



ACTIVIST EDUCATION &  
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE  
*(Known as Project Ulwazi)*  
NPO registration number 118-577

**VISION:**

To improve the socio-economic status of HIV+ activists through access education and learning opportunities thereby promoting sustainable social development and change.

**MISSION:**

*Nurturing our social and human capital*

To provide support to HIV+ activists to further their education and promotion of nurturing organisational culture.

**Partnerships**



AFRICA CENTRE FOR HIV/AIDS MANAGEMENT

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Stellenbosch University



## **BACKGROUND**

Many poor people especially people living with HIV/AIDS and women who come from poor and marginalized communities have limited access to education and skills. Many individuals who are able to make their way through the public education system to pass their matric exams are unable to afford university fees. This impacts on their ability to be recognized and remunerated adequately in their community advocacy work they do, over and above cannot not to compete fairly in the job market. Now treatment makes it possible for people living with HIV to lead healthy and productive lives but the conditions of poverty continue to surround many in a state of hopelessness as they do not have the tools to break their cycle of poverty.

However, many of these activists continue to be the anchor of community development through dedicating their lives towards social justice. Many social movements and Non-Governmental organisations depend on this human capital to provide support and leadership in communities. Yet very few of these community activists' leaders have opportunities to dream beyond unpaid, low paid volunteerism. We strongly believe that nurturing your human capital should become intentional effort that all organisations should do. Looking after your hardworking activists will not only provide personal growth to those individuals, investment to human capital but also investment in social development.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Activist Education and Development centre (AEDC) was founded by activists for activists in 2009 and at the time was known as Project Ulwazi- meaning education or information. Project was a known name within the Treatment Action Campaign activists at the flagship popular education programme. AEDC was then later registered as a Not-for-Profit (NPO) under the South African social development registration in 2011.

Our logo embodies our activist's resilience. Our deliberate choice in combination the lotus flower and white Phoenix bird surrounded by a dark environment symbolise our everyday struggles. Community HIV+ activists begin their lives personal traumas and life struggles - like the lotus flower which begins its life in the bottom of a lake but it grows through the darkness, muddy and cold water. It rises slowly above the surface to bloom with remarkable beauty. The phoenix is a great mythological bird from Ethiopia that towards the end of its life not only that it builds its nest but it also ignites fire to both itself and the nest and both burn fiercely, from this a new, young phoenix arises, reborn anew to live again. The phoenix is a bold symbol of that embodies transformation renewal, strength and power.

The activists we support have a deep history of post-apartheid community campaigning and organising through the AIDS movement through Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). In 2011 the centre began a pilot project in the TAC Western Cape region to explore feasibility of providing support activists. Majority of the activists that we support are women (60%) openly living with HIV and others affected through immediate family relative living with HIV. All of the activists come from very poor homes with little or no income at all, they are providers and breadwinners to their families surviving on the allowance from this project as their only income. This is about investing in their educational and economic development, and in return they will invest sustainable development of their communities.

## **SUCSESSES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

In the last five years of the pilot, we value the support and contributions from the following organisations and individuals such as Monument Trust (based in the United Kingdom)has generously a multi-year contribution of R2.9 million (2011-2015). The Sampan Foundation (based in the United Kingdom) R52 824.32 as a once off donation South African social justice activists Ms Inge Van Reenen R10 000 as a once off donation and monthly individual activist givers through give and gain foundation and direct deposit has raised more than 3000 monthly since 2012.

**30 TAC activists** have taken part in a year programme comprising of University accredited courses (including English for academic purposes, Maths literacy, Computer skills, basic social science research and life skills from the University of Stellenbosch) A few quotes from our 2012 evaluation; "I have self-esteem and confidence, now I can help my kids with their homework. I feel like a better person"- AEDC participant-foundation phase. "I have a very bright future getting a degrees and job will help my families and my community" AEDC participant- foundation phase.

**Ten** of 30 TAC activists are completing their final years from University and two have completed their national certificates in early childhood development and are currently placed as assistant teachers at two primary schools in Khayelitsha. See the attached article by Johnson Mesi featuring three of the student activists in their final year of study

## AEDC STRATEGIC APPROACHES AND OBJECTIVES

- i. We facilitate and support community activist's leaders who do not have matric (senior secondary school certificate) which is need in order to access institutions of higher learning. We aim to support at least 20 community activists with enrolment at night schools and provide extra Saturday tutorial classes.
- ii. Upon completion with the matric – the successful candidates will be taken through the foundation course for one year.

We do this through our partnership with University of Stellenbosch (Africa Centre for HIV Management) to provide fully accredited basic courses such as mathematics literacy, Basic English, English for academic purposes, Life orientation and career guidance, Basic critical reading and writing, basic research literacy, Support for learners: University application process, psycho-social support (living allowance, transport and advice on mental and physical wellness)

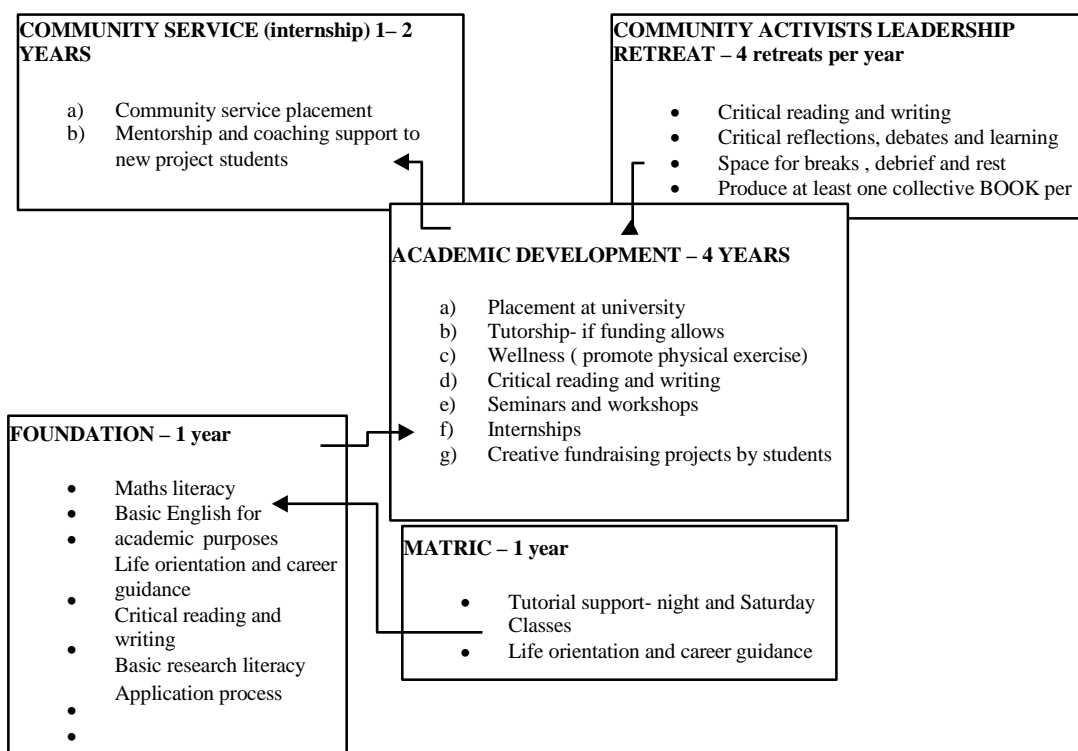
- iii. Upon foundation phase competition the activists will move to the academic development phase for a maximum of three years. A selection process is conducted upon assessment and suitability (A split 50% of technical colleges' certificates and 50% for universities degree). We have a strict list of courses to choose from which can benefit broader society.

We support with application processes and once accepted we also advise of how to access education scholarships and bursaries. Tutorial support for each activists and progress monitoring is provided this depends on availability of resources but we use volunteers where possible. Additional workshop about critical reading and writing are provided. Psycho-social support through a living allowance to relief their immediate financial and social security stress, transport, counselling when needed and advice on physical wellness.

- iv. We support learners who have successfully completed their academic studies by providing community service for one to two years. We do this through: Community service and internship for those who have successfully completed their degrees. Mentorship and coaching support to new students.
- v. Community Activists Leadership Support and Wellness because activist's burnout is one of the most common challenge facing social justice movements and NGO; and it affects mostly those leaders who work directly with poor communities.

We create a deliberate platform for learning, reflection, exchange, writing and retreat for previously disadvantaged activist's leaders, who might not have opportunities for sabbatical leaves. We do this through to four writing retreats a year - attracting high-level community activist's leaders from KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western communities at least for the first year and with intention to include other activists from other provinces and Southern African Countries (*dependent of funding*). We have secured a five bedroom house in North East of KwaZulu-Natal which can immediately accommodate up to 10 people sharing. Activists that have an income will pay 50% of the cost of the retreat and those who are unemployed will have to be subsidised 100%. In the long term we hope to buy this property and register it under a trust. Facilitators and Writing coaches will be approached once funding is secured.

## STRATEGIC APPROACHES AND OBJECTIVES



## ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

The centre operates under the leadership and guidance of the following dedicated board members. We pride ourselves in our principle that this centre must be led by women coming from previously disadvantaged working class background and must make sure that at least 60% of those we support should be women. The composite of our board is 80% of our board members are women of whom two openly live with HIV. Our centre administrator is a women, an activists, and student studying social work at the University of Western Cape and openly lives with HIV.

- 1. Chairperson of the board and Co-founder:** Mrs. Fredalene Booysens, Human rights activists, currently works as the national campaigns manager for Treatment Action Campaign and completing her master's degree in adult education at the University of Cape Town.
- 2. Founder and board member:** Mrs. Vuyiseka Dubula-Majola, Human rights activists, former general secretary of Treatment Action Campaign, currently a board member of TAC, and completing her doctoral degree in development studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- 3. Co-founder and board member:** Prof Jan Du Toit is a psychologist by profession and is currently the Director of the Africa Centre for HIV Management at the University of Stellenbosch.
- 4. Board member:** Sr Nompumelelo Mantangana is a Human rights activists and a professional nurse with extensive history working in HIV programmes in Khayelitsha. She is currently the chairperson of TAC in the Western Cape region.
- 5. Board member:** Ms. Bulelwa Zono is a Human rights activist from Gugulethu and has been involved with TAC since 1999 as a volunteer. She is one of the young women activists supported by the AEDC. She is currently in her final year completing her undergraduate degree in Psychology at the University of Western Cape.
- 6. Board member:** Dr Takiyah White-Ndwanya is an education and public health specialist, she is currently doing her post-doctoral fellowship at Health Economics and Epidemiology Research Office (HE2RO)

## **Volunteers and supporters**

We can never thank Tantaswa Ndlelana, Chrystal Hunter, Fanayi Tshabalala, Dr Musaed Abrahams, Prof Du Toit, Sis Mpumi, Fredalene, Phillip Mokoena, Lihle Dlamini and Faniswa enough for volunteering their time to the Centre running purely on their volunteerism since 2011. Although we appreciate that this not viable with increased support needed for the Centre, now we need to invest in building internal capacity through providing employment opportunities of our new graduates. This could be their first opportunity for formal employment.

Our great appreciation to Polly Clayden, Matthew Williams and Dr Nono Simelela for believing in this vision and opened a few doors for our initial support.

Thanks and gratitude to all the international student interns for their donations in kind namely Dr Takiyah White and Kate Anderson, masters student from the School of International Studies, University of Denver

## **GOING FORWARD**

We are conscious that funding this kind of support is very rear, many would rather fund service delivery projects not the education and development of the people who volunteer their lives to community development. To build strong and resilience communities we need to invest in nurturing and supporting our frontline community activists as our human capital. This begin with investing in their personal development. “Just like if you do not feed and nurture a tree it will not produce good fruits , so are activists that are not looked after – they will not produce long-term sustainable change”.

### **Contact person**

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