
EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE FUNDING INTEGRATING PROGRAMMES

AVERT

Mpfuxelelo Project (South Africa)

This project works with the staff and patients of Tintswalo Hospital, a 450-bed facility in rural Mpumalanga province, South Africa. Before the Mpfuxelelo Project began, all HIV/AIDS services in the area were referred to and managed at a separate clinic run by the University of Witwatersrand's Rural AIDS and Development Action Research Program (RADAR). RADAR, at the time the only HIV/AIDS service provider in the area, operated a small antiretroviral clinic which had a very limited capacity to deal with the overwhelming number of patients, being understaffed and under-resourced.

The Tintswalo Hospital's wards were overflowing with patients not responding to routine medical care, because most patients were HIV-positive and in need of antiretroviral treatment. The hospital was facing several issues that made it difficult to provide HIV/AIDS care, including renovation work in the hospital, shortage of equipment, lack of cooperation by hospital staff, and lack of hospital capacity to make decisions on the ground. This led to RADAR establishing Mpfuxelelo, funded by the UK-based charity AVERT.

Launched in October 2008, the project aims to improve the state of HIV/AIDS services within Tintswalo Hospital and the surrounding area through patient empowerment, advocacy and service linkages. Several distinct areas of work all contribute towards this aim. Peer educators speak to patients waiting for appointments at the hospital, raising awareness about HIV and access to HIV-specific services. The educators have gained a good reputation locally, and have been invited to speak at teachers' meetings and school events. Counsellors provide voluntary testing and counselling (VCT) services within the hospital

premises, allowing quick referral to the relevant departments for care and treatment. In addition, they offer adherence counselling to those at risk of treatment failure.

Mpfuxelelo also seeks to strengthen the hospital's HIV/AIDS care system. It promotes linkages between the hospital's care section and other community care programmes and seeks to improve continuity of care by improving referral channels within the hospital. Focus areas within the hospital are those with potential high impact such as in-patient wards, maternity units and the out-patient department.

Within one year of beginning the project, Mpfuxelelo provided education to over 30,000 people visiting Tintswalo Hospital and identified 436 clients infected with HIV. The RADAR clinic still provides HIV/AIDS services to the area, but the hospital's increased HIV/AIDS service capacity has removed a lot of the pressure it was experiencing. Mpfuxelelo succeeds because it builds upon the existing resources within the hospital and surrounding community in a sustainable way. By working to improve knowledge of and access to HIV/AIDS services among both patients and health care workers, Tintswalo Hospital is slowly shifting toward greater awareness and improved clinical outcomes.



Two peer educators working in the out-patient department at Tintswalo hospital