

M·A·C AIDS FUND
LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE
at Columbia University and UCLA

PROFILES OF COHORT 2





Name: Kholisa Beatrice Gogela (Nickname: Mmampho)

Position/Organization: Founder and Operator, Human Touch Training Consultancy cc

Location: Dorchester Heights, Eastern Cape Province

Background/Discipline: Clinical mental health; peer education mentoring; human resources

With a background in social work and human resources, Kholisa Gogela's early professional work was in peer education, mentoring, and student wellness programs. In 2007, based on these and other experiences, she started her own training consulting business in order to contribute to the social, psychological and economic empowerment of the community through social responsibility programs. Her prevention plan centers on the large and growing threat to Buffalo City Municipality in East London, where the pandemic is compounded by high unemployment, poverty, lack of access to basic services, and gender-based violence. Gogela's plan is to establish a sustainable, school-based peer education program in two high schools. She plans to recruit and train 25 learners, as well as six faculty supervisors, in each school to become peer educators. The training will be group-based, using the Experiential Learning Model, which allows for participation, fun, and active learning. The peer educators will train other boys and girls in school between 15 and 20 years old about self-awareness and self-esteem, basic communication and helping skills, sexuality, and HIV and STD transmission and prevention, with a particular emphasis on the role of gender inequalities.



Name: Estelle Eleanor Heideman

Position/Organization: HIV/AIDS Coordinator, University of the Free State

Location: Bloemfontein, Free State

Background/Discipline: Education, HIV management in the workplace

Since 1997, Estelle Heideman has developed and implemented workplace programs in local businesses, training more than 5000 teachers and government officials in life skills, HIV/AIDS, gender issues, counseling skills and integrating HIV/AIDS into curricula. She is now based at the University of the Free State, where she has taught HIV/AIDS counseling in medical schools and worked with students and educators on a range of HIV-related subjects, particularly with regard to gender inequalities. A major part of the trainings involves strategies to equip women to better care for their sexual health within relationships. For the Leadership Initiative, Heideman's prevention plan will focus on education for farm laborers and their families in rural areas of the Free State in order to increase their knowledge of HIV/AIDS, enhance communication and greater equality within relationships, promote voluntary HIV testing and counseling, and assist couples with being partners in reproductive health issues. Men will be particularly encouraged to talk to their partners about sex, violence, substance abuse, and HIV, while women will be taught assertiveness and negotiating skills.



Name: P. Nwabisa Jama (Nickname: Nwabi)

Position/Organization: Researcher, Gender and Health Research Unit, Medical Research Council of South Africa

Location: Pretoria, Gauteng

Background/Discipline: Public health; information and library sciences

Nwabisa Jama began her work in HIV research as an assistant on a study investigating sexual violence in the context of youths' sexual relationships; later, she offered sexual and reproductive health and HIV sessions to the young female study participants. She spent the next five years as a community research and health promotion coordinator, providing the "Stepping Stones" HIV prevention workshop series to a total of 3000 youth from 70 villages throughout the Eastern Cape. She is currently writing a Ph.D. proposal to investigate the applicability of gender and power theory on understanding young women's condom use practices, employing the Stepping Stones dataset. Jama's prevention plan will continue her work with Stepping Stones among youth ages 15 to 24 from rural parts of the Eastern Cape as well an urban township in Gauteng. She will also conduct qualitative research on sexual relationships and condom use among youth and women's gender identities,



Name: Fumane Portia Khanare

Position/Organization: Lecturer, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Location: Ashwood, KwaZulu-Natal

Background/Discipline: Educational psychology

As a class teacher and school department head, Fumane Khanare formed the “Pledgers’ Club” with girls in grades 8 to 10 to create a forum in which girls would be free to discuss issues such as self-esteem, sex, love, relationships, and HIV/AIDS. She later linked with the Peacecorps NGO and began coaching girls’ basketball. At this time she became a member of the organization “Kicking Out AIDS” (KOA), the goal of which is to involve school-going and out-of-school youths in sports as a vehicle for HIV/AIDS education. Currently, Khanare works with a project called “Every Voice Counts,” focusing on research about meeting the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children with regard to gender roles and vulnerability to HIV. Her prevention plan will focus on understanding how 12- to 17-year old youths communicate about HIV/AIDS in order to foster open communication among young people, particularly in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal.



Name: Matshidiso Maseko (Nickname: Tshidi)

Position/Organization: Co-Director, Khanya Family Centre

Location: Katlehong, Gauteng

Background/Discipline: Educational Psychology

In 1994, after realizing the needs of disadvantaged communities in East Rand, Johannesburg, Matshidiso Maseko was one of the three female founding directors of Khanya Family Centre in Katlehong. The area faced many severe social problems, including crime, poverty, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, backyard abortions, suicide, armed robbery and community violence. Khanya Family Centre provided counseling, training, and social modeling as well as assistance with food and other practical matters to traumatized women and children. Today, Khanya provides a range of community services, including a vibrant skills training program called the “Thusano Project,” focused on the concept of “help yourself by doing it on your own.” As a women’s mental health action group, they have reduced perceptions of gender bias in their community by demonstrating that organizations run by women can compete with the traditional male-dominated work groups. Maseko’s prevention plan will involve expanding the work of Khanya by offering free counseling, assertiveness training, and reproductive health education to the community, reaching clients through social networks, partnerships with other human service providers, and print media.



Name: Babalwa Pinky Mazaleni (Nickname: Pinky)

Position/Organization: Researcher, AIDS & Budget Unit, Governance and AIDS Program (GAP), Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)

Location: Pretoria, Gauteng

Background/Discipline: Public policy, human development

Babalwa Mazaleni is an aspiring public policy analyst and researcher for the AIDS and Budget Unit with the Governance and AIDS program, building on her prior work with the “Public Policy Partnership” cohort project. Through this project, she worked in a range of government and other public settings and then completed a master’s degree in public policy and human development in the Netherlands. Mazaleni will implement her prevention plan in the Rustenburg area of North West Province by promoting voluntary HIV testing and counseling among women aged 15 to 24 years, providing support groups for HIV-positive people, and advancing women’s empowerment. She will also seek to initiate a gender-based network within the community to increase women’s negotiating power in their relationships.



Name: Romiela S. Pillay

Position/Organization: Project Manager, MERSETA

Location: Johannesburg, Gauteng

Background/Discipline: Social work and Business Management, Human Resources

Romiela S. Pillay is a project manager at the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authorities (MERSETA). She manages and coordinates strategic projects aligned to the National Skills Development Strategy, which includes developing and implementing a strategic approach to HIV/AIDS in business. Previously, she helped to address HIV/AIDS-related needs in both the private and public sectors. A social worker with additional training in business, Pillay will use her prevention plan to focus on the needs of the South African workforce within the nation's small and medium-sized enterprises via workplace interventions. Working through MERSETA, Pillay plans to employ a multi-pronged approach, including proactively assessing the likely impact of HIV and AIDS on businesses and developing a customized plan to promote HIV education and awareness, to analyze and then manage how HIV/AIDS impacts the enterprise, and to curb discrimination against those living with the virus.



Name: Carmen Shadwell

Position/Organization: Teacher and Coordinator, LEAP Science and Maths Schools

Location: Cape Town, Western Cape

Background/Discipline: Occupational therapy

With a background in occupational therapy, Carmen Shadwell has a range of experience working with groups and communities around HIV/AIDS and related issues. Focusing on “transformative leadership,” Shadwell wishes to extend her current work as a life orientation teacher and social responsibility coordinator and counselor at the LEAP school, which serves learners from disadvantaged areas of Cape Town. LEAP School employs a philosophy of being open, honest, and real to engage young learners. Through the school’s life orientation forum, Shadwell will focus her prevention plan on increasing learners’ awareness of forming meaningful relationships. The program will include strategies on sharing thoughts and behaviors, challenging misperceptions and stereotypes, reflecting behavior, increasing sense of self, shifting from “survival mode,” and acknowledging healthy alternatives in behavior choices, all with a view to HIV prevention and gender inequality.