

Fikelela, a Xhosa word meaning “reach out”, is the HIV and AIDS outreach programme of the Anglican Church in Cape Town, South Africa. Founded in 2000, Fikelela was formed with the vision to provide an active Christian response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

Our Purpose: What does Fikelela exist to do?

According to Fikelela Coordinator, Rev. Rachel Mash, Fikelela’s purpose is clear and simple. It exists to do two things: (1) to get HIV into the Church and, (2) to get the Church into HIV.

Fikelela’s mission is to mobilize the Anglican community to make a sustained positive contribution to the reduction of new HIV infections, and to drive HIV/AIDS education and care in partnership with others.

Core Activities

Fikelela works to achieve its vision through a set of core activities:

1. **Care for orphaned and vulnerable children** Fikelela operates the *Fikelela Children’s Centre* in Khayelitsha, a Cape Town township. Established in 2001, the centre offers short-term emergency residential care to children who arrive malnourished, abandoned, neglected and often abused. Social workers refer children to the Centre, where they receive psychosocial and emotional care and support, healthy nutrition, and treatment (for HIV and TB, amongst other treatment options) from a resident nurse and trained care workers. When children are assessed to be well enough, the Centre facilitates their placement in a suitable foster care family.

Heaven’s Nest is another children’s centre operated independently by a parish task-team, and operating since 2004.

2. **Parish Task-teams** Fikelela encourages and supports local Anglican congregations to mobilize their churches in response to HIV and AIDS. Interested congregations form task-teams that involve themselves in HIV-work of their choice, depending on what is appropriate to their community. This could include hospital visits, pastoral care, education and information-sharing within the church, fundraising, work with children, or a food parcel project (one congregation prepares over 800 food parcels a month for orphans or people living with HIV). Presently, there are 32 task-teams operating in the Cape Town diocese. Task-teams are tasked with getting HIV/AIDS onto the church agenda: in prayer, liturgy and preaching, and service.
3. **Support Groups** are coordinated centrally through the Fikelela office and, increasingly, independently through local congregations and task-teams. Churches partner with local health facilities that refer people living with HIV who may benefit from the support group environment. All support groups are church-based, but are not restricted to members of any congregation or faith group. Presently, 11 support groups are in operation in the Cape Town diocese.
4. **Youth prevention programme** Prevention of HIV is a major priority for Fikelela, particularly with a focus on youth. *“Agents of Change”* is a Lifeskills and Education programme run in select parishes by young people themselves who are trained as peer educators and facilitators. Over 20 sessions, the programme provides information and awareness on HIV, stimulates interactive discussion on risks, builds leadership in young participants, and promotes voluntary testing.

“Survivor Africa” is a 7-week Bible-based sexuality and choices programme offered to confirmation candidates. Confirmation class teachers are trained to run this programme, and completing a sexuality course is a prerequisite to being confirmed.

5. **Resource development** Fikelela has developed a range of resources to complement their activities. Manuals and Resource books accompany training for programmes like *Agents of Change* and *Survivor Africa*. Publications have been written (eg. *“Worship and Liturgy”*; *“Our Church has AIDS”*, *“Mobilizing your congregation”*) to make HIV and AIDS accessible to congregations, and to resource clergy with skills, information and outlines of how to incorporate HIV into the life of the Church.
6. **Events** Fikelela makes good use of significant dates to raise awareness and profile of HIV. Annually, World AIDS Day is commemorated in memorial services. Other special events (Candlelight memorial; Walk for Witness; etc.) are promoted to raise interest and commitment in care and support, outreach, testing, prevention, etc.

Our Approach

Ways of Working	Illustration/Story
<p>Fikelela tries to work as closely as possible with clergy – to build relationship, to influence, etc. Clergy are often role models, or gatekeepers or enablers.</p> <p>But, if the clergy are not on board with the process, lay people in local parishes often take the initiative and lead, while still keeping clergy informed.</p>	<p>At one Parish Council, parishioners said to their priest: <i>“When will we start a task team like all the other churches?”</i></p> <p>Father P: <i>“I’ve got one of ‘your’ people here with me.”</i></p> <p>Fikelela’s Walk for Witness: Nobody wanted to test until the Bishops tested.</p>
Care for children is short-term emergency care only until the child is well enough to be placed with a family. Being part of a family is the goal; Fikelela’s conviction is to not institutionalize the child.	
Programmes are not “owned” by Fikelela’s central coordinating office, but need to belong to the parishes. Activities must be seen as local church programmes (eg. <i>“St. Mary’s Support Group”</i> , not <i>“Fikelela Support Group at St. Mary’s”</i>).	T-shirts with the name of the local parish, printed by that parish, are very popular.
Youth Lifeskills programmes employ a participatory approach that is fun and engaging, with full information. Proposing the discussion topic and allowing for discussion helps young people to share their own stories. Icebreakers along the way help them to relax.	
The Vision and Mission for Fikelela are what drive us: to get HIV into the Church, and to get the Church into HIV.	
People living and working with HIV are all too familiar with stigma, exclusion, and marginalization. Fikelela aims to work by building real relationships and maintaining them. Keeping in touch is important.	A support group member welcomes Bev’s visit: <i>“I like how you make me feel.”</i>
There is high value placed on teamwork: working together, especially in partnership between clergy and lay people in the parishes.	Organising special events and services (eg. World AIDS Day Memorial Service)
Regular staff training, capacity-building and professional development opportunities.	

	What we're most proud of	Story/Illustration	Resource/Tools
1	<p>Children become healthy Children who were very, very sick are now alive and happy and living in homes with families.</p> <p>Children are placed with Fikelela by a social worker. They are often malnourished, neglected and abused. At the Children's Centre they receive lots of love, nutrition, medication (including ARVs). This is a place of short-term residential care until they are well enough and can be placed with foster parents.</p>	Simpiwe and Sive	Fikelela DVD
2	<p>Fikelela logo The Fikelela logo is rich with meaning, showing a variety of people: some are old, some are young, some are fat, others are thin. But together, they can make a difference, if they act from a deep sense of compassion and love.</p>		
3	<p>Christian Community caring together Fikelela promotes the value of holding hands and standing together within the community of faith – caring together to fight the disease. Care is extended to those who are infected and living with HIV, and to those who have been affected by HIV, particularly people who have lost loved ones to AIDS.</p> <p>Prayers and liturgies have been published and distributed to resource the faith community to participate in World AIDS Day services and other significant events.</p>	<p>Annual World AIDS Day memorial services: seeing a shift in ownership by parishes over the years (eg. printing their own T-shirts).</p> <p>Walk for Witness event at Athlone/Turfhall stadium draws over 3000 people.</p> <p>Powerful experiences of Candle Memorials with support group members.</p> <p>Cornerstone Christian College principal: <i>"I can tell the difference between the Anglicans and the other churches..."</i></p>	<p>Publication: <i>"Worship and Liturgy"</i></p> <p>Publication: <i>"Our Church has AIDS" aimed at seminaries.</i></p>
4	<p>"Agents of Change" and "Survivor Africa" Fikelela's prevention programme for teenagers within the Anglican church aims to stimulate vision so that young people can discover a dream for their future. Thinking ahead, and becoming more self-aware enables them to make responsible decisions about their behaviour. Training offered to these young people makes a difference in the way they think about themselves, and encourages hope.</p>	<p>Peer Education has an impact on Thumeka's vision for herself, her vocation and her community.</p> <p>Ceres Youth Team shows leadership in their community.</p>	<p>YouTube: Fikelela</p> <p><i>Survivor Africa</i> Manual and Workbook</p> <p><i>Agents of Change</i> Lifeskills Programme Manual and Guideline</p>

Our results

Result/Outcomes	Indicators	Tools/Resources	Illustration/Story
The Church is getting into HIV. Parishioners are becoming involved, and more committed to the cause. This is not limited to a specific age, as both old and young participate.	Food Parcel project; Task-teams visiting hospitals and children's centres; Agents of Change running youth services.		
HIV-response is taking the Church out of the building and into the community.	Fikelela is implementing <i>Agents of Change</i> programmes in schools.		
Growth and development of Task-teams and support groups through struggle and perseverance.			Holy Redeemer Sea Point. St. Dominic's Hanover Park St. Andrew's Steenberg.
Young people are getting an opportunity to learn and make a difference in their church and community. Young people are taking responsibility and demonstrating leadership.	Integration of sexuality programme into confirmation class. Young people taking the programmes into their communities.		Ceres Youth Group takes programme to the farms.
Numbers of children who are becoming well through the Children's Centres and successfully supported into foster care.			Esther goes to Tanzania.
Fikelela has received multiple recognitions as a Best Practise model, particularly in the faith-sector.	Cordaid Award Impumelelo Award		Social Development Dept. names Fikelela as a Best Practise model.
Support groups demonstrate how HIV can help to break down barriers.	Support group members comprise refugees, transvestites, all colours, some from churches, others not.		Sharing what we have in common: <i>"We like shoes"</i> .
Seeing Christ in HIV+ people.		Partnership with the Phillipi Trust. Support Group Training Material.	Support group member offers a bed for Masixole and her baby.

What are we learning? What can we share?		Illustration	Tools
1	There is a strong link between the work with young people and the work with infected adults. Young people are more open-minded and aware of what is happening in the world. It's easier to explain risk and consequence to young people, and they are often more accepting of HIV+ adults than other adults.		
2	Young people are able to share their knowledge and disclose information, if the correct environment is created, and if the relationships are authentic.	In Lifeskills sessions, there is seldom a teacher-pupil relationship. Everyone feels free to share their own information about a specific topic.	Lifeskills Manual
3	Change can happen if you want it. Teenagers who have been sexually active can abstain from sex.	Teens who are in the Lifeskills programme were sexually active, but now report abstaining from sex.	<i>Agents of Change</i> publication
4	The flow of information is important. Clergy are gatekeepers to congregational action, so information has to be shared with them. But it's helpful to share information with the task-team coordinator as well, to ensure that communication is not held up or obstructed at the clergy-level.	Info sits on Father's desk	
5	The occasional gathering of task teams in a Forum has been a very important factor. It makes those who are struggling feel hopeful and inspired.	The Church that gave 1 food parcel	
6	Gender issues within the church cannot be separated from HIV. In programming, this link is essential.	Gender desk partnership	
7	It is important to meet people and parishes where they are at, at their own level of awareness, and threshold for participation. Progress cannot be forced.	At the AGM, a Task-Team shared about a woman in the support group who could hardly talk, but found her voice after some time and with support.	
8	Not all parishes want to be involved in the same way, and may resist participation in some areas. Fikelelela's success comes from creating realistic opportunities for parishes to be involved in a way that is comfortable for them		
9	Service leads to church growth	<i>Agents of Change</i> churches experience growth in numbers of youth attending. Task team experience: "we used to fight over hymns versus choruses. But now we see there are more important issues."	
11	Progress is achievable and measurable if the organization and parishes set realistic goals (eg. 5 new support groups; linking with community; etc.)		

What are our challenges and emerging issues?

What would we like to learn from others?

1	<p>Our experience is that many support group members default on treatment and turn, instead, to alcohol and drugs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways is this linked to levels of education and literacy? If people were more empowered with education, would they be more responsible to care for themselves? • How do we sustain psychosocial care and support, and extend it into community life, after support group meetings, so that coping skills and lifeskills are strengthened in the home context?
2	<p>The Fikelela Prevention programme is aimed at young people aged 14-21 years, but the sexual life for most children (in some form or another) reportedly starts around 10 years of age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the existing programme appropriate to reach a younger age group, and relevant to them? • How do we overcome parish/parent resistance to working with this age group around this subject matter? • What is the best way to develop capacity for this process with children's workers in churches (eg. Sunday School)
3	<p>Fikelela is keen to strengthen gender-work linked to prevention, particularly with the teen programme and support groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we get more men to participate in the support groups? • How do we make progress on addressing issues of sexuality and sexual orientation within this framework?
4	<p>Young people seem to have lost their fear of HIV. They are more afraid of pregnancy.</p>