



## DFID MSP PROJECTS: CAPACITY BUILDING, SA MILITARY SERVICES

**Project title: Capacity building in support of the comprehensive care, management and treatment plan of HIV and AIDS, including the provision of antiretrovirals for the SA Military Services**

**Service Provider: Continuing Education, University of Pretoria**

**Partner: National Department of Defence (DoD)**

### **Aim**

To equip health care personnel of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS), the health care arm of the DoD, at selected sites with the knowledge and skills to administer a comprehensive care and treatment programme for HIV and AIDS that includes the provision of antiretroviral therapy.

### **Target group**

The target group for the training was a multidisciplinary team entrusted with implementing the Comprehensive Care Management and Treatment (CCMT) of HIV and AIDS within the DoD. This included doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dieticians, social workers, psychologists, occupational emergency care orderlies ("lay counsellors") and drug logistical and procurement staff and managers.

### **Project description**

A training curriculum was developed and a training manual produced. The course was designed as a two-week, 80-hour residential workshop. The Training Manual was approved and validated by the University of Pretoria and by the US Centres for Disease Control (CDC). Topics ranged from clinical to public health and human rights and social elements of HIV treatment, care and support.

Seven training workshops for over 300 DoD personnel were held between October 2005 and August 2008. Trainers included clinicians, PLHIV and psychologists. The training consisted of an initial ten-day workshop and a three-day refresher workshop.

Baseline and final assessments of participants' knowledge and skills were completed on every course. All trainees showed significant improvement. Respondents gave the course an overall rating of 3.77 out of 5.

Master trainers were identified as capable of running 'training of trainers' courses, to ensure sustainability of the project.

### **Conclusions**

Although the course is of high quality, there were concerns about the ability of the SAMHS to move towards training of trainers capable of maintaining clinical knowledge levels in a rapidly shifting environment. By the end of the project there had already been attrition in the original cadre of trainees.

Gaps in the training, related to addressing stigma and gender inequality and violence, were identified. It was suggested that focus groups should be held to identify key training needs of SAMHS personnel.