

The Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT)

HACT, founded in 1990, is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to dealing with the HIV and AIDS epidemic by means of **holistic, multifaceted** and **sustainable** interventions, including **prevention, care, community empowerment** and **community outreach**. [Editorial comment from Laurie: Read that sentence again! If we could get western health care practitioners to prioritize these same things, what a wonderful world it would be. These CBOs have it figured out!]



SLF community-based partners, like Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (South Africa), are adapting to ensure community members have access to health and nutrition supports during restrictions to movement and market closures due to COVID-19 responses. Photos provided by Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust.

The Centre is located in Durban, the third most populous city in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal. Durban, including neighbouring towns, has a population of about 3.44 million, making the combined municipality one of the largest on the Indian coast of the African

Continent. The province shares borders with 3 other provinces and the countries of Mozambique, Eswatini and Lesotho.

HACT was one of the first NGOs in South Africa to respond to the HIV and AIDS epidemic and has established a reputation for making significant and meaningful impact on the lives of people infected and affected by the disease. The Centre primarily focuses on serving semi-rural and disadvantaged communities of the 1,000 Hills region of KwaZulu-Natal, one of the epicentres of the global HIV and AIDS epidemic with HIV-infection rates of up to 40% - more than double the national average of 20%.

HACT adopts a holistic, family-centred and asset-based approach to tackling HIV and AIDS, striving to deliver practical, sustainable and community-led projects and services. This approach empowers families and communities to reach their potential and enables them to assist in the growth and development of the country. Focus areas include:

- HIV Education and Prevention, HIV Health Care, HIV Support
- Care for and empowerment of at-risk groups such as orphaned and vulnerable children and grandmothers
- Economic Empowerment
- HACT BIZ – established to increase sustainability as providing skills training and employment opportunities for the people served.

Proactive steps taken due to the COVID pandemic include a prevention education campaign on site and within communities, modelling good hygiene, staying home if sick, reminding immunocompromised people of the special risks to them, the importance of continuing with anti-retroviral treatment and the need for social distancing. In addition, sanitation, hygiene and infection control measures have been further tightened in the Respite Unit with the Centre off limits to groups of visitors and external groups.

References: [Powered By Love](https://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/assets/files/SLF-Spotlight-on-Grassroots-Spring2020.pdf)

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Check out this 16-sec slide show on FB if you can: <https://www.facebook.com/280100765363756/videos/223843969052225>

