



**MHSC**  
Mine Health and Safety Council

# MHSC e-NEWS LETTER

December 2023

Every mine worker returning from work unharmed every day. Striving for zero harm in our lifetime.

## Leading the Fight against HIV, AIDS and TB.

The MHSC takes pride in joining the South African Mining Industry (SAMI) in commemorating World Aids Day on the 01 December 2023. The industry is making strides in efforts to eliminate the scourge of HIV, AIDS and TB in the mining sector.

**Below:** The poster from the MHSC highlighting the theme for the 2023 World AIDS Day Commemoration (WAD) for the SAMI.



**“Let Communities Lead”.** In Solidary with the global and the national theme; The South African Mining Industry’s (SAMI’s) theme is “Supporting SAMI Communities in Leading the fight against HIV, AIDS and TB”. The MHSC’s focused on running an awareness campaign from 15 November 2023 to 01 December 2023. Activities included sharing HIV, AIDS and TB communication to mines, as well presentations at Regional Tripartite Forums (RTFs)

This has been important as our sector remains among the high-risk sectors in as far as TB and HIV infections are concerned. Consequently, the South African National Strategic Plan for HIV, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted infections (2017-2022) recommends focusing prevention efforts on this population in line with the United Nations vision of zero new HIV infections be made a priority. HIV prevalence in mineworkers is believed to be higher than the national adult average. The mining sector in South Africa has been affected by the HIV epidemic however, improved access to affordable and effective treatment through prevention programmes has enhanced the quality of life of Mineworkers.

The mining industry is working towards identifying additional social risks of HIV infections between cases and controls, underlying issues enabling HIV transmission in mineworkers between cases and controls and reasons for uptake and access of HIV prevention services.

2023 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> WAD Commemoration, which globally is observed under the theme



The Arum institute conducted a study to understand the social risk factors driving new HIV infections among miners at three mining operations in the Northern Cape (Kolomela iron ore), Limpopo (Amandelbult platinum) and Mpumalanga (Zibulo coal). The research included in-depth interviews with mineworkers, healthcare providers and community members. Part of the outcome of the research contributed towards the National guidelines' recommendations for a nationwide roll-out of anti-retroviral treatment to HIV positive individuals regardless of the CD4 count from September 2016 to date.

Mineworkers are encouraged to practice safe sex and regularly test for HIV/AIDS, if necessary, seek counselling at local health care facilities. If infected taking treatment as per the medical practitioners' advice serves life. It is important to note, being HIV positive is not a death sentence, one can lead a healthy lifestyle for a much longer period.

### Observing 16 Days of Activism in the SAMI

The 25 November 2023 marks the beginning of the annual 16-day global campaign against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), culminating on Human Rights Day on 10 December 2023. At the PPE Guideline workshop held in November, Ms. Yogen Chetty a WIMAC employer convenor spoke strongly against gender-based violence in the South African Mining Industry.



Efforts geared at elimination of violence against women are underway in the South African mining sector are underway, with MHSC and various stakeholders playing a vital part in policy development and research geared towards Women in Mining. The MHSC developed a guideline on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), that will be gazetted by DMRE upon final approval.



Adv. Masilo from DMRE added her voice by calling for a multidisciplinary approach to appropriately deal with the scourge of these societal ills. Her words echoed the words of the U.N. Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammed where she stated that "halfway through the 2030 Agenda, we are far from achieving the target of eliminating violence against women and girls." Furthermore she stated that "In order to tackle the pervasive global issue, the U.N. is calling for a comprehensive robust response that invests in prevention through strengthened legislation, improved services."

Prevention is key to ending GBV, while working with schools, communities, encouraging media and religious/traditional leaders to promote positive social norms and championing awareness and behaviour change campaigns, engaging men and boys. The United Nations further indicated that an estimated 736 million women worldwide — nearly 1 in 3 — have faced physical or sexual abuse, or both, at least once in their lifetime. The perpetrators of GBV are most often the victim's husband or



intimate partner, according to the U.N. Around 245 million women and girls 15 years of age and older experience this type of violence.

## MHSC Strategy Session with a Purpose



*Mr. Gertzen Schlemmer of Organisational Effectiveness Academy leading the session.*

In pursuit of its mission to enhance Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) in the South African Mining Industry, the Mine Health and Safety Council initiated an internal strategic initiative to strengthen the cohesiveness and effectiveness of its leadership team.

Both EXCO and MANCO unanimously agreed that a close-knit team will ensure high productivity and a harmonised work environment becomes a norm at MHSC. The facilitator highlighted the importance of understanding team dynamics in the context of self-consciousness within the organisation. MHSC Chief Executive Officer, Dave Mamphitha gave the opening remarks and laid the foundation for what later became the hallmark of the strategy session. He placed

emphasis on the benefits of a team building techniques, such as increased communication, planning skills, employee motivation, and employee collaboration. He further emphasised that the session must not lose sight of the organisational mandate, while reflecting on the 27 years of positive contribution to “Zero Harm for mine workers, while perusing research excellence.

The strategy session was “themed” around enhancing a team that cohesively works together towards a common goal. Given the nature of MHSC core business or mandate, creating these bonds through strengthening internal relations and understanding team dynamics remains crucial for both organisational effectiveness and efficiency in meeting tripartite partners expectations.

The MHSC recognises that effective teamwork is a cornerstone of achieving the tripartite objectives, encompassing research, legislation, and knowledge transfer in the SAMI.



**MHSC EXCO and MANCO Team:** embracing the project scope of the strategy session encompassing the diagnosis of team dynamics, the proposition of strategic interventions, and the enhancement of communication, teamwork, and collaboration within these critical segments of the organisation. With a select group of 3 EXCO and 10 MANCO employees as participants, the objective was clear: to identify strengths and needs, increase self-awareness, address team challenges, and ultimately promote collaboration within the organisation.