

NEWSLETTER

MEET ELIJAH MAHLANGU, A NEW ADDITION TO THE MASOYISE FAMILY



1. Who is Elijah and how would you describe him?

I am a humble, honest and inquisitive person who likes to explore new avenues in life. I am also a problem solver with a realistic and open-minded approach to situations.

2. Tell us a little bit about your background as a health programme manager?

I am an educator by profession, I was a school principal at Blinkpan Primary School in Mpumalanga for two years. I think that is why it was not too challenging for me to shift my career to health education. My journey in the health space started when I enrolled to study Management of HIV and AIDS in the World of Work upon receiving a scholarship from the Department of Education in Mpumalanga through both Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (then Medical University of Southern Africa) and Stellenbosch University.

Upon completion I worked for 11 years as a project manager at Re-Action Consulting, a company which facilitated workplace wellness programmes in the coal mining sector. I also worked for the United States Peace Corps (US Government agency) as a community health outreach programme manager for two years. Before joining the Minerals Council South Africa, I was a regional programme manager at Universal Healthcare, a healthcare solutions consultancy with most clients being in the retail industry, for one year.

3. How long have you been with the Masoyise Health Programme? What do you like most about the programme and what challenges have you come across so far?

I joined the Masoyise Health Programme in May 2019. My journey so far has been very exciting. I am surrounded by thought leaders and that exposes me to a lot of information which helps me grow in my position.

Masoyise, with the assistance of various stakeholders, conducts studies with the aim of helping the South African mining industry to deal more effectively with health and legacy issues; addressing issues which affect both current and retired employees. It excites me that I am part of

creating long-term solutions for the industry.

We recently started an exciting project on the study of Health Promotions and Behavior Change interventions. It can be challenging to join a new organisation as you try to get your voice. You also need to understand your colleagues' personalities and the general culture of the organisation. However, the leadership and Masoyise team made my life much easier as they are always willing to assist and guide. Everyone is just willing to step in and help, making all challenges learning curves.

4. How does the Masoyise Health programme empower people to improve their health?

The programme seeks to create awareness on health sustainability among mine employees and their surrounding communities. The cornerstone of the programme is the collaboration that we have with our various stakeholders like labour movements, government departments, the South African Business Coalition on Health and Aids (SABCOHA) and the United Nations family of organisations who also share best practices in prevention and treatment, among others. Masoyise has over the years managed to reach several peri-mining communities mainly through its collaboration with SABCOHA, which has a network of funders who assist in establishing various projects in these areas.

The recent funding SABCOHA received from the Global Fund programme is to educate, conduct HIV testing services and encourage treatment with special focus on sexual health among adolescent girls. Masoyise looks forward to the outcomes of this programme as it will contribute to the overall work it does.

Masoyise is also involved in TB contact tracing which also extends to communities surrounding the mines. Communities are therefore empowered to improve their health through all the collaborations we have.

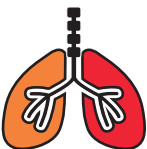


ABOUT TB CONTACT TRACING



What does TB contact tracing mean?

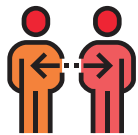
TB contact tracing is a process of identifying, diagnosing and treating (if needed) people who have had contact with an individual with a serious infection. This is a primary means of controlling the spread of an infectious disease, in the case of the mining industry, tuberculosis (TB).



What are its various stages or standard roll-out plan?

For TB contact tracing to be successful and helpful all the necessary steps need to be followed, and they are as follows:

- Identifying contact and interviews: this means contacting a person identified as an infected person and gathering as much information about the places they have been to, who they have been in contact with as well as other relevant information which might help in the tracing process
- Prioritising contacts: contacting the people who have had most contact with the infected person and treating them if needed
- Contact follow-up: it is important to follow-up with those listed as priority contacts to see if they have been taking their medication properly, check if they have been re-infected if it was their first infection, or if there was any detection prior to the initial tracing process
- Confidentiality and consent in contact investigation: it is important to keep the information of all contacts confidential. It is equally important to get the consent of all the contacts at the beginning of the tracing process



In the mining industry, in which commodities is TB most prevalent?

As TB has been a long-term problem for the industry and the country, one cannot single out one commodity. TB is not an industry problem, but rather a national problem - the industry happens to be one of the high-risk groups.

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