

# Powerful private sector partnerships

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the De Beers Group of companies, Venetia Mine partnered with the AfroCentric Group and South African Business Coalition on Health and AIDS (SABCOHA) towards the community health wellness campaign at Musina and Blouberg communities. The investment is in line with the Building Forever (BF) pillar for Partnering for Thriving Communities and, in particular, De Beers' health and wellbeing stretch goal, which aims at the reduction of HIV and TB infection rates, child and maternal mortality, the incidence of gender-based violence, and road accidents.

AfroCentric contributes funding to the SABCOHA community fund and is committed to strengthening the partnership approach and contributing to the sustainability of the programme. AfroCentric Employee Health Solutions (formerly Fastpulse) provided project management, clinical and technical oversight and, together with De Beers and SABCOHA, ensured overall oversight and achievement of all project goals.

Health testing services (HTSs) and wellness screening access points were deployed within the areas in Blouberg, Alldays, and Musina over a period of six months. HTSs for 25 000 individuals included HIV counselling and testing, and screening for tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), blood pressure,

glucose, body mass index (BMI), and vision. The wellness screenings support Government's Checka Impilo campaign – an accelerated national wellness campaign that focuses on testing and treating people for the human immunodeficient virus (HIV), TB, STIs, and non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. To date, De Beers and AfroCentric have contributed more than R10 million towards the campaign.

## LAUNCHING OF THE COMMUNITY WELLNESS DAY AT MUSINA

On 8 September 2023, the Community Wellness Day was launched at Musina, bringing together various stakeholders. The day formed part of a campaign launched in January by De Beers and AfroCentric to fund wellness screenings of more than 25 000 community members in the labour-sending areas surrounding Venetia mine, in the Vhembe and Capricorn districts of Limpopo province. The Community Wellness Day was attended by the Minister of Health, Honorable Dr Joe Phaahla; Vhembe District Executive Mayor, Dowelani Nenguda; Musina Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Godfrey Mawela; Deputy Chairperson of the Private Sector Forum, Dr Tshegofatso Gopane; Chairperson of the South African Business Coalition on Health and AIDS, Dr Thuthula Balfour (who is also



Stakeholders at the Community Wellness Day launched at Musina, 8 September 2023

Photograph: courtesy of MMPA

Head of Health at the Minerals Council); South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) CEO, Dr Thembi Xulu; Deputy Chairperson of SANAC, Steve Letsike; members of civil society, organised labour, traditional healers, faith-based organisations, management of Venetia Mine; and the AfroCentric group.

At the Wellness Day launch, various services were offered, such as health testing, registration of social grants and identification documents, highlighting the importance of integrating service delivery. The Minister of Health reiterated the importance of public-private partnerships in responding to the scourge of non-communicable diseases that is ravishing our communities. The Senior General Manager of Venetia, Ntokozo Ngema, committed to further investment in the communities around Venetia Mine.

The wellness screening campaign aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the health objectives outlined in South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP), and the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV/AIDS, STIs, and TB.

De Beers is also focusing on road safety as it transports its workforce to and from the mine. Road safety forms part of SDG 3, which is part of the Building Forever pillar for Partnering for Thriving Communities. De Beers has invested in a project to improve road safety in partnership with the Department of Transport on routes associated with its labour-sending areas, and strategic roads around the special economic zone in Musina.

De Beers has also established a programme called Living with Dignity to address gender-based violence.

## RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

### HIV

A total of 25 198 community members (50% male and 50% female) participated in HIV counselling. The majority (69%) of the participants were black and aged 25-49 years. Of the individuals who participated in HIV counselling, 24 570 participated in HIV testing (97.5% uptake), 2.4% declined testing due to known positive status, and 0.1% (with unknown status) declined HIV testing. Most of the individuals who participated in HIV testing, tested negative (99.4%).

### Tuberculosis

- A total of 25 198 community members were screened for pulmonary TB.
- Thirteen participants were found to be on TB treatment.
- Forty-three participants had symptoms suggestive of TB and were referred to the local hospital for further investigation; all tested negative for TB.

### Sexually transmitted infections

A total of 25 198 community members were screened for STIs; 57 (0.2%) had symptoms and were referred to local healthcare facilities for treatment.

### Non-communicable diseases

Almost two-thirds (62%) of the participants had high BMIs, 9% had elevated blood pressure, and 3% had elevated blood glucose levels. Those with high BMIs were given health education and advised to see dietitians, while those with abnormal blood pressure and/or blood glucose were referred to the local hospital for treatment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The private sector needs to show commitment towards the implementation of the NSP 2023–2028.
- The AfroCentric and De Beers partnership initiative needs to be replicated across all provinces in South Africa.
- Partnerships with the Department of Health should be improved to ensure treatment initiation of all individuals screened and found at risk of ill health.
- Coordination between Government, private sector, and civil society is vital for successful health and safety initiatives.
- The high prevalence of obesity in our communities needs an integrated response between stakeholders.
- Integrating community health as part of the health strategy of organisations is needed to address the social determinants of health. 