

## WHO WE ARE

The Health Systems Trust (HST) is a dynamic independent non-profit organisation established in 1992 to support the transformation of the health system in a new democratic South Africa. HST actively supports the development of comprehensive national health systems, through strategies designed to promote equity and efficiency in health and health care delivery.

HST has acquired a wealth of experience in the design and support of relevant health systems research, strengthening the district health system, and as a powerhouse for information dissemination within the health sector in South Africa and increasingly southern Africa. HST has established networks and partnerships with various service providers nationally and internationally. HST is also involved in capacity development through intern programmes and grant support to a range of individuals and organisations.

Using a Primary Health Care approach, current core focus areas include strengthening governance, management systems and priority programmes of HIV & AIDS, TB and STIs, maternal, women's and child health and nutrition. We are guided by an independent Board of Trustees, representing a diverse group of individuals with professional standing and expertise in health systems development and public health.



## Health Systems Trust

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# HEALTH SYSTEMS TRUST

## VISION

Health systems supporting health  
for all in southern Africa.

## MISSION

To contribute to building comprehensive, effective, efficient and equitable national health systems by supporting the implementation of functional health districts in South Africa and the region.

## APPROACH

- We embrace a public health perspective with a focus on the Primary Health Care approach.
- We do health systems development through research and information dissemination that influences both policy and practice.
- We improve quality of care in priority health programmes through facilitating supportive interventions and sharing 'best practice.'
- We advocate for equity, efficiency and effectiveness in health services and for empowerment of health service users.

## CORE VALUES

Our work is guided by the following key values:

- Transparency and accountability
- Innovation and responsiveness
- Integrity and nurturance
- Embracing diversity
- Participatory democracy

HST's unique strength lies in its ability to add value to the critical interface between health systems research, policy development and implementation support. As such, HST occupies a vital strategic position and plays an intermediary role between the public sector, activist organisations and research institutions while maintaining a commitment to the principles of human rights oriented Primary Health Care. Additionally, HST has cumulative experience and expertise in a variety of technical content areas like District Health Expenditure Reviews, District Health Plans and Health Information Systems and in managing the 'software' of health policy and practice. HST's work in longer-term and broad-based health systems support at the primary level is a key feature of its unique contribution to health systems development.

Core activities are health systems research, health systems development, advocacy, capacity development, knowledge management and information dissemination. These activities are implemented through our three core clusters: **Research**; **District Support and Community Development**; and **HealthLink**.

## RESEARCH

*The Research cluster focuses on innovative research to strengthen the district health system, its support system and priority programmes, in particular HIV and AIDS, TB and the special needs of vulnerable groups such as mothers and children. Our priority is getting research into policy and practice.*

Our key research areas are:

- Public Health Care
- District Health Systems and Decentralisation
- Human Resources
- Tuberculosis
- Reproductive Health
- Maternal and Child Health
- Community Health Workers
- Occupational Health
- HIV & AIDS and STIs

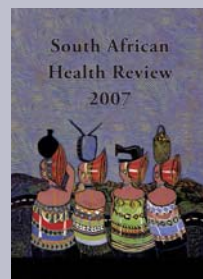
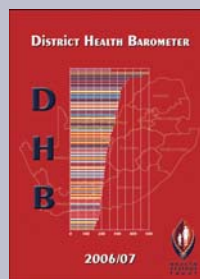
## DISTRICT SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*The District Support and Community Development cluster supports selected districts in improving the quality of health care by strengthening capacity of both clients and providers in the SADC region.*

The aim of Community Development is to support selected districts in developing partnerships with communities and community based organisations as part of the district health system.

Focus areas include:

- Community based household food security, nutrition education and community based growth monitoring and promotion.
- Collaboration of community support structures and networks with ART service sites for the improvement of community ART treatment, awareness and adherence.



- Promotion of more informed and affirming public dialogue on human sexuality to engender positive changes in relevant policies and programmes on the African continent.
- Enhancing HIV counselling and testing to increase community access to quality services.

The key focus of District Support is to improve quality of care by strengthening systems through the lens of priority health conditions.

Technical support and capacity building is provided to district management and staff to bridge the gap between health policy and practice. The unit has also championed the implementation of the Clinic Supervisors Manual and continues to support the areas of District Health Expenditure Reviews and District Health Plans and strengthening the use of information for management. New developments include developing a routine pharmacy information system as well as integrating HIV/TB/STI tools and advocacy documents.

## HEALTHLINK

*The HealthLink cluster facilitates the strategic use and dissemination of health and related information and is also involved in advocacy projects which serve to improve the quality and availability of reliable information. The cluster also focuses on advocating for equity in health and is actively involved in supporting the implementation of the National Strategic Plan.*

Key projects include:

- Health Management and Information Systems
- Equity and Governance
- Treatment Monitor
- District Health Barometer
- Knowledge Management

### Information Dissemination

Information dissemination rests as one of the cornerstones of the HealthLink cluster and a variety of specific projects and activities are undertaken in order to fulfill this objective.

- **South African Health Review (SAHR)**  
Published annually, the SAHR provides all levels of the public health sector with a current and longer-term review of health policy developments and their implementation in South Africa. It also monitors changes and challenges in provision of equitable and accessible health care in the country.

### Resource Centre

The HST Resource Centre contains a comprehensive collection of health related publications and is involved in disseminating health information and HST publications.

### HST Website (www.hst.org.za)

The HST website provides a wide array of knowledge, research, links and information about health systems and Primary Health Care in southern Africa. It showcases our work and holds an extensive database of publications.

### HST Indicators Database

The HST indicators database (www.hst.org.za/healthstats/) provides a range of indicators and statistics describing the South African health system, and contains a combination of demographic, socio-economic, health status and health services data.

### Electronic Discussion Lists

HST has established and moderates numerous e-discussion lists on a wide range of health and health systems topics. These include the District Health Systems and Local Government list (dhs-1g), the Rehabilitation/Disability list (disability), the Rural Doctors list (mailadoc), the Drug Policy and Practice list (druginfo) and a list focussing on HIV & AIDS with a gender, women's rights and sexual and reproductive health rights lens (60percent).

### HealthLink Bulletin

The HealthLink Bulletin is a bi-weekly electronic news summary sent via email, which focuses on news items related to HIV and AIDS, health systems development, Primary Health Care and public health. It also summarises relevant conferences, current research resources and training as well as job opportunities.