

# MAC AIDS Fund Leadership Initiative

## Profiles of Cohort 5



Thandi Gumbi  
Cherae Halley  
Londiwe Luthuli  
Lorraine Malinga  
Leo Mbobi  
Mlungisi Mkhize  
Patricia Mpala  
Muthuphei Netshinombelo  
Linda Scott  
Kodwa Tyiso  
Zolisa Xabadiya  
Thobile Zulu



## **THANDI GUMBI**

**POSITION:** COORDINATOR FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT,  
BREAKTHRU COMMUNITY  
ACTION NGO

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** EDUCATION

**LOCATION:** PIETERMARITZBURG, KZN

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As Coordinator of Breakthru Community Action (BCA), a project of Breakthru Church International (BCI), **Thandi Gumbi** works to promote life-giving opportunities for children, youth, and families in a number of struggling communities. Formerly a teacher, Gumbi taught HIV life skills in the classroom and conducted workshops for fellow educators in her school, and was also tasked with leading the formulation of a school AIDS policy. More recently, she has brought her skills from the classroom into her community work. This work varies from conducting workshops to encourage groups to become involved in nonviolent community change to working with schoolchildren living in boarding houses to help them develop support networks. For the past 12 years, through camps and meetings, she has been working with young adults and women in five communities of Pietermaritzburg, focusing on building healthy relationships and dealing with imbalances in gender relations. Most recently, Gumbi has started training Breakthru's volunteers on Play Skills to help children who are experiencing loss and grief because of the death of a loved one.

### **Gumbi's prevention plan:**

*Moving from the dependency of childhood to the independence of adulthood is a major developmental stage, one in which adolescent youth often take risks. Typical issues arising at this stage of development are first romantic relationships and asserting opinions that run counter to those of parents or guardians. Many of these situations can put youth at risk, including risk of exposure to HIV. Learners residing away from their families in boarding houses can be at heightened risk as adult supervision is often limited and in some cases girls and boys live in the same house. Gumbi's prevention plan -- The Youth on Board Project -- will seek to reduce this risk among boarding house learners ages 15 to 18 years in the Pietermaritzburg area. The project will train peer educators to help other learners recognize risky behaviors and the related gender dynamics underlying many situations they encounter in the boarding house environment. The aim is to create a healthier and more supportive environment where learners can achieve their potential.*

**CHERAE HALLEY**

**POSITION:** PEER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OFFICER, DEAF HIV/AIDS AWARENESS PROGRAMME, GAY AND LESBIAN MEMORY IN ACTION (GALA)

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** DRAMATIC ARTS AND SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

**LOCATION:** JOHANNESBURG

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**Cherae Halley** is a South African advocate on the intersecting issues of HIV/AIDS, gender and disability. She is affiliated with the Deaf HIV/AIDS Awareness Project, which seeks to reduce the level of HIV/AIDS in the general Deaf population in South Africa through the provision of educational outreach services on HIV/AIDS and on sexual health and rights to the Deaf. Halley drew on her background in both Dramatic Arts and South African Sign Language to work with other performers, artists, musicians and dancers to create a performance art piece titled *HIV/AIDS: In It Together*, which was performed in public spaces. The collaborative piece dealt with issues such as getting tested, caring for one another, living with HIV, and HIV prevention. Today, her work through GALA focuses on training Deaf youth and young adults (with co-facilitator John Meletse) about HIV prevention, using Applied Theatre as a visual method. Through the organization Themba Interactive, Halley also is involved with creating and performing educational interactive dramas for high school learners. Halley belongs to the only playback theatre company in South Africa, DFL Playback Theatre Company.

**Halley's prevention plan:**

*The Deaf community is seen as vulnerable to HIV for a number of reasons such as their minority status, low education levels and high unemployment. These factors, including the inaccessibility of health care facilities and awareness campaigns, place the Deaf community at a high risk of HIV infection. Through her prevention plan, Halley will train 15 Deaf, township-based community members, living in Johannesburg, on HIV/AIDS, gender and sexuality. The project will provide the participants with visually appealing resource material to use within their schools and organizations in order to increase knowledge and raise awareness. The project uses Applied Theatre techniques to engage the participants in visual and Deaf appropriate training methods for 12 weeks before placing the individuals within their schools and organization as leaders on HIV/AIDS prevention and advocacy.*

**LONDIWE LUTHULI**

**POSITION:** COMMUNITY PROGRAMME COORDINATOR,  
CENTRE FOR THE AIDS PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH IN  
SOUTH AFRICA CAPRISA

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** SOCIAL SCIENCE

**LOCATION:** DURBAN

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In her work with research organization CAPRISA, **Londiwe Luthuli** plays several roles working with a diverse range of communities in the field of HIV/AIDS. She identifies, establishes, and maintains community relations with stakeholders in the community, helping to build a rapport between the researchers and the community. Luthuli also paves the way for researchers to enter into the communities in order to be able to conduct and implement community-based and/or clinical research studies, and represents the organization at clinical trials networks, forums, committees and groups. Her work draws on prior experience working with numerous organizations, research councils and institutions, and has included engaging with rural women in the rural outskirts of Port Shepstone and with working with local municipal/ward councilors, health committees, and other forums in Vulindlela and in Pietermaritzburg.

**Luthuli's prevention plan:**

*Health workers -- including lay HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) counselors who do not directly provide clinical services and care to patients -- are often relied upon as sources of information at work and in their communities. A lack of ability to convey accurate information during counseling or at the community level may lead to increased risk of HIV infection. This information gap also represents a missed opportunity to proactively inform the broader range of patients who come to the clinic for other primary health-care services. Therefore, Luthuli's prevention plan aims to address health workers' knowledge gaps on HIV/AIDS so they can better address the questions and needs of patients. Health workers will also be engaged in discussing and designing new strategies to prevent HIV infection.*



## **LORRAINE MALINGA**

**POSITION:** MANAGER OF HIV MOBILE TESTING UNIT,  
EMTHONJENI HEALTH PROGRAMME, THE  
AURUM INSTITUTE

**DISCIPLINE/BACKGROUND:** NURSING

**LOCATION:** RUSTENBERG, NORTHWEST PROVINCE

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As a member of a community project in Bisho, Eastern Cape, **Lorraine Malinga** assisted the impoverished community members residing in a squatter camp to access better sanitation and improve their living conditions. She has also worked in day-to-day care of elderly persons in an old-age home based in East London and assisted with handicapped children at Amalinda Home for the Disabled. These diverse experiences helped build her involvement with public health and in the nursing profession. Today, she works with The Aurum Institute, an internationally recognized institution specializing in HIV/AIDS research. With Aurum's Emthonjeni program, Malinga leads a team using a mobile van to provide HIV counseling and testing to small and medium enterprises, poor communities, those who have difficulty accessing clinics because of the distance, farm workers, taxi drivers, domestic workers, and marginalized workers.

### **Malinga's prevention plan:**

*The main aim is to provide health education to a target group of women regarding HIV prevention and gender inequality. This will enable them to become HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) advocates in the Freedom Park informal settlement, a community with no health facilities to conduct HIV testing. Most of these women are at risk because there are some who function as commercial sex workers to make ends meet. Multiple concurrent relationships are also socially accepted, resulting in increased risk of acquiring HIV. Further, some of the men that have tested positive said they have not told their partners and they were not using protection when engaging in sex. It is widely recognized that women have a powerful impact on changing behaviors and creating environments that are more conducive to meeting the psychosocial, emotional, physical, and development needs within the community. This project will empower women to take informed decisions and enable them to employ different risk-reduction behavior. The project will further enable the women to know about their rights when it comes to a choice to take an HIV test.*



## **LEO MBOBI**

**POSITION:** PROJECT CO-COORDINATOR, SONKE GENDER JUSTICE NETWORK

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** SOCIAL SCIENCES AND COMMUNICATION

**LOCATION:** CAPE TOWN

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**Leo Mbohi** is a gender and human right activist working with Sonke Gender Justice Network, with a particular emphasis on preventing HIV and gender-based violence. Currently, he is implementing the (MMC) Medical Male Circumcision Project, which encourages men to access MMC while also engaging them on issues of sexual and reproductive rights. In 2010, he worked with community-based organizations to prevent sexual exploitations of children around the time of the World Cup of Soccer. He also advocated for the rights of children who were allegedly raped and molested in an informal settlement area, engaging the National Public Prosecutor, Justice Department and other CBOs to strengthen advocacy work in promoting safer communities for children and women. Mbohi has additionally worked with traditional leaders in the rural part of the Eastern Cape (Mhlontlo Municipality) regarding the care of the orphans and vulnerable children. He has capacitated teachers, caregivers, police officers, Department of Social Development staff, and the community at large to promote positive parenting and reduce forms of abuse that put children at risk of HIV.

### **Mbohi's prevention plan:**

*This prevention plan will address negative social norms related to the practice of male initiation amongst AmaXhosa men. It will be implemented in Khayelitsha Township in Western Cape, targeting 10 young men, aged 18 and above. The traditional male initiation school, also referred to as "going to the mountain," does not address issues of health and sexual behavior. There is little work done to ensure that boys are mentally and physically fit for this cultural journey. Furthermore, when young men return from the mountain there is a negative social norm that encourages young men to sleep with a woman who is not his partner to test whether his circumcised penis "is moving nice or not." If young men at this critical stage in life are exposed to information promoting responsible behavior, they would be in a better position to think positively about themselves and their sexual behavior as it relates to their "new manhood." If such issues are integrated into the initiation process a positive impact can be made in HIV prevention as well as gender equality.*

**MLUNGISI MKHIZE****POSITION:** SENIOR COORDINATOR, THE VALLEY TRUST**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** SOCIAL SCIENCES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**LOCATION:** KWANYUSWA, KZN

**Mlungisi Mkhize** is engaged with the field of governance and leadership, positioning The Valley Trust as a leading proponent of innovative social development practice. Responsible for the program that enhances the capacity of communities through leadership structures at various levels of community, Mkhize also provides technical support and mentoring about social development practice. Mkhize has a long history of working with men in rural areas, and has worked with various community-based institutions such as traditional leadership structures, local government and school governing bodies. He has facilitated community meetings to discuss problems such as poverty, manhood, unemployment, high rates of child abuse, and HIV/AIDS and sexual behavior. Mkhize has also played a leading role in efforts to analyze the socioeconomic conditions of young men and to address poverty, gender-based violence, and social marginalization.

**Mkhize's prevention plan**

*Mkhize's prevention plan recognizes that engaging men as role players in reducing HIV infections is essential for effective behavioral strategies to address the HIV epidemic in South Africa, as well as the relationship between poverty and HIV infection. The program will engage 20 unemployed or informally employed men in the KwaNyuswa area of KwaZulu-Natal in educational and awareness-raising workshops on health-seeking behavior, HIV prevention, and gender norms that put men at risk of HIV infection. By establishing a co-operative as a strategic approach to retaining the participation of the men, the program will also initiate poverty reduction strategies in the community. The group of 20 men will use the knowledge gained in the workshops to co-host two thematic conversations in the community to create a platform for discussing health-related issues that affect the community.*



## **PATRICIA MPALA**

**POSITION:** HIV/AIDS COORDINATOR, CYDAC  
(CHILDREN, YOUTH, DISABILITY, AIDS & CARE)

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** EDUCATIONAL  
ADMINISTRATION & PLANNING

**LOCATION:** JOHANNESBURG

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**Patricia Mpala** is an HIV/AIDS Coordinator with CYDAC (Children Youth Disability AIDS & Care), the main aim of which is to improve the lives of children and youth, including those with disabilities, those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and those with cancer in both rural and urban areas of South Africa. While earlier working for the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP), Mpala was the first employee to implement an HIV/AIDS project, and also raised awareness of HIV/AIDS during food distribution sessions, among smallholder farmers, and at local traditional leadership meetings. She has facilitated HIV/AIDS workshops, trainings and seminars, and has led the management team in developing a workplace HIV/AIDS policy and in training field officers. Under Leonard Cheshire Disability, she also worked with partners throughout the Southern Africa Region, and conducted awareness sessions on HIV/AIDS during the Global Meeting for Young Voices (young people with disabilities) coming from all over the world. More recently under CYDAC, Mpala initiated a prevention strategy for children and youth implemented through talking to parents and guardians in the Berea neighborhood.

### **Mpala's prevention plan:**

*The "Revival of Hope" project aims to prevent new HIV infections and problems relating to gender inequalities among households with people living with HIV/AIDS in the Hillbrow and Berea areas of Johannesburg. The project seeks to bring about restoration of hope that they will live longer as long as they remain on treatment, while also addressing gender inequalities. The project will use home-based caregivers to disseminate information through discussions at the household level. The population in these areas fall victims of HIV/AIDS due to human trafficking, transactional sex work, visits from truck drivers from neighboring countries, and migration. The project uses a participatory approach by engaging all people infected and affected by HIV in discussions related to preventing new infections in their own settings and raising awareness on gender-based violence. The project is expected to reach out to 40 households, who will gain increased knowledge about HIV, STIs, and gender norms and will develop skills to negotiate safer sex and health-seeking behaviors.*



## **MUTHUPHEI NETSHINOMBELO**

**POSITION:** CLINICAL NURSE PRACTITIONER, DEPT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE VHEMBE DISTRICT

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** NURSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**LOCATION:** THOHOYANDOU, LIMPOPO

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As a clinical nurse practitioner working for the government of Limpopo Province, at Tshakhuma Clinic in Vhembe District, **Muthupe** **Netshinombelo** is involved with a range of community-based projects. These including education, training and mobilization of teenagers concerning such issues as interpersonal interaction, teenage pregnancy, prevention of HIV, and life skills. She also works to mobilize participation in VCT and PMTCT programs for the purpose of encouraging people to learn their HIV status and, for those who test HV-positive, starting antiretroviral treatment when needed. Netshinombelo carried out a Master's of Public Health thesis on the effects of health education intervention on knowledge about HIV/AIDS among farm workers in Levubu Farming area Limpopo.

### **Netshinombelo's prevention plan:**

*Because of difficult living circumstances, poor access to services, low wages and high levels of substance abuse, as well as many other challenges, farm laborers are very vulnerable to HIV infection and gender-based violence. While they have been identified by government and NGOs as a critical target for HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives, few such programs exist. There is a need to establish HIV and AIDS awareness programs and interventions targeted specifically at farm workers aimed at increasing knowledge and changing risky sexual behaviors and addressing gender based violence. Netshinombelo's prevention plan will pilot an awareness and education program focusing on these components in a large farm in Levubu farming area, Limpopo Province.*



## **LINDA SCOTT**

**POSITION:** SOUTH AFRICAN COORDINATOR, MOTHERS FOR ALL

**DISCIPLINE/BACKGROUND:** HUMAN SCIENCES / NUTRITIONAL MEDICINE

**LOCATION:** CAPE TOWN

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**Linda Scott** is a founding member of the non-profit organization Mothers for All, which was established first in Botswana and then South Africa. Mothers for All supports women who are caring for children orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS by providing them with training in income generation and other life skills. The women are taught how to make paper bead jewelry from recycled paper, a project that has been so successful that sales increased more than tenfold between 2008 and 2010. This provides new skills, a regular income, and a support network to over 70 women and their families. Through Mothers for All, Scott is currently working with a group of male inmates in Worcester Prison, teaching them how to make the recycled paper bead jewelry so that they can raise money to help orphans in a nearby community. This group of men (self-named “the Group of Hope”) also raise HIV awareness amongst the inmates.

### **Scott’s prevention plan:**

*Scott’s prevention plan seeks to increase the capacity, reach and effectiveness of the Group of Hope’s activities regarding HIV prevention among inmates in Worcester Prison. This will be done through structured training workshops on HIV prevention methods and communication strategies. The Group of Hope will be given help and resources to target over 50 inmates through one-to-one sessions, to hold prison events to raise general awareness among inmates and prison staff, and to develop prison-appropriate leaflets and posters for general distribution and display. The project will focus on the dominant inmate practices that are associated with gender-based violence, sexual violence, and high-risk behavior. Peer education programs that have been developed and implemented by the prisoners themselves have been shown worldwide to be the most effective at bringing about positive behavioral change among inmates. It is hoped that this innovative project will be replicated in other prisons and receive the official endorsement and support of the South African Department of Correctional Services.*



## **KODWA TYISO**

**POSITION:** TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, PEOPLE OPPOSING WOMEN ABUSE (POWA)

**DISCIPLINE/BACKGROUND:** EDUCATION

**LOCATION:** KATLEHONG, GAUTENG

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**Kodwa Tyiso** is a manager at People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA), which prides itself on being of the few organizations in South Africa that provides a comprehensive service for women survivors of violence, including counseling, legal advice, advocacy, and the provision of shelter to women in need. The Training and Development Department, which Tyiso manages, builds the capacity of POWA staff and service providers working in the women's rights sector. There is a particular focus on community-based organizations in provinces where there are limited resources for women to access justice. Before becoming engaged with the women's rights sector, Tyiso worked for a home-based care center and as a teacher. Previously at POWA, she was coordinator of a research study on microbicides.

### **Tyiso's prevention plan:**

*Tyiso's prevention plan recognizes that HIV/AIDS and violence against women are part of multiple oppressions that South African women experience despite the country's progressive constitution. In partnership with Teang Basadi Home Based Care, an organization providing care for HIV positive people, Tyiso will raise awareness about HIV and gender among people in households and clinics in Katlehong. This will be achieved through training caregivers on HIV and gender, as well as through advocacy strategies. Caregivers will advocate for better understanding of women's experiences of HIV/AIDS among local service providers through stakeholder forums and other existing venues. A community discussion will also be facilitated to engage local government institutions on HIV and gender. Ultimately, the HIV prevention program seeks to open up spaces for Teang Basadi caregivers, at provincial and national levels, to articulate women's experiences of HIV/AIDS.*



## **ZOLISA SWAARTBOOI-XABADIYA**

**POSITION:** MANAGER OF PREVENTION, CARE AND SUPPORT, EASTERN CAPE AIDS COUNCIL

**DISCIPLINE/BACKGROUND:** PUBLIC HEALTH

**LOCATION:** EAST LONDON AREA, EASTERN CAPE

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**Zolisa Swartbooi-Xabadiya** is a teacher, community development facilitator, and researcher. After working as a teacher for 8 years, Xabadiya joined the Transkei Land Service Organization (TRALSO) as a Gender and HIV Officer. In this capacity, she worked with CBOs and rural communities in the former Transkei, conducting workshops, doing community mobilization, and undertaking research. Xabadiya was appointed as a Social Mobilization Officer for the Eastern Cape AIDS Council. Having completed a Master's degree in public health, Xabadiya was promoted to the position of HIV Prevention Manager in the Eastern Cape AIDS Council. In this role, she has been central in promoting dialogue among Eastern Cape about issues of sex and sexuality in their cultural, social and economic context.

### **Xabadiya's prevention plan:**

*Xabadiya's plan will be implemented in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. It aims at strengthening the capacity of women in leadership in integrating gender and HIV prevention into cultural practices. Five women from the executive committee of the Eastern Cape Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu (women traditional leaders) will undergo leadership, gender and HIV prevention training. Imbumba Yamakhosikazi Akomkhulu will conduct community dialogues with boys and girls (aged 15 to 18) in their communities, looking at ways of integrating HIV prevention to male initiation (ulwaluko) and virginity inspection (inkciyo). The information gathered through the dialogues will be documented and presented to the House of Traditional Leaders as a model through which HIV prevention and gender could be integrated to community practices. The model will be used as a guide by traditional women to engage young men and women in their communities in order to decrease the number of new HIV infections.*



## **THOBILE ZULU**

**POSITION:** SPECIALIST HIV/AIDS COORDINATOR, HIV/AIDS CENTRE, DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**BACKGROUND/DISCIPLINE:** SOCIAL SCIENCES

**LOCATION:** DURBAN

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As a Specialist HIV/AIDS Coordinator at the Durban University of Technology, **Thobile Zulu** ensures the provision of HIV prevention, care, and support services to students, promotes HIV counseling and testing, and organizes peer education and information outreach efforts. Previously, Zulu was an implementer of the Mpondombili school-based intervention, which was designed to delay teen sexual activity and promote condom use. She has also worked on research efforts on the nature and extent of problems faced by child-headed households, including conducting focus groups and interviews and coordinating with a range of stakeholders.

### **Zulu's prevention plan:**

*Beginning with the reality that gender inequality and power imbalances are main drivers of HIV infection, the aim of Zulu's prevention plan is to capacitate peer educators to facilitate discussions with other students which challenge gender inequality and gender imbalances. The prevention plan will be implemented through the peer education program run by the HIV/AIDS Centre at the Durban University of Technology. Ten peer educators selected out of existing peer education programs will be trained on gender inequality and HIV. After training, the peer educators will facilitate eight educational sessions with first year students in two DUT residences. Interactive and participatory approach will be used to engage both male and female students on issues related to gender inequality, gender imbalances and HIV prevention.*