

NASTAD South Africa Profile

April 2016

HIV and AIDS in South Africa

South Africa is a middle income country located at the southernmost tip of Africa with [a population of 54,960,000](#).¹ According to the 2014 UNAIDS Spectrum Estimates, South Africa has one of the highest HIV adult prevalence rates in Sub-Saharan Africa—[estimated at 18.9%](#). Furthermore, the 2014 UNAIDS Spectrum estimates that there are [6.5 million people living with HIV](#) in the country.

South Africa's response to the HIV epidemic is guided by the [National Strategic Plan \(NSP\) on HIV, STIs and TB 2012 – 2016](#). The latter, the country's third NSP, outlines the national priorities related to HIV, AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB) prevention, treatment, and care and support. The five broad goals of the NSP are to:

- Reduce new HIV infections by at least 50%, using combination prevention
- Initiate at least 80% of eligible patients on antiretroviral therapy (ART), with 70% alive and on treatment five years after initiation
- Reduce the number of new TB infections, as well as the number of TB deaths, by 50%
- Ensure an enabling and accessible legal framework that protects and promotes human rights in order to support implementation of the NSP
- Reduce self-reported stigma related to HIV and TB by at least 50%



South Africa has the largest ART program in the world and [by end of March 2015, South Africa had 3,103,902 on treatment](#).² Despite the commendable ART scale-up, patient outcomes remain below expectations due to poor linkage to care, suboptimal retention in care, and weak community-based care and support service delivery. NASTAD South Africa works in collaboration with South African Departments of Health (DoHs) to expand and enhance their HIV prevention, treatment, and care and support programs by providing technical assistance and support for program design, implementation, management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

NASTAD South Africa

NASTAD South Africa has supported the National and Provincial Department of Health in the implementation of public health programs with specific emphasis on strengthening HIV Care and Support since 2009 with funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Integrated Access to Care and Treatment (I ACT)

Through technical assistance (TA) and direct service delivery (DSD), NASTAD South Africa supported the implementation of the [Integrated Access to Care and Treatment \(I ACT\) project](#) in Free State and Mpumalanga Provinces from 2009 to 2015. NASTAD South Africa assisted in high-level development of relevant policies to enhance referrals and linkages; identification, recruitment and training of Support Group Facilitators (SGFs); mentoring, coaching and supportive supervision of SGFs; and the establishment and maintenance of support groups at both facility and community level. Lessons from the implementation of the project and evidence through the I ACT retrospective and [prospective evaluations](#) point to the importance of information, education and communication to improve linkages to care, adherence to treatment and retention in care. With NASTAD's technical assistance, I ACT program implementation in Free State and Mpumalanga have been successfully transitioned and integrated with the care and support unit of the HIV/AIDS Directorate of the PDOH and the RTC. In September 2015, NASTAD closed out the I ACT project.

LinkCARE

Under a CDC sub-award through [South Africa Partners](#), NASTAD South Africa began to implement the LinkCARE program in April 2015. The LinkCARE program is centered on supporting implementation of the HIV care and support cascade while improving linkage to care, adherence to treatment and retention in care. The LinkCARE program provides technical assistance and support for the development and implementation of key aspects of HIV and AIDS care and support services in South Africa and strives to improve patient outcomes by:

1. Promoting early linkage, treatment adherence, and retention in care;
2. Supporting the nationwide roll-out of the "National Adherence Guidelines for

Chronic Diseases (HIV, TB and NCDs)" including I ACT; and

3. Supporting the comprehensive package of care and support services that are part of routine HIV care and treatment.

Technical assistance is provided through the (i) review, design, and implementation of effective tools for successful programming, (ii) capacity building of human resources, and (iii) improvement of systems and processes for managing program and activities. Targeted technical assistance and support to the South African Government (SAG) will enable further development and implementation of HIV care and support services nationwide; the implementation of National Adherence Guidelines for Chronic Diseases and I ACT; and the progressive reinforcement of sustainable health systems needed to end the HIV epidemic.



Figure 1. I ACT Support Group Facilitators after their graduation from a NASTAD/ RTC facilitated training in July 2014.

References

1. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). (2015). *Mid-year population estimates*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
2. National Department of Health (NDOH) (2015). *Annual report 2014/15*. Pretoria: NDOH.

Country Contacts

Habtamu Girma, Country Lead
hgirma@NASTAD.org

Dr. Tshiwela Neluheni, Country Director
tneluheni@NASTAD.org