



# ABCD

For  
World Aids Day  
2018  
Festival



In December, we celebrated the World Aids Day of 2018 in a somewhat unconventional way: An Asset-based Community-driven Development (ABCD) Festival in respect to HIV and health. It took place at Noluthando Hall in Makhanda/Joza and was attended by adults and youth who take part in the Raphael Centre's project called 'Siya Sonke'.

This event was about sharing stories of success but also experiences made and questions raised in the process of ABCD in practice. The Festival was composed of:

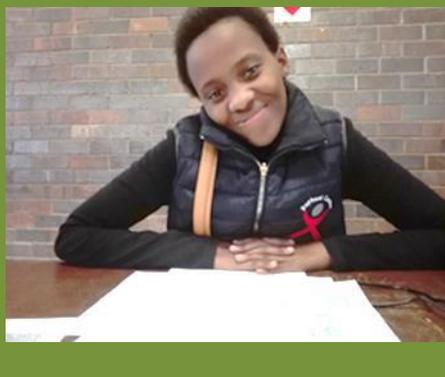
- ✚ Product and skills market
- ✚ Youth poetry by Nontle Mama
- ✚ Workshop 'World Café'
- ✚ Community visioning



Our guest-speaker, Bernie Dolley from Ikhala Trust addressed the small crowd with very profound questions: "What is your purpose in life? What is your motivation? Where do you want to be one day?" Also, she reminded the entire group what ABCD was about: "Instead of looking at what is not there, we look at what is strong in the community but also in a person, and we simply start building from there".



The Siya Sonke women entrepreneurs show-cased their home-made products and shared their stories of success. It was led by Andiswa Stofu who is a young mother and joined Siya Sonke in 2017. She started producing aloe-soaps and lip balms – using what she has available in her natural environment and at home. In the meantime, she has extended her range of products with beautiful beadwork and has become a small local trader of her products in Grahamstown. At this point, others had the opportunity to register for learning a new skill.



The day further unfolded an inspirational atmosphere when people split into working groups for the 'World Café' session to share experiences relating to questions: 1) Do you know someone with HIV who lives a healthy life? How did she or he succeed?; 2) Since you attended the ABCD training, is there anything that shifted or changed?



3) What has helped you to move away from poverty of mind (e.g. self-limiting thinking, negative mind-concepts) – what usually helps you to re-focus on your goals?; 4) Life-lines: Highlight the most important events or experiences which have made you proud or inspired?

The Siya Sonke youth group was asked 1) Where do you want to see your community in five years?; 2) Whom do you want to be in five years? They depicted their ideas through visioning boards which were presented at the end of the day.

# Outcomes

For the women, the most important change experienced since ABCD training and practice was: self-acceptance, trust, caring and a sense of togetherness. Also, what was emphasised was having gained confidence and a sense of freedom of choice. This came through awareness of own strengths and knowing how to employ these to follow aspirations. What was also commonly valued was the shift of mind: positive thinking, self-reflection and focusing on what is there (and not on what is not there) to make a start working towards a goal. Women also appreciated the increased team working, knowledge about planning, budgeting and how to invest in growing assets.



The Siya Sonke youth shared their community vision which was much related to a better local infrastructure : People working together to bring peace into the community (fighting violence and crime); Community can generate its own electricity; Clean water is available to everyone; Safe and warm places for children – (e.g. more day care centres, preschools, and aftercare options); Safe places for all animals (stock); Community that sustain themselves through gardening in order to eliminate poverty and create more job opportunities.

Visioning themselves in 5 years, the common ideas were to be youth leaders, to generate income through farming as well as promoting young talented athletes so that they can represent Makhanda/ Grahamstown in National teams.



In conclusion, the day had shown how much factors required for community development are just the same as for community health. Moreover, community health is the pre-requisite for our community to prosper. So, in respect to World Aids Day where we remember people's journeys with HIV but also celebrate achievements of healthy living, it was emphasised that HIV-prevention is more than counselling, testing and HIV education . It is a matter of mental, physical and social well-being. It requires perspectives and confidence in pursuing individual ambitions and a good infrastructure.

'Siya Sonke': The 'Siya Sonke' (isiXhosa for 'we are going together') project is part of the Raphael Centre's Programme for Asset-based Community-driven Development. It aims at individuals and community-groups driving their processes towards well-being, growth and change. It is attended by 40 families who live in the Joza community in Grahamstown. The Centre works with adults, children and youth of these families. The intention is to understand and learn together how socioeconomic change at household and community level can happen.

**Way forward:** The interim Siya Sonke progress report will reflect upon commonly valued change from the festival with more detail and will depict socio-economic progress of Siya Sonke families. This report comes out in March 2019.

**With special thanks to:**

**Emthonjeni Trust**

**Ikhala Trust**

**DG Murray Trust**

**Club Peloton**

4 Dundas Street, Grahamstown, 6139

Phone: 046-6228831

[anne@raphaelcentre.co.za](mailto:anne@raphaelcentre.co.za)

Follow us on facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/raphaelcentre.co.za/>