



TransCape Health Projects Jan-June 2020

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Health Counselling and COVID-19



Introduction

None of us could have predicted we would find ourselves living through unprecedented times such as these. The blow to the rural areas and its health systems is severe and the lack of relief support from government is deeply concerning. TransCape NPO and the health counselor have to adjust dramatically and find ways to navigate uncharted territory.

Covid-19 action

Just before the South African lockdown was implemented, Zintathu was able to reach over 500 people and educate them about what the Coronavirus is and how to best avoid and prevent the spread.

Large numbers of community members were reached through pamphlets in isiXhosa, word of mouth, and What' s App groups. Zintathu also educated all

community health care workers, HIV support group members, and Home-Based Care staff about the Virus. This way the news went out rapidly and we are pleased with the level of education about Corona. A lot of fake news and myths about Covid-19 was smothered by our health team, as it is a new disease people come up with stories about magical medicines and cures.

Hygiene is a huge problem in the rural areas as the communal water taps are off and there is no clean water available in many areas. Zintathu gave out hundreds of soaps and demonstrated how you can effectively clean your hand with a two-liter Coke bottle, filled with water. We also gave out sanitizer and disinfectant spray to bus and taxi drivers to prevent the spread in public vehicles.

Social distancing plays a major role to prevent the spread of the virus. Zinathu and her health team stressed this point as we know that in the African culture distancing will be a major issue.





Over 600 masks were sewn by our local sewing ladies and distributed to the elderly and vulnerable. Zintathu also educated the people about the benefits of masks and how you can make your own, as the ready-made masks cost R20 each, which is expensive for most people.

Zintathu communicated with the patients on ARV' s about the travel restrictions as we feared that HIV affected people will default their treatment. Transport was shut down and it is extremely difficult to reach the clinics and hospitals to get the ARV treatment. Zintathu stressed the point that all patients are allowed to travel to get medicine and that the clinics have to see them. Contact details of the nearest health care workers were given out, in case of emergencies.

Way forward to fight Covid-19

The health team will continue to educate and spread news updates about Covid-19 and hopefully, we will be able to get some personal protective gear for all frontline health workers.

HIV/Aids counseling

HIV/Aids and Health projects are struggling financially. We had to cut down on Clinic visits and on catering on awareness days. We also had to stop buying food for the Home-Based Care meetings and Support group meetings and our last cataract surgery trip to the hospital was in January.

Nevertheless, Zintathu has been pushing on and continued with Clinic, visits, School visits, Awareness events, Support Groups for HIV positive people, Home visits, Cataract surgery, and giving out Sanitary towels.

Clinic Education

At the beginning of the year, Zintathu visited 3 clinics in our area to meet with the nurses and staff. The managers of clinic change often and it is important to introduce them to TransCape NPO and what we do. Usually, that sets a good tone for communication and teamwork. Zintathu visits each clinic once a week and educates patients about ARV' s and how important it is to take the medication regularly. She gives out pamphlets and helps the nurses test for HIV and then counsel the clients. She also gives out reusable Sanitary towels to menstruating women.

School Education

Zintathu visited 3 schools at the beginning of the year. She met with the principals and teachers to discuss her role in educating the students about Health issues. Especially important is the talks about HIV/ Aids and how it can affect learners' lives and lead to dropouts. She also teaches the students about alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, and gives out Sanitary towels. Zintathu made good contacts and received phone calls from all schools to come in and help with the health awareness lessons.



Community awareness days

Zintathu already visited 5 different villages this year and met with the headmen and the community leaders to educate the population about HIV/Aids at Awareness days. She gets support from the Support Group members who are well trained now to talk about the implications and consequences of the virus. All village leaders gave her more dates to come and share her knowledge at bigger events. Young and old attend the awareness days and many people ask questions.

Support groups and home-based care workshops

Every 3rd Wednesday of the month, Zintathu meets with the Support group and Home-Based care members for a learning and feedback session. They discuss how effective they are and what they could do better to educate the community about HIV/Aids and how to get everybody tested. They also reach out to all

family members and make clear how to take medication so there are no defaulters. Zinathu is happy to report that she gets more and more new members from the community who want to be educated and help with the drive. This helps a lot to transfer knowledge about new medications, new illnesses, and reaching young people.

Home Visits and Education

Every last day of the week, Zinathu goes Door-to-Door in different villages. She gives pre and post-testing counseling. A lot of people are comfortable being tested in their homes. Zinathu accesses the test-kits at the nearest clinic. She usually has to buy her gloves because of shortages at the clinics.

Cataract project

TransCape and Grace Vision work together to transport Cataract patients to Zithulele Hospital. In January we transported 9 patients to get the needed operation. They were all over 50 years old. Their life changed now that they can see again. They were are very very grateful.

Sanitary Towels Project

Zinathu managed to buy the correct fabric and material to make 1 477 pads to be given to the schoolgirls and the women from the community.

Patient Transport

On the 12 of February, Sibongile had a terrible accident. Someone drove into his car while turning to fast in from of him. His car was evaluated and ridden off by the insurance. Since then we are using Mdumbi Backpackers car, if available, to move emergency patients to Canzibe hospital.

In the first three months of 2020, we transported 13 patients to Canzibe Hospital to see the doctors. All of them were emergencies like Asthma attacks and women giving birth.



Conclusion

We are facing scary times as we South Africa is still awaiting the peak of COVID - 19. Zintathu and her team are facing challenges with a brave heart and standing strong to fight against the virus. Without your contribution, this would not be possible. TransCape and the health team would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support!

Yours sincerely

Zintahu Luvalo and the TransCape team

