

Partnerships

with a purpose

Through partnerships, South Africa Partners works as a field catalyst in the areas of health and education in the country – two critical areas that serve as a foundation of a fair democracy.

As a field catalyst, South Africa Partners:

Catalyses change by acting as an invisible hand that amplifies the existing efforts of local and international partners.

Creatively meets evolving needs by filling key capability gaps across a range of disciplines and system levels.

Engages in a range of functions to help stakeholders scale up innovative, evidence-based solutions.

Remains nimble enough to fulfil rapidly evolving needs in health and education.

Offers in-house expertise in public health and education.

Maintains a commitment to social justice.

defined goal. For over 20 years, the organisation has helped partners summon sufficient momentum to propel a solution up and over the tipping point to sweeping change.

Focus areas

South Africa Partners' focus areas are: **Improving systems to provide care and support to people living with and at risk of HIV/AIDS:** The organisation's I ACT, LinkCARE and STEPS programmes focus on prevention, retention and empowerment from the time of HIV diagnosis until the successful commencement of antiretroviral treatment.

South Africa Partners helps to bring partners together, build awareness, identify innovative and scalable solutions, share information with a system of global stakeholders, and mobilise funding towards transformative change. Worldwide, it is recognised that no single organisation or strategy, regardless of how large or successful, can solve a complex social challenge at scale. Instead, organisations need to work collaboratively to tackle pressing social problems. South Africa Partners serves as a hub for spokes of advocacy and action, rolling all stakeholders toward a



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Increasing the capacity of health leaders to drive health system transformation: In partnership with the University of Pretoria, University of Fort Hare and Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, the Albertina Sisulu Executive Leadership Programme in Health (ASELPH) strengthens and elevates executive-level training for future generations of health leaders. **Supporting young children to reach their full potential in life:** Through South Africa Partners' Community Early Childhood Development Network, the organisation helps low-resourced crèches transform from minimally provisioned places of care into true centres of learning. The Sifunda Ngokuthetha (meaning: we learn by talking together) programme turns everyday environments, such as a grocery shops, into learning opportunities.

I ACT programme

The South Africa Partners Integrated Access to Care & Treatment (I ACT) programme has empowered millions of South Africans living with HIV to make positive lifestyle changes and become advocates for effective HIV services. In 2002, South Africa Partners initiated a collaboration between the Department

Designed to contribute to the goals of the Minister of Health's Health Management Development Plan for South Africa, ASELPH mainly supports the initiative to improve executive leadership within the country's healthcare system

of Health in the Eastern Cape and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which focused on people living with HIV. The teams worked together to identify specific HIV prevention and care plans in the US, which had proven to be highly successful in slowing the rate of infection among key affected populations. After adapting the interventions to the South African context, the work led to the development of I ACT. The I ACT programme teaches people how to live positively with a positive diagnosis. It promotes the early recruitment, referral and retention of newly diagnosed people living with HIV into care and support programmes, and can be tailored towards children, adolescents or adults.

The goal is to reduce the high loss-to-follow-up rate from the time of HIV diagnosis until the successful commencement of ARV treatment. This is achieved through empowering newly diagnosed people to advocate for and manage their health, and strengthening the active engagement of families, healthcare providers and communities into the continuum of care. Through a series of structured and curriculum-based meetings, I ACT group participants increase knowledge, skills, and confidence to advocate for their health. Participants are guided through a process of learning about living with and understanding HIV.

The topics lead to:

- knowing what HIV is, and its effects

- understanding that there is medication (ARVs) to help people live with HIV, including knowledge about side effects and responsibility to take the medication
- accepting status through a process of overcoming self-stigmatisation, and knowing that it's possible to live a long, healthy and productive life
- understanding the principles of disclosing status, rights and how to build a support network among friends, family and strangers
- knowing how to be healthy with HIV, what to eat, how to maintain a positive outlook on life and the importance of exercise
- ensuring that prevention messaging is passed on to others
- planning effectively to live a long life. In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control recognised the programme's impact and funded national scale-up efforts through provincial departments and regional NPOs across the country. In 2015, I ACT was adopted as a national care and support strategy by the South African National Department of Health and included as a strategy in the National Adherence Guidelines for Chronic Diseases (TB, HIV and NCDs). It has been adapted in partnership with the Department of Correctional Services as STEPS – an HIV prevention strategy that serves offenders and staff members in correctional facilities.

As part of the LinkCARE programme, South Africa Partners serves as a technical advisor to the National Department of Health's Care and Support Directorate for this highly effective intervention. This achievement is just one illustration of how South Africa Partners has worked tirelessly over 20 years to harness sufficient momentum towards sweeping change. **35**



SOUTH AFRICA PARTNERS
20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

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