

Combating HIV/AIDS in Swaziland

Corporates and NGOs in CSR Partnership to Combat HIV/AIDS in Swaziland

"Business has a responsibility beyond its basic responsibility to its shareholders; a responsibility to a broader constituency that includes its key stakeholders: customers, employees, NGOs, government - the people of the communities in which it operates."

▶ Courtney Pratt, Former CEO Toronto Hydro

On Monday 7 November 2011, PMR-africa held their annual Awards breakfast in Swaziland to honour leaders and achievers who contribute to the country's economic growth and development. Dr Arnau van Wyngaard, CEO of Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care (SHBC), was the keynote speaker, focussing on "Corporates and NGOs in Corporate Social Responsibility Partnership to Combat HIV/AIDS in Swaziland".

Dr Van Wyngaard outlined the necessity for organisations to expand the financial bottom-line to include social imperatives for true organisational success since CSR is regarded as a business necessity: "Corporate social responsibility is a hard-edged business decision. Not because it is a nice thing to do or because people are forcing us to do it, but because it is good for our business". (Niall Fitzgerald, former CEO of Unilever) The Economist (January 2008) stated: "Companies with their eye on their 'triple-bottom-line' outperform their less fastidious peers on the stock market".

The keynote address encouraged organisations to join forces with NGOs to attain their CSR objectives. Van Wyngaard, argued that making a difference in the community (eg by combating HIV/AIDS) is not the core business of companies, whereas for NGOs such as SHBC, caring for the community is their core business. He reminded business leaders that the very communities that their businesses serve, include employees, relatives of employees and customers. Invest-

ment into the wellbeing of the community will ultimately have financial returns.

He shared Corporate/NGO partnership guidelines that have proven helpful in deciding who to partner with to meet CSR objectives:



Dr Arnau van Wyngaard, CEO of Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care (SHBC)

- Evaluate a potential NGO partner's systems, its management, administration and governance practices.
- A worthy NGO partner uses tried and tested business practices (eg project management, monitoring and impact evaluation) as well as sound financial practices.

Using SHBC as a case in point, Dr Van Wyngaard gave leaders insight into the work they have undertaken since 2005:

SHBC's vision is 'To become the hands and the feet of Christ in the communities surrounding the church'.

After initially training 36 people in an area known as Dwaleni, the group of volunteers, all working without any salary, started reaching out to members of the community in need of care and support, thereby establishing a nucleus of caregiving skills within those communities.

Presently, 850 volunteers form part of SHBC in 30 rural communities, caring for approximately 2 700 clients. SHBC also runs a preschool for 20 orphaned or vulnerable children, and feeds approximately 80 orphans daily at Dwaleni.

In 2011, a new programme was established whereby wheelchairs are distributed to invalids who would never have been able to afford their own wheelchair. More than 80 wheelchairs have already been distributed and plans are currently in place, in collaboration with four other bodies, to import more than 500 wheelchairs in 2012 – a prime example of what can be done when NGOs, corporates and other organisations take hands to alleviate the need within communities.

Dr van Wyngaard is a recognised international speaker and has published various articles in academic journals on the topic of HIV and AIDS. SHBC has a website where more can be read about their work: www.shbcare.org. Dr van Wyngaard can be contacted at wyngaard@lando.co.za. ▲