



## C-SHARP Youth Produce Powerful Short Films

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Photos courtesy of Eh!woza



Community engagement took an innovative turn in [C-SHARP](#) when youth filmmaking workshops resulted in three profound short films from the Bishop Lavis and Nomzamo communities in the Western Cape.

Six grade 10 learners from high schools in Bishop Lavis and Nomzamo were recruited to participate in a three week training workshop run by non-profit organisation, [Eh!woza](#). The comprehensive workshop was run during the June / July school holidays and covered all aspects of filmmaking from story development to interviews, use of equipment and video editing.

Since C-SHARP was new to the Bishop Lavis and Nomzamo communities and the community engagement space, they explored the options available to them. C-SHARP Nodal Director, Dr Hannah Hussey said, “We liked that this project promised high-level engagement with youth, but then also results in an end product that we can use at larger community engagement activities, almost like an advert for C-SHARP.”

C-SHARP and Eh!woza held recruitment drives at the high schools where the opportunity was unpacked. The brief was for learners to create a short movie about a challenge facing their community that they were passionate about. Learners were selected based on the creativity of their proposals. Interestingly, all the youth filmmakers were young women.

One of the challenges faced was difficulty in recruiting the envisaged 12 learners. A total of 6 learners were confirmed with 5 completing the programme (5 from Nomzamo and 1 from Bishops Lavis). The lower intake could be attributed to less enthusiastic support from some schools, safety concerns and a language barrier making it difficult to relate to, for some learners.



Speaking about the details of the programme, Dr Anastasia Koch, Co-founder of Eh!woza said, “The programme is structured with in-person hands on workshops at our office/workshop space at the Isivivana Centre in Khayelitsha. To guide the participants in making the films, the Eh!woza team facilitates a programme of workshops which includes sessions on story and narrative development, the ethics of storytelling and consent, technical workshops on how to use camera equipment, logistics and guidance around conducting interviews and then many sessions on how to edit film, which is where the narrative for a story is very much developed.”

Hannah also conducted sessions where she introduced C-SHARP and what some of the early data from Nomzamo and Bishop Lavis would mean for people’s health. C-SHARP staff greatly assisted participants in finding interviews and developing the films.

Participants used a range of equipment for filming, with interviews primarily being shot on DJI Oslo Pocket 3 cameras and editing using Premiere Pro, which is industry level equipment. Anastasia explained that Eh!woza receives core funding from the [Wellcome Trust](#), which has allowed them to source and host the equipment for running these kinds of workshops. “We run workshops working with young people in Khayelitsha all through the year and have developed the equipment and workshop programme, greatly facilitated by the core funding we receive from Wellcome. This allowed us to run this special project in collaboration with C-SHARP,” she said.

Hannah lauds the initiative as a success as it produced three beautiful and moving short films, dealing with important issues in their communities: HIV, unemployment and drug abuse. She added that the learners had a valuable experience, and you could see them becoming more confident each week.

The movies are titled, *Echoes of Hope: Personal Stories of Living With HIV*, *Harsh Realities: A Tale of Addiction and Survival* and *Unseen Battles: Surviving the Jobless Storm*. The short films deal with highly relevant topics in South Africa and hone in on real life stories in the communities of the young filmmakers.

Hybree Swarts, a grade 10 student at John Ramsay High School in Bishop Lavis described her experience at Eh!woza as fun, productive and educational. Hybree said, “The biggest lesson that I learnt was you shouldn't judge a person based on their circumstances. Eh!woza opened my eyes to see that drugs and gangsterism don't need to be a norm in our lives as the future of the nation. You can rise from the circumstances.”

A film “premiere” was hosted on 26 July at the Isivivana Centre in Khayelitsha, where the learners presented their films and had a mini-Q&A session around the films. The learners invited their own guests to the event. Teachers who helped coordinate the recruitment of learners, as well as C-SHARP and Eh!woza staff attended the event.

The movies have since been shared widely on social media, including X and Tik Tok. It was also successfully screened at John Ramsay High School, where the Bishop Lavis learner was from. It was used as an opportunity to assist with recruitment for the upcoming new mural painting project at the high school.

Reflecting on the programme, Hannah explained that C-SHARP operates in two sites, Bishop Lavis and Nomzamo “The two sites are effectively independent, and very rarely do we have activities across the two sites, as the operational issues are so different, and so I think that opportunity for dialogue between young people that are experiencing similar challenges but living in very different communities 40 km away from each other, where they would never normally meet, coming together and learning together was really interesting and exciting,” commented Hannah.

The three compelling short films can be accessed via the links below:

[Echoes of Hope | Personal Stories of Living with HIV](#)

[Harsh Realities | A Tale of Addiction and Survival](#)

[Unseen Battles | Surviving the Jobless Storm](#)

### **C-SHARP**

Cape Town Systematic Healthcare Action Research Project (C-SHARP) is an innovative urban health and demographic surveillance system (HDSS) node planned within the communities of Bishop Lavis and Nomzamo, forming a crucial part of the South African Population Research Infrastructure Network (SAPRIN). This collaborative initiative is jointly led by the Western Cape Government: Health and Wellness (WCGHW), the City of Cape Town, and five academic institutions. C-SHARP aims to integrate research surveillance components seamlessly into the routine provision of community-oriented primary healthcare (COPC).

### **Eh!woza**

Eh!woza operates at the intersection of science communication, youth advocacy, community engagement and skills development to merge the biomedicine of disease with its social impact. They enlist beneficiaries as active partners and facilitate access to accurate information while promoting honest conversations, storytelling, and representation of health and disease. Over the long term, Eh!woza aims to encourage positive health-seeking behaviour, engender trust, and ultimately decrease stigma.

