in the near future.

Mqatsheni village, in the KwaSani Local Municipality, is in a very remote locale on the border of KwaZulu-Natal and Lesotho. This area is still very much challenged as it lacks basic amenities such as water and electricity. At present the health services to the area are provided by mobile clinics.

These challenges may soon be thing of the past as, The Honourable Councillor J.P. Khoza, the Sisonke District Municipality Mayor, also launched a water supply project to this community on the same day.

MEC Nkonyeni also touched base on the diseases burden suffered by the rural and poor communities such as tuberculosis (TB). She advised the community to make use of government initiatives to combat these diseases and go to the health facilities to test for TB if they have some symptoms of the disease. She also warned about the hazards of not taking treatment properly as this may lead to XDR or MDR TB.

MEC Nkonyeni also handed out 10 wheel chairs, 20 walking sticks, and 20 reading glasses to the

**MARCHING TOWARDS MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS DREAM****CARING: Our dedicated staff busy at work during one of community outreach projects**

**S**isonke Health District received yet another accolade as was recently pronounced as the best performing health district in KwaZulu-Natal to meet Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations-and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Sisonke Health District performance has been remarkable and in some areas has far surpassed national and provincial targets.

For an example, the efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger are bearing fruits as the incidences of severe malnutrition to under-1 year old children are at 0,4%.

Maternal health has improved tremendously given that only 8 cases of maternal deaths were reported in 2008/9 annual report.

Some strides have been made to combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Indications show that HIV prevalence is at 27.4%.

Sisonke District is malaria free.

The fight against TB is also gaining momentum seeing that TB treatment interruption rate decreased by 6.7%, smear conversion rate is 51% (2 months) and 63% (3 months) respectively, the cure rate is at 66% and interruption rate is at 6.7%.

## KHANYA AFRICA SHINES THE SPARKLING LIGHT ON LIVES OF THE NEEDY

Since the launch of Khanya Africa voluntary programme underprivileged communities in Sisonke Health District have managed to access free health services in their own backyards.

**Sisonke Ngempilo** speaks to Ms Vamisile Khumalo, the Khanya Africa Sisonke District Coordinator who also serves as the programme's Provincial Secretary.

**Sisonke Ngempilo: Please explain the Khanya Africa concept**

**Vamisile Khumalo:** Khanya Africa is a voluntary organisation that is aimed at assisting the underprivileged communities to gain access to quality health care. This goal is achieved through promoting the spirit of voluntarism and team approach to health care programmes.

**SN: Who are the main beneficiaries of Khanya Africa programmes**

**VK:** As is indicated earlier on, the beneficiaries of Khanya Africa outreach are those communities that the Department of Health has a difficulty to reach, for an example, areas that do not have a residential or mobile clinic.

**SN: What has been the response of volunteers in the Sisonke District**

**VK:** Khanya Africa has been very successful in the district. The response from health care workers has been very positive including all health professions. We are also grateful for the positive response we have received from the NGO sector in the District. Currently there are about +/- 450 members within the district.

**SN: What relationship does Khanya Africa has with the Department of Health?**

**VK:** Currently Khanya Africa is supported by the Department of Health. The majority of our volunteers are from the DoH, composed of various occupational categories, volunteering with their time and skills in rendering health services to needy communities. We use departmental resources like transport, equipments (medical and none medical)

**SN: What has been the impact of Khanya Africa outreach programmes in Sisonke District?**

**VK:** Khanya Africa has managed to have four out-



**SERVANT: Ms Vamisile Khumalo the Khanya Africa's Sisonke District Coordinator and Provincial Secretary**

reach visits so far in a period of four months. The first one was at Nonguqa in Bulwer, and the follow-up thereafter. The third visit was at KwaShoba where Khanya Africa managed to consult 1956 clients with only 150 staff members in one day. The fourth outreach was at Kroomhoek in eMzimkhulu where Khanya Africa has seen 1200 clients with 100 staff members. The services that were provided were very comprehensive, to mention a few, vascular diseases screening, TB testing, VCT, dental, ophthalmic, rehabilitation, Social Workers, prostate and cervical cancers testing, under 5 clinic.

**SN: What is Khanya Africa planning to do moving forward?**

**VK:** Khanya Africa has so far managed to establish relationship civil society organizations operating within the district like Red Cross. They have expressed much interest to work with us. We also wish to strengthen our relationship with the Sisonke District Municipality as we wish to extend our activities to all municipalities in 2009/10 financial year.

**LATEST UNDERTAKINGS CAPTURED THROUGH THE CAMERA LENS**



**Khanya Africa volunteers (left) at the outreach visit to Kroomhoek area to offer direly needed health services to the grateful local community (right)**



**Sisonke District staff members have moved to elegant offices with glittering corridors (left) and much more spacious working space as seen being enjoyed by Human Resources Department staff (above).**



**Various health promotion activities took place during the clinic sod-turning event at Mqatsheni village near Underberg.**

**NEVER TOO OLD TO STRUT YOUR STAFF IN THE NAME OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**



**KUGUG' OTHANDAYO: Super grannies tussling for the ball in the netball (upper picture) and soccer (above) during the finals of the eventful games**

**LETHAL: Stella Steward Hluthankungu striker displaying her ball juggling skills before the final**

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