



## SAPRIN welcomes seventh research node

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[Attendees from various institutions at the launch of Bammisho](#)

SAPRIN welcomed its seventh Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) research node on 27 November 2024, during an official launch event at the Kanana Multi-cultural Centre in Rustenburg. The Bafokeng Health and Demographic Surveillance Node (Bammisho) is located in the Royal Bafokeng Nation near Rustenburg, North West Province. Located near Rustenburg's platinum mines, this research hub will focus on the social and health effects of mining and migration on local communities.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Kobus Herbst, Director of the [South African Population Research Infrastructure Network \(SAPRIN\)](#) remarked, "The addition of Bammisho as our seventh node marks an important expansion of SAPRIN's network. This new site will not only generate essential insights into the health and socio-economic impacts of mining and migration but also strengthen our collective research capacity to address the unique challenges facing South African communities." Dr Herbst welcomed Bammisho as the seventh and newest node in South Africa aiming to produce high-quality research and enhance research capacity.

The research will be conducted by the AWISE collaboration team, which includes the [The Aurum Institute](#), [Wits School of Public Health](#), [Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University](#) and Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in the USA. Bammisho is set to gather robust, long-term data on health, migration, and demographic patterns in the Bojanala District.



SAPRIN is funded by the [Department of Science, Technology and Innovation](#) (DSTI) and forms part of DSTI's strategy to enhance research capacity in the country. SAPRIN is hosted by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). Of the seven SAPRIN nodes, four are rural and they are Agincourt (Mpumalanga), DIMAMO (Limpopo), AHRI (KwaZulu – Natal) and BMMISHO (North West). There are three urban nodes; GRT-INSPIRED (Gauteng), C-SHARP (Western Cape), and USINGA (KwaZulu-Natal).

Speaking at the launch BMMISHO Nodal Director, Professor Geoffrey Setswe provided an overview of BMMISHO and the research process. He explained that the proposal was to develop a population cohort of 100 000 people living in 43 000 households in the Bafokeng community.

Setswe explained that their vision is to develop a world class health and demographic surveillance node and a research platform to conduct population-based research, to understand the impact of mining and migration on the health and social economic outcomes in the Bafokeng nation. Setswe said they aim to establish BMMISHO as a leading research institution generating impactful research that influences policy and contributes to community well-being.

Dr Mongezi Mdhluli, Chief Research Operations Officer at the [South African Medical Research Council \(SAMRC\)](#) said that building trust and respect in communities are vital components for sustaining a healthy relationship between researchers and communities. He reiterated that community engagement is a strong element of the SAPRIN strategy. Adding that nodes are building and maintaining strong rapport with the communities they are working in.

Dr Koketso Rakhudu, Kgosana of the Tsitsing village of the Royal Bafokeng nation welcomed the BMMISHO node. He said, "The BMMISHO project aims to look at the complex interplay between the mining, migration and socio-economic and health outcomes of our people and by leveraging on the expertise of our partners we are posed to generate valuable insights that will guide our developmental strategies and health policies."

Dr Rakhudu emphasised that they were committed to fostering a healthy, educated and prosperous community. Adding that the findings from the BMMISHO project will play a pivotal role in shaping their responses to the challenges posed by mining and migration and ensuring that they not only survive, but thrive.

Dr Herbst said that SAPRIN's new vision is equitable health and social wellbeing through a dynamic and impactful research infrastructure underpinned by longitudinal population-based nodes in under-resourced communities across South Africa. He highlighted the new values of SAPRIN as respect, collaboration, integrity, accessibility, excellence and enablement.