

Youth in shebeens & taverns
- An HIV and AIDS Prevention
Opportunity -

Organisation: The Lamontville HIV and AIDS
Support Centre, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
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JOHAP The Joint Oxfam HIV/AIDS Program in South Africa seeks to strengthen the civil society response to HIV/AIDS through supporting integrated community-based services for HIV prevention and care, including a focus on gender and sexuality and the rights of people living with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS.



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JOHAP OBJECTIVE 1:

Approaches to HIV and STI prevention that effectively address gender and sexuality issues, with a particular focus on young people to strengthen civil society response to HIV and AIDS.

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The opinions of authors or participants in this document do not necessarily reflect those of Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Affiliates, JOHAP or its staff.

The various case studies presented in this series were written by different people. As much as possible we have tried to maintain their style of writing to preserve authenticity and accuracy.

This document is one of a number of publications highlighting learning during the second phase of JOHAP (April 2002-March 2005). If you wish to read these please go to the following web address; http://www.oxfam.org.au/world/africa/south_africa/articles.html

One of the strategies employed by JOHAP to strengthen the quality of the civil society response to HIV and AIDS is to strengthen partner organisation's capacity to document and share their work with other. This case study and others in the series are a result of some of this work.

Photos

Front cover: The Lamontville HIV/AIDS Centre Peer Educators using Taverns to bring across the message of HIV/AIDS awareness. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

Left: Children in Lamontville waiting for the bus after school. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

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Context

The aim of this case study is to provide an overview of the HIV and AIDS Shebeens and Taverns Peer Campaign project, in terms of the nature of services provided, target group, extent of participation by young people in taverns participation, achievements, constraints and lessons learnt. Secondly, the case study and findings will be used for advocacy material to strengthen the development of the HIV/AIDS Shebeens and Taverns Peer Campaign intervention.

Lamontville is a formal township located 13 kilometres from the centre of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is relatively close to one of South Africa's major road routes, the N2. Approximately four kilometres in extent, Lamontville accommodates a population in the region of 89,000 people as per the 2002 population estimates. During the mid-1980's, when KwaZulu-Natal experienced an increase in political violence, the township had to accommodate large numbers of people fleeing from areas under siege. This was as a result of a successful community campaign against the incorporation of the area into the then KwaZulu Homeland Government. The inflow saw increasing pockets of informal settlements.

Lamontville, like any other township in Durban and South Africa, has a very high unemployment rate, especially for women and young people. Local businesses operate

in an economically depressed area. While there is a proliferation of spaza' shops for survival, the bigger businesses are at closing point. As a result, there is an increase in the number of people living below the bread line in an already poverty stricken area. Among the employed, monthly earnings vary widely. Of the total working population, 26% earn R500 (USD 76) or less per month, while only 1% earn more than R4500 (USD 689) per month. To make matters worse, South Africa has no systematic income support system for unemployed persons. Within the Lamontville area, 40% of residents live in formal housing, while the remaining 60% live in informal settlements and hostel dwellings on the outskirts of the township.

Young People have not been left unaffected by the high unemployment rate. It is estimated that 32% of out of school youth in the township are unemployed. This fact, coupled with the lack of recreational facilities in the area, contributes to the high rate of teenage pregnancies. As a consequence, Lamontville has one of the highest HIV infection rates within the Durban metropolitan area.

Photo below: Water towers are prominent in Lamontville. Here young children are able to drink the water from one of these towers. Without water these communities could not function or exist. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS



Photo left: Ntsiki Mangxo, Nonvuyo Bengu and Standiwe Ngcece (Community Aids Awareness Peer Educators) at Makbi's Tavern. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

¹ Local corner shop – can be very informal

In broad terms Lamontville contains the average type of township development with mostly overcrowded standard houses, substantial deficiencies and comparatively low standards of support and inconsistent services. With the establishment of the new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994, and in particular with the recent creation of representative local government structures, it can be safely expected that there exists substantial pressure within Lamontville for the development of more equitable living conditions. The township has basic services that include a public library, health clinic, schools, and sporting facilities. The schools in the township experience hardships, as a number of local students prefer going to schools in nearby suburban areas.

Health wise, the area has one local government-run Health Centre which only offers preventive health care services. It operates only during working hours, from Monday to Friday. For curative services, the community of Lamontville has to rely on the services of the nearby Clairwood Hospital. The hospital's clinic service is a Department of Health facility that does not offer a 24-hour service, nor does it operate on weekends.

Over the years, the township has seen an increasing number of youth dying as a result of the effects of HIV infection. Women, children and the disabled are vulnerable to different forms of abuse. Poverty and diseases such as TB, HIV and AIDS are rife. Teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and alcoholism have escalated at an alarming rate amongst youth.

Overview of Lamontville AIDS Support Centre (LASC)

Lamontville HIV and AIDS Support Centre is a Community Based Organisation (CBO) that was established in 1996. LASC aims to empower youth to deal with HIV and AIDS, STI prevention, gender and socioeconomic development issue through training, workshops and community outreach campaign. Other beneficiaries include parents, educators and community member infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. They undertake awareness raising in schools, churches, taverns and shebeens² and the community at large, peer training and education, public campaigns, peer counselling, condom demonstrations and distribution, and host an information centre.

In response to this situation the **Lamontville HIV and AIDS Support Centre (LASC)** developed, amongst other programs, the **HIV and AIDS Shebeens and Taverns Peer Campaign**. The project came into operation on 1 April 2004 with financial support from the Joint Oxfam HIV/AIDS Program (JOHAP). The campaign is innovative in that it locates HIV and AIDS centrally within the gender and Human Rights framework.

For the first time in Lamontville, shebeen² and tavern owners have joined forces to provide HIV and AIDS awareness to their young customers. Shebeens are used by young people in township environments as a place of recreation and a site at which sex can be accessed with relative ease. Often shebeens are among the few entertainment resources located within the

community and are therefore easy to get to and provide a social context for young people. The campaign with shebeen and tavern owners includes HIV and AIDS awareness workshops for young people aged between 18 and 30 years in local shebeens and taverns. Discussions, videos, case studies and simulations are the main teaching tools.

As with all LASC projects, an extensive baseline study to understand the perceptions and knowledge of HIV and AIDS among youth in shebeens and taverns was conducted to guide project design and assist in determining the success of the project. There were a number of features that made this study unique:

- Such a study had never been conducted in Lamontville before.
- From conception to completion it was undertaken by community based people using local assets.
- All ten fieldworkers were local young people who received free training on the agreement that they will give their services voluntarily.
- The methodology was based on the Developmental Assessment Model.³

Photo: Two boys standing together outside a spaza shop in Lamontville. The HIV Aids Support Centre works within all aspects of the community of Lamontville. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

² Shebeens and taverns are generally the equivalent of a bar/pub. At times the term shebeen is used to denote an unlicensed establishment, while tavern may be used to indicate that the establishment is legal and licensed to trade in the sale of alcohol. The distinction is, however, often vague and not standardised.

³ Explained in the book Reclaiming of Youth at Risks by Brendtro and Brokenleg.





Shebeen and tavern owners are gate keepers. In other words, they decide what media and information young people who frequent their businesses will have access to.

Shebeen and tavern owners did not understand the health and socio-economic rights of young people in their shebeens and taverns, and were concerned that knowledge of these rights would make young people disrespectful and that their business might lose this target market.

Bringing these people into the process and taking them into account was vital to the success of the campaign. LASC saw the importance of involving the local shebeen and tavern owners on a wider scale in the fight against HIV and AIDS, since they undoubtedly have the capacity to directly reach the many young people that are using their shebeens and taverns.

The LASC team visited all nine taverns in Lamontville and discussed the project with the owners. Six accepted while three declined participation.

Those who accepted were given a more in depth overview of the project, for example what to expect from LASC and what LASC expected from them.

The LASC project coordinators selected two volunteers from their broader peer education program to conduct the campaign in the identified shebeens and taverns.



It was decided that all volunteers should come from a similar social background, and be familiar with the people they were addressing. Videos and charts were used in the workshops, and a trusting relationship was developed between the facilitator and his or her audience so that open discussions could be held.

Photos

Left: The Lamontville HIV/AIDS Centre Peer Educators using Taverns to bring across the message of HIV and AIDS awareness. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

Above: Education is vital to the growth of the communities' children. Here young boys listen to their sister read to them after school. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS



Achievements

A few of the achievements of the campaign are highlighted here:

- Nine out of ten young people in the six taverns which participated in the project reported that the HIV/AIDS Shebeens and Taverns Peer Campaign was the first educational campaign they had attended on HIV and AIDS. They noted that they gained new knowledge about how HIV is contracted; how it is transmitted; preventive measures; living positively with HIV; advantages of undergoing voluntary counselling and testing; and issues relating to sex and sexuality. In addition, the young people noted that the project helped refute some of the commonly held myths surrounding HIV and AIDS.

- The information shared during the campaign was useful in that it provided participants with knowledge and skills to convey the message to other young people and peers in and out of the tavern environment. At least 53% of the participants reported that they had already started sharing this information with others through family discussions, one to one discussions with their children, and peers in other taverns.
- 17 of the beneficiaries also noted that the project was extremely beneficial as it increased awareness on how to relate to and support people living with HIV and/or AIDS.
- Both the shebeen and tavern owners and young people who participated in the campaign responded that they enjoyed the methodology and resources used during the campaign, and reported that

it had contributed to their understanding of HIV and AIDS and related issues. Feedback indicated that at least 80% of the main beneficiaries felt that the project facilitators had been very effective in facilitating knowledge and skills. They appreciated and valued their patience, openness and sensitivity in relating to all participants, both literate and illiterate.

- The implementation of the HIV and AIDS Shebeens and Taverns Peer Campaign has made full and accurate information about HIV and AIDS and sexuality freely available in the establishments targeted. Today HIV and AIDS and sexuality is not always a taboo subject in local taverns. The positive result is to some extent confirmed by the local clinic. They report that the incidence of sexually transmitted infections in the age group of 19 to 30 years had declined⁴.
- LASC's attendance register has clearly indicated the increased number of young people coming to the centre requesting voluntary counselling and testing (VCT).

Photos

Left: The Lamontville Community HIV Aids Support Centre. Seen here are the Peer Educators from left to right: Ntsiki Mangxo, Nonvuyo Brngu, Standiwe Ngcece with the Project Coordinator Mduduzi Phehle. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

Right: Washing drying in the breeze. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS



⁴This however is not a statistically conclusive or verified finding at this point in the project

Lessons

When working with young people in shebeens and taverns, there are numerous pitfalls, particularly in the area of ensuring minimum disruption of their socialisation or entertainment. The HIV/AIDS Shebeens and Taverns Peer Campaign approach is highly regarded by all involved and is suggested as a model for future endeavours. It is essential that consultations are held in advance with both tavern owners and young people using taverns, and that the chosen project facilitator is skilled enough to cope with the young people using taverns.

To encourage the shebeen and tavern owners to participate, LASC approached Smirnoff®, to conduct a promotional event (T-shirts and other prizes were handed-out) prior to the HIV and AIDS education.

Through the campaign, a number of lessons were learnt:

- It is clear that HIV prevention strategies need to target disadvantaged young people, especially young people living with HIV and AIDS. Strategies must also take into account literacy levels. They should also be driven by demand, for example; decentralised to where the young people are, as well as address gender issues.
- Sustaining a community intervention means ensuring local ownership by involving the community in the initial phases of project planning and formulation. This enables the community to accept the concept and to provide the initiative during the implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. It also means broadening the scale of the intervention to reach more people at each site and to expand the number of sites where the intervention is implemented. Local shebeen and tavern owners should



be involved on a wider scale to fight HIV and AIDS since they have capacity to reach many young people.

- The involvement of local young people in shebeens and taverns as volunteers, who are trained to perform specific tasks, is very important in cutting costs and sharing responsibilities with young people in shebeens and taverns. It is recognised, however, that volunteers need to be vetted to establish their commitment and suitability for ensuring the success of the project.
- There is a need to address gender issues, socio-economic justice, HIV and AIDS, positive living and human rights issues vigorously to ensure that the young people in taverns are not discriminated against as a result of AIDS.
- This campaign developed a form of education that created awareness amongst young people in taverns and can play an important role in diffusing the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The approach could be used to create awareness and act as an educational intervention around youth development, life skills and to foster behavioural change. In addition, the development of tangible programs, informed through reliable research, is crucial in obtaining commitment to such a campaign by young people shebeens and taverns owners.

Photo right: On the corner of the street, food vendors cook meat to sell to passers by in the Lamontville Township 30km south of Durban. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS

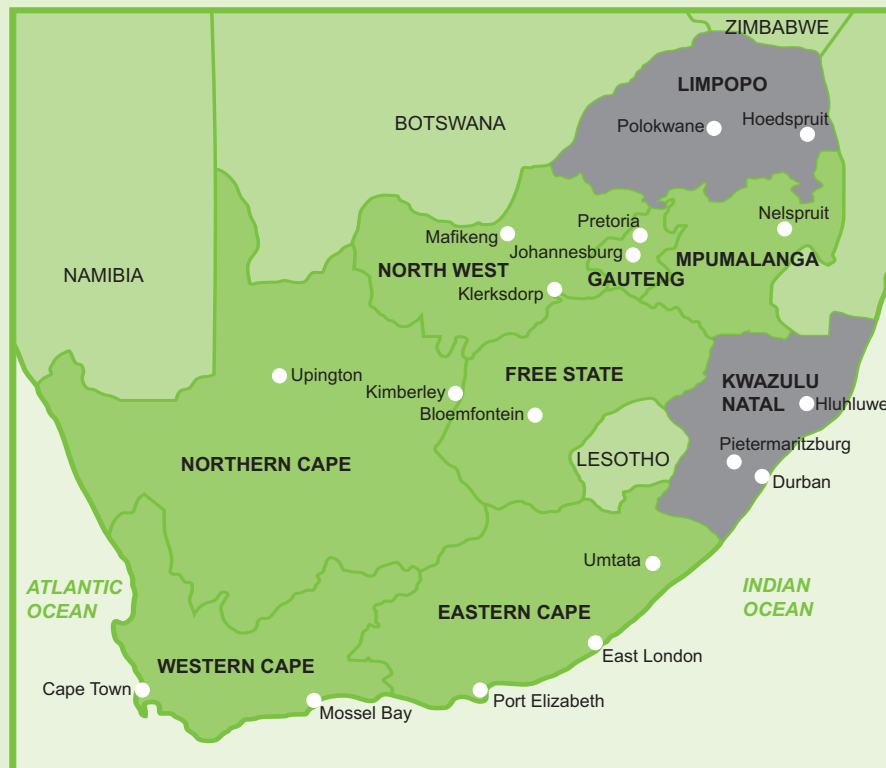
Photo left: Young children playing an Arcade game in one of the Taverns in Lamontville where the Lamontville HIV/AIDS Support Centre operate.

Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS



Contact

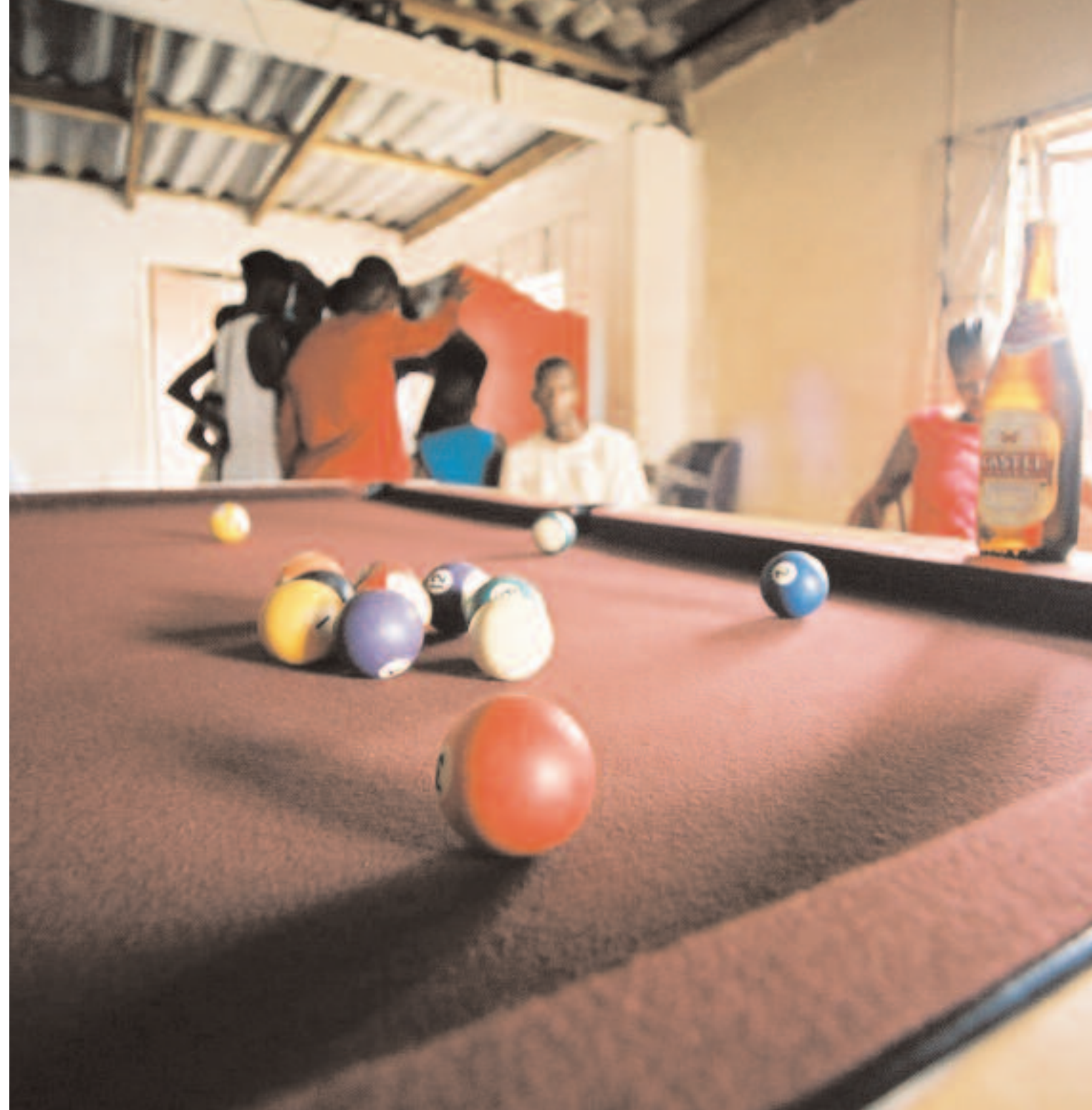
The JOHAP program currently operates in two provinces; Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal.



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Photos

Right: The Lamontville HIV/AIDS Centre Peer Educators using Taverns to bring across the message of HIV/AIDS awareness. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS
Back cover: Outside the Support Centre with the meeting hall in the background. Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS



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