

# COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (NHI) IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Professor Geoff Setswe**

Former Professor and Head of Health Sciences, Monash South Africa  
Now, Deputy Executive Director, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

**Dr Ravayi Marindo**

Former Senior Lecturer, Monash South Africa

**Jacqueline Withuhn**

Lecturer - Public health, Monash South Africa



## HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL

### INTRODUCTION:

#### WHY THE NHI IN SOUTH AFRICA?

- A universal, comprehensive, free national health care system founded on the primary health care approach, requires a well-funded and well resourced public health system.
- There is a need to radically shift the way society funds health care - by incorporating all health care resources in the public sector.
- It builds upon the strengths of the public health system
- With 8,5% of GDP spent on health, SA has enough resources to provide health care to everyone.
- NHI only provides the funding framework for building a unified health care system, within which SA can address its health care challenges.

Source: Department of Health (2011). National Health Insurance in South Africa. Policy Paper.

#### AIM AND OBJECTIVES:

##### AIM

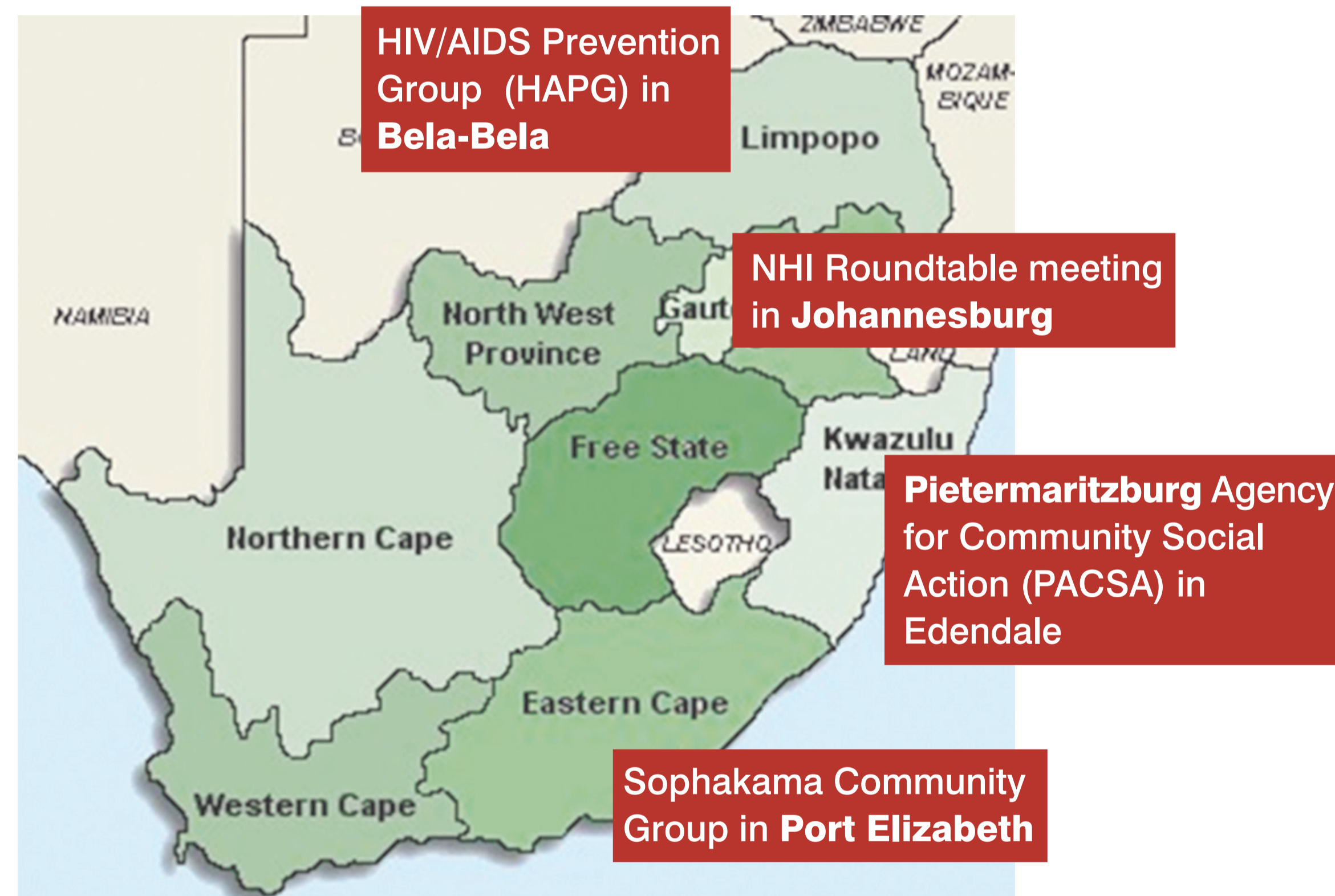
The aim of the community consultations was to test a public policy engagement model using the NHI.

##### OBJECTIVES

- To conduct community consultations to guide development of the NHI;
- To enable communities to contribute to the implementation of the NHI;
- To enable communities to hold government accountable for the implementation of the NHI

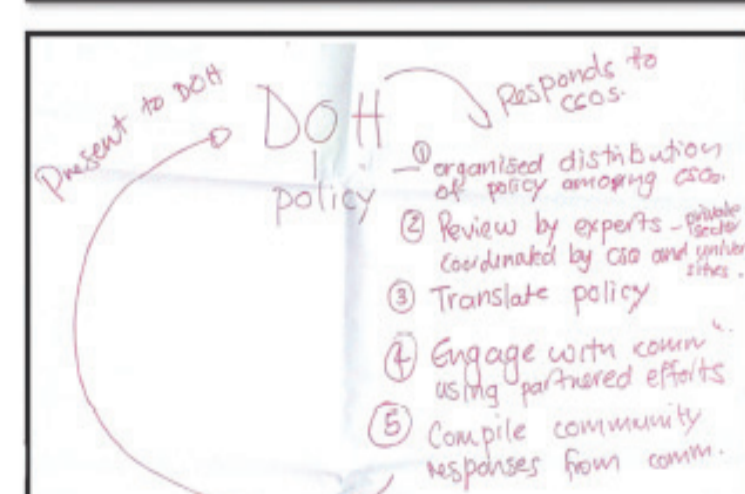
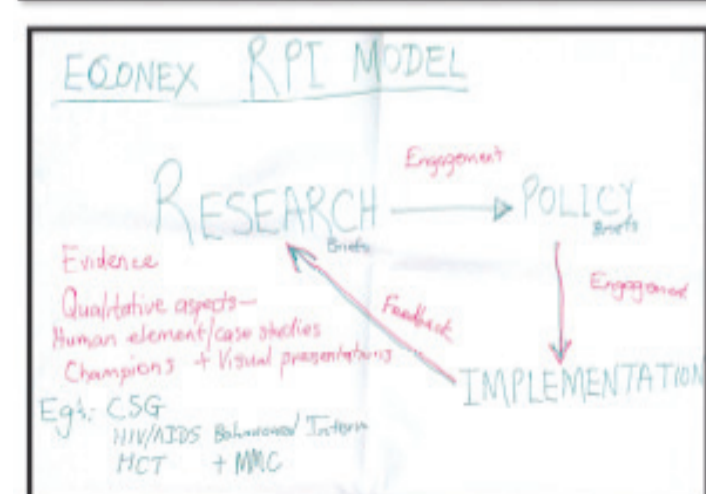
#### CONSULTATION SESSIONS:

#### SITES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS



Source: sacarental.com

#### ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT WITH HEALTH POLICY REFORM



NHI Roundtable Discussion at Monash South Africa, Johannesburg

#### LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE MEETING

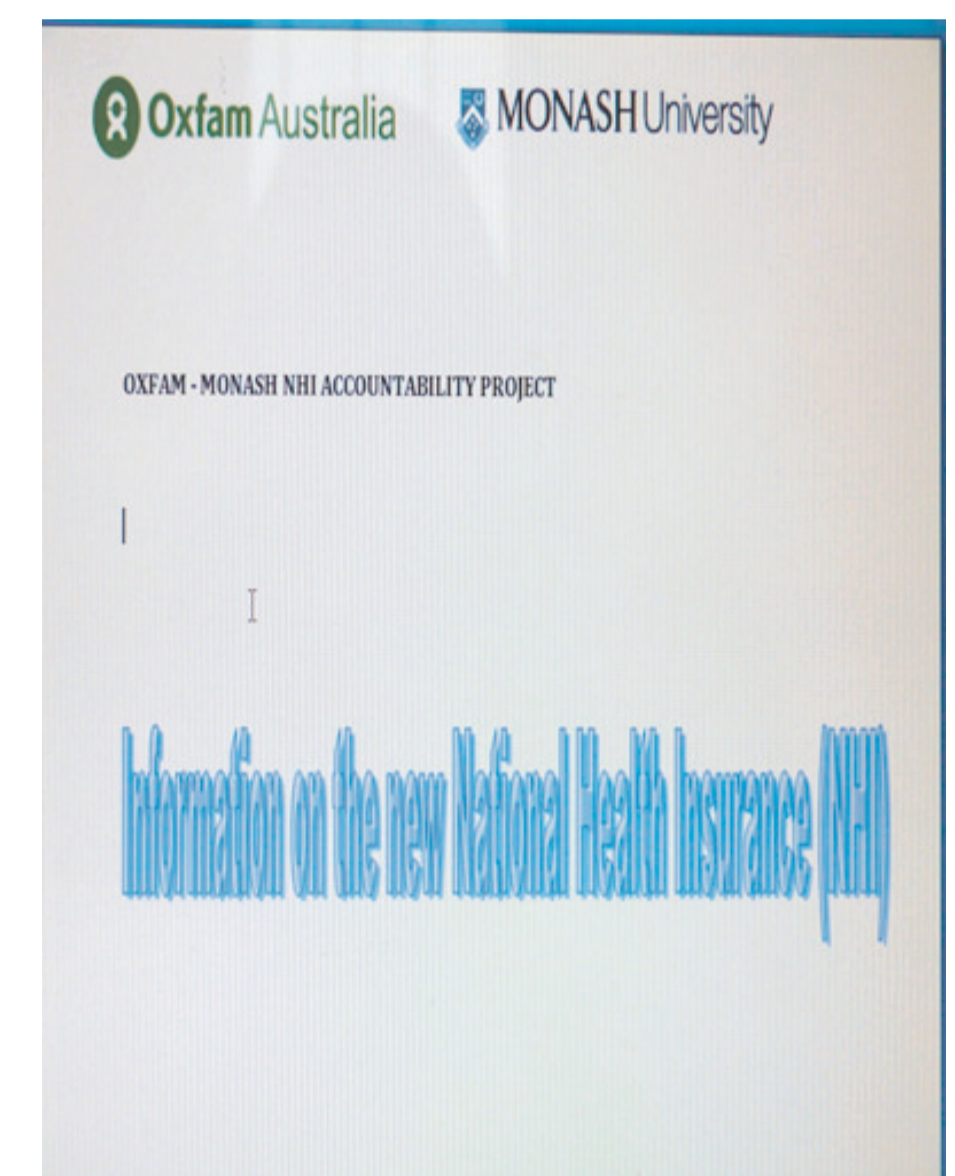
- Establish what social and political spaces are being used by CSO to engage with the State on health policy reform;
- Better understand the inhibitors and promoters for participation and engagement by civil society with the State in health policy reform;
- Test communities' perspectives on public participation in the policy development process with that of formal CSO perspectives

### RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

- Training sessions were conducted for the service providers on the NHI and how to conduct consultations.
- Staff read through the NHI information booklets and got clarity on the NHI policy and implementation process.



An information booklet on the NHI produced by the Department of Health Source: www.health.gov.za

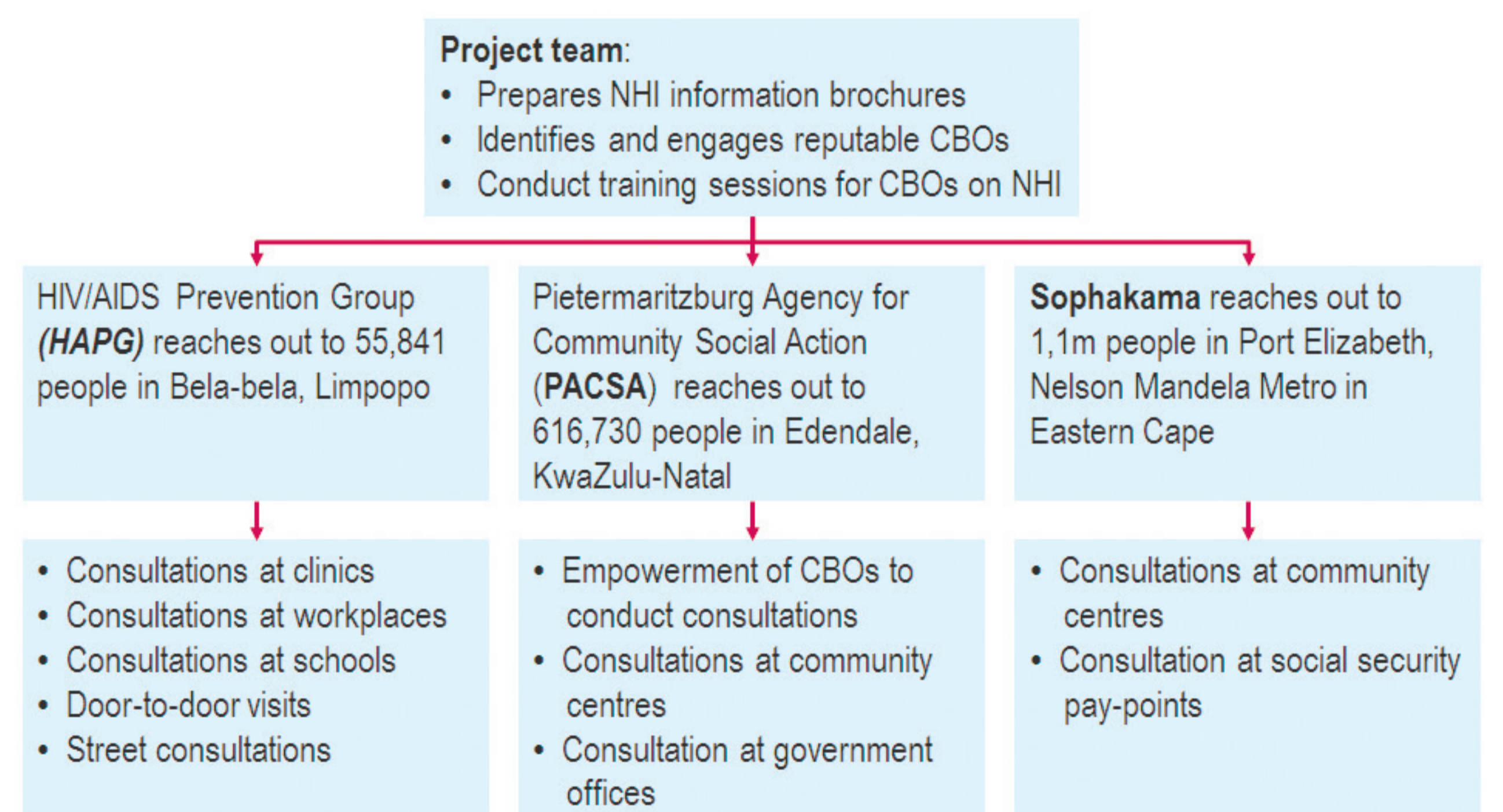


Initial information booklet on the NHI produced by the Oxfam-Monash partnership team

### HOW CONSULTATION SESSIONS WERE CONDUCTED

- Introduction of facilitators and participants
- A request was made to allow the team to take photographs
- Distribution of NHI information pamphlets with a short summary in local languages
- The content of the NHI was presented
- A time for questions and answers
- Key issues were recorded and unanswered questions were referred to relevant authorities
- Gratitude expressed for the cooperation

### THE ROLL-OUT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS



### CONCLUSION

- Community members are interested to learn about issues that affect or will affect their daily lives with the NHI;
- It is essential to bring new information as close as possible to the people as it is generally not picked up in other ways;
- It is essential to have a good preparation for the staff before reaching out to the community as they feel more confident;
- The community members hope for a serious change in health care with the NHI but are reserved to raise their hopes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Team members should have a good understanding of the NHI before reaching out to the community so that they come over as confident;
- Use different outreach methods to get different outcomes (less or more interaction);
- To have reactions of a wider spectrum of people one needs to approach different target groups;
- Educational materials for communities need to be brief, to the point and in accessible language;
- Have a good relationship with the community to introduce new topics;
- Once community members have heard about new issues from a source known to them they do some follow ups on their own.