

# PROGRESS ON WOMEN, GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE NSP

## NSP 2017-2022 MID TERM REVIEW: SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs (NSP) 2017-2022 Mid Term Review (MTR) was an in-depth analysis of the NSP implementation, with the aim to illustrate progress made towards reaching the NSP targets across the eight NSP goals. The review focused on the first half of the NSP term (2017 to 2019) and documented emerging issues and opportunities, lessons learnt, gaps and challenges encountered. This summary of findings focused on the first four goals of the NSP and presents key data pertaining to women in South Africa, using 2016 as the baseline year and 2018 for the most recent data.

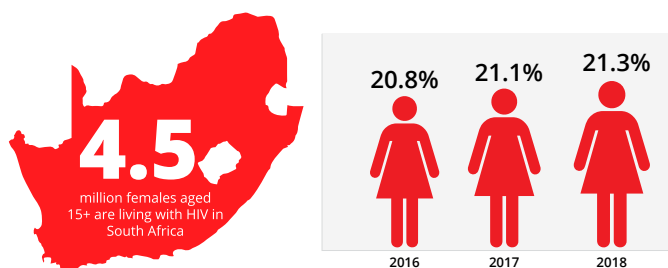
The focus on young and adult women in this summary is important because women are disproportionately affected by HIV in South Africa. In 2018, 21% of women were estimated to be living with HIV, compared to 13% of men. Furthermore, the HIV prevalence among young women is three times greater than that of young men. In 2018, 500,000 young women aged 15 to 24 years were living with HIV, compared to 167,000 young men.

The review synthesised evidence from primary data, collected through key informant interviews at national and provincial levels, and desk review of secondary data from diverse sources. SANAC NSP Reference Group, Strategic Information Technical Task Team, Civil Society, and other stakeholders were instrumental to ensuring high-quality review and validation of findings. The MTR findings will:

- inform targeted implementation of the NSP for the remaining period ending March 2022
- provide recommendations for enhanced performance towards achievement of the NSP targets by the end of the NSP term.

### STATUS OF THE EPIDEMIC AMONG FEMALES IN SOUTH AFRICA

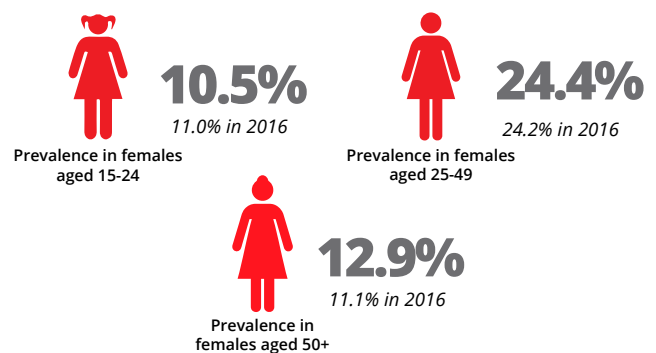
#### FEMALE HIV PREVALENCE 2018



**4.5 million** women living with HIV in South Africa  
**0.5 million** aged 15 to 24 years  
**3.3 million** aged 25 to 49 years  
**0.7 million** 50 years or more

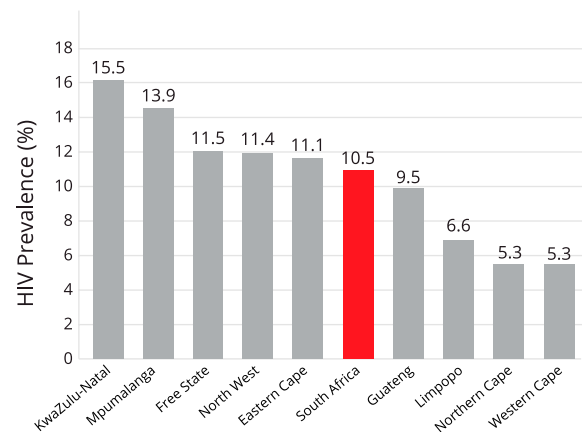
Source: Thembisa v4.2

#### FEMALE HIV PREVALENCE BY AGE IN 2018

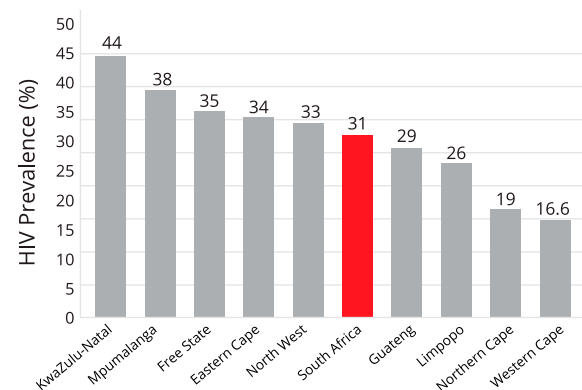


Source: Thembisa v4.2

#### HIV PREVALENCE BY PROVINCE 2018: YOUNG WOMEN (15 TO 24 YEARS)

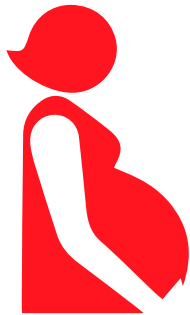


#### HIV PREVALENCE BY PROVINCE 2018: ADULT WOMEN (25 TO 49 YEARS)



Source: Thembisa v4.2

## HIV PREVALENCE IN PREGNANT WOMEN



2018  
**21.7%**  
At baseline in 2016, it was 22.2%

Source: Thembisa v4.2

## SUMMARY OF THE EPIDEMIC IN YOUNG AND ADULT WOMEN

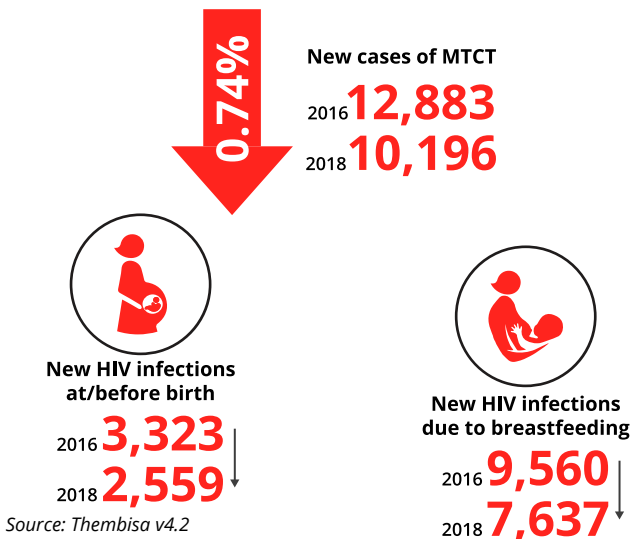
The HIV prevalence in South Africa remains significantly higher among females (21.3%) than males (13.1%). Data from cross-sectional surveys and estimation models show that the prevalence of HIV among females in South Africa has continued to increase in the past decade. For the review period, the prevalence increased slightly from 20.8% in 2016 to 21.3% in 2018, translating 4.5 million females currently living with HIV in South Africa. This increase can be attributed to the country's laudable HIV treatment programme, which has expanded over the years. This has translated to a decrease in HIV-related deaths and an increase in life expectancy for people living with HIV (PLHIV). It is a notable and welcomed observation that the prevalence is declining among young females aged 15 to 24 years.

There is significant variation in the overall female HIV prevalence by province, ranging from 11% in Western Cape Province to 31% in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Five provinces have female HIV prevalence higher than the country's overall level of 21%.

## PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS NSP GOALS

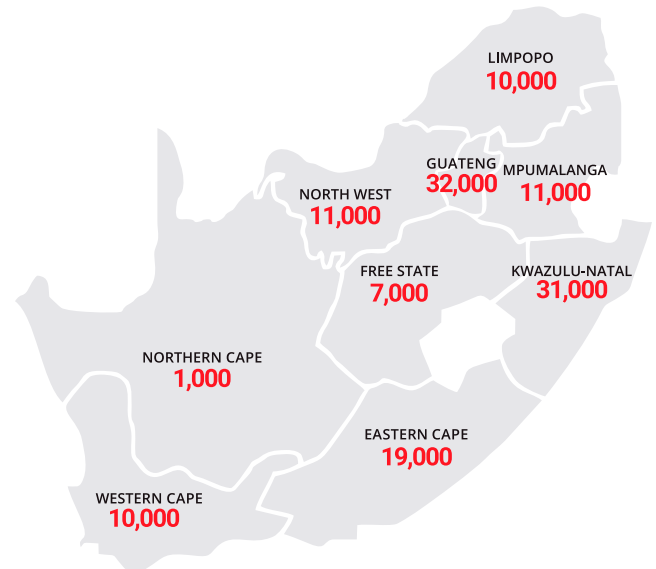
### GOAL 1: ACCELERATE PREVENTION IN ORDER TO REDUCE NEW HIV AND TB INFECTIONS AND NEW STIS

#### MOTHER-TO-CHILD-TRANSMISSION (MTCT) RATE



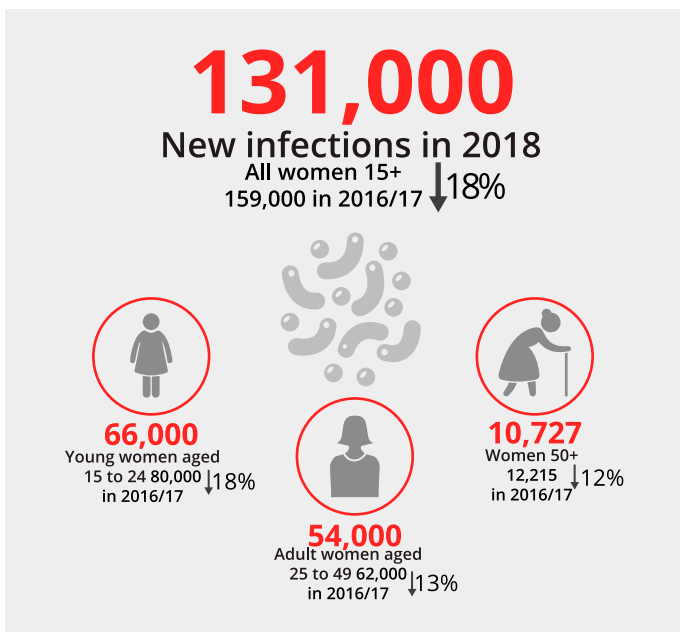
Source: Thembisa v4.2

## NEW HIV INFECTIONS AMONG WOMEN 15+ BY PROVINCE



Source: Thembisa v4.2

## NEW HIV INFECTIONS AMONG WOMEN BY AGE



Source: Thembisa v4.2

## PREVENTION PROGRAMMES - WOMEN INDICATORS

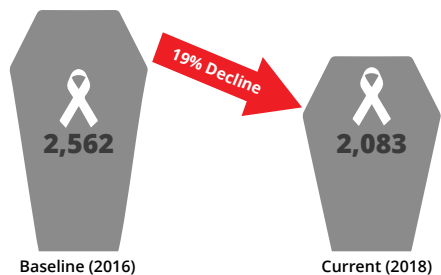
INDICATOR	BASELINE 2016/17	TARGET 2018/19	ACHIEVED 2018/19
Delivery in 10-19 years in facility rate*	7.3% (NDoH APP 2017/18)	7.2%	12.9% (DHIS, 2018/19)
Number of female condoms distributed	27 million (NDoH Annual Report 2015/16)	40 million	17.7 million (NDoH Annual Report 2018/19)
Number of AGYW, FSW, MSM, IDU receiving oral PrEP for the first time during the reporting period	2,003	18,215	21,063 (115%) (DHIS, 2018/19)
Percentage of women accessing ANC services who were tested for syphilis	36% (3 doses) 71% (1 dose)	80%	97% (ANC Survey, 2019)

## SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS GOAL 1

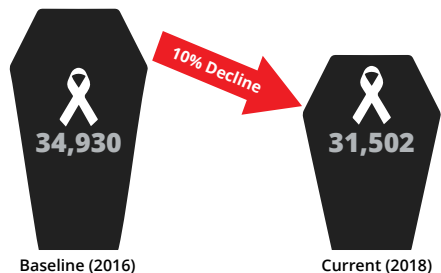
The good news is that the number of new infections among women is declining in all provinces and age groups. However, the rate of decline has not been sufficient to meet set targets. Female condom distribution is suboptimal - 44% of NSP target. Although the 2018/19 target set for PrEP has been exceeded, the target is low and PrEP uptake remains suboptimal - oral PrEP uptake across all PrEP implementing sites is about 29%. The PMTCT programme continues to record laudable achievements, with the mother-to-child transmission rate of HIV at 10 weeks now below 1%, at 0.74%.

**GOAL 2: REDUCE MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY BY PROVIDING TREATMENT, CARE AND ADHERENCE SUPPORT FOR ALL**

**AIDS DEATHS IN ADULT FEMALES 15 TO 24 YEARS**



**AIDS DEATHS IN ADULT FEMALES 25 YEARS AND ABOVE**



Source: Thembisa v4.2

**LIFE EXPECTANCY**



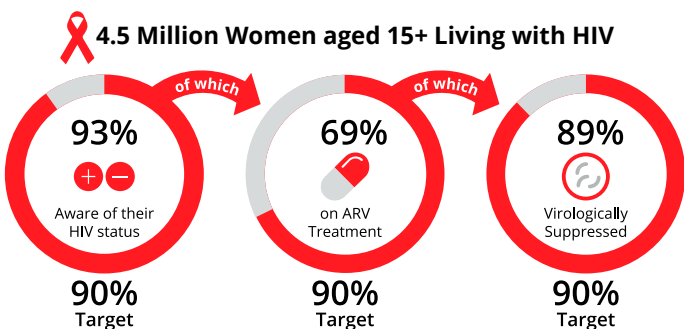
**69.6 yrs**

Life expectancy at birth for females in South Africa in 2018

In 2016, it was 68.8 years

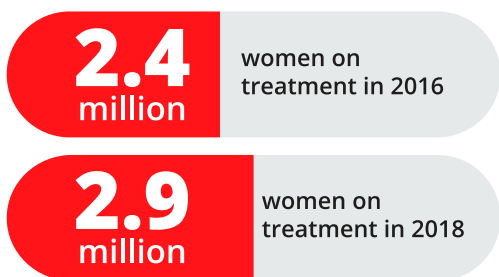
Source: Thembisa v4.2

**PROGRESS TOWARDS 90-90-90**



Source: Thembisa v4.2

**WOMEN AGED 15+ ON ANTIRETROVIRAL TREATMENT**

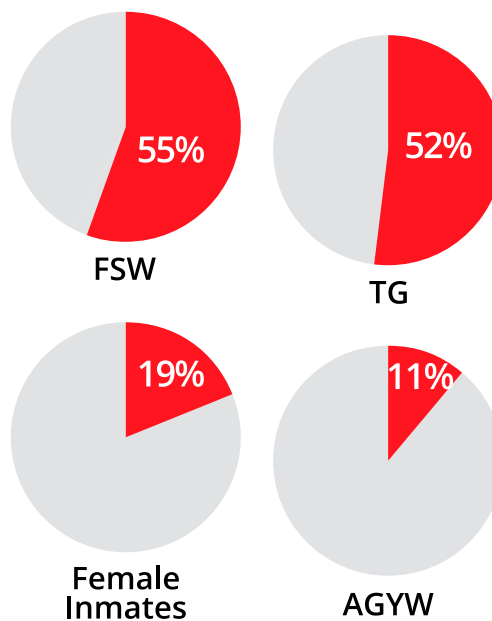


**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS GOAL 2**

The drop in HIV related deaths is directly attributed to the ever-expanding ART programme in South Africa. The Thembisa Model showed that females accounted for over 65% of the estimated 4.6 million PLHIV on treatment in 2018. Firstly, women are more likely to initiate treatment. Secondly, they are more likely to stay in care. In 2018, the rate of ART initiation was 69% in women aged 15 years and above, and 66% in males of the same age group. The laudable ART programme of the country has translated to increase in life expectancy in the last decade. For females, the life expectancy at birth in increased from 66.2 years in 2016 to 67.3 years in 2018.

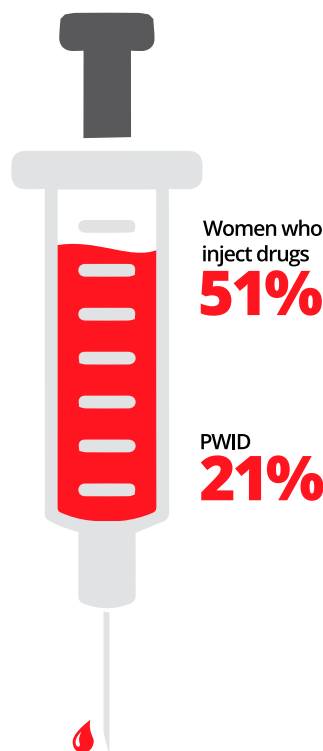
**GOAL 3: REACH ALL KEY AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WITH CUSTOMISED AND TARGETED INTERVENTIONS**

**HIV PREVALENCE AMONG SPECIFIC KEY POPULATIONS**



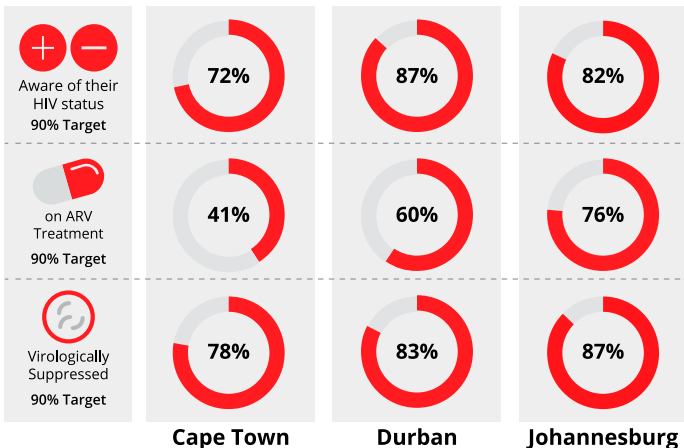
Source: Thembisa v4.2; Botshelo Ba Trans Study 2019; GAM 2018

**HIV PREVALENCE IN WOMEN WHO INJECT DRUGS**



Source: VHI 2018

## 90-90-90 INDICATORS AMONG FEMALE SEX WORKERS



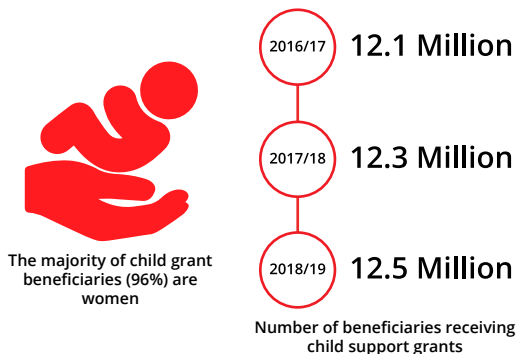
Source: SAHMS2 2018

### SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS GOAL 3

Under Goal 3, the NSP reflects a commitment to ensure that nobody is left behind. Nationally, the female sex workers population size is estimated at 237 717, with an HIV prevalence of 57.7%, although this varies between areas, with prevalence estimated at 71.8% in Johannesburg, 53.5% in Durban and 39.7% in Cape Town. Female sex workers, like other HIV key populations in South Africa, are far from achieving the 90-90-90 target. Progress towards 90-90-90 targets for key populations, remains hindered by persistent barriers, such as stigma (including self-stigma), discrimination, and punitive legal and policy environments. The scarcity of data on key populations remains a hurdle in turning the tide on the HIV epidemic in key populations.

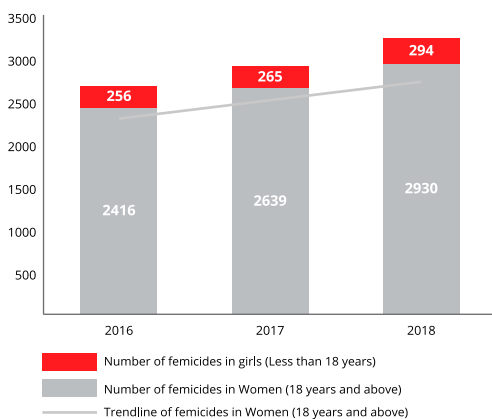
## GOAL 4: ADDRESS THE SOCIAL AND STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF HIV, TB AND STIS, AND LINK THESE EFFORTS TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

### NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES RECEIVING SOCIAL GRANTS 2016/17 - 2018/19



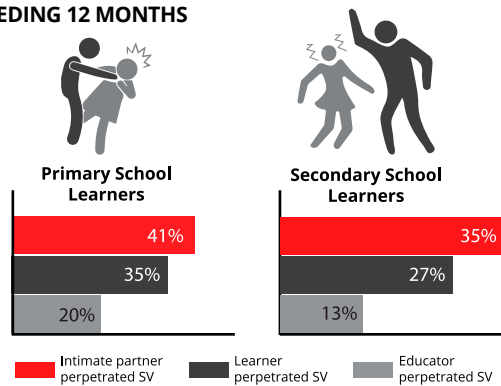
Source: SASSA Annual Report 2018/19

### TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF FEMICIDES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2016 TO 2018



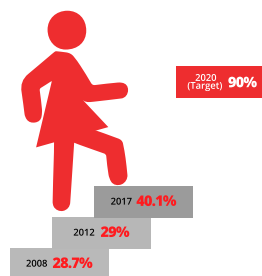
Source: GAM 2018

## LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE (SV) IN THE PRECEDING 12 MONTHS



Source: SeVISSA baseline study 2017

## TRENDS IN COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF HIV PREVENTION AMONG YOUNG WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA, 2008 TO 2019



Source: GAM 2018

### SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS GOAL 4

Data on diverse outcome indicators under this goal show below optimum statistics. Every three hours, a woman is killed in South Africa. According to the SABSSM 2017 survey, the proportion of ever-married or partnered women aged 15–49 years old who experienced physical or sexual violence from a male intimate partner in the past 12 months was 29.1%. Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) are not exempted from the bane of intimate partner violence in the country. There has also been a marked upward trend in females who have age-disparate sexual relationships in the aged group 15 – 19 years from 18,5% in 2005 to 35,8% in 2017. Although there has been palpable increase in output indicators such as exposure to social and behaviour change communication and the level of HIV prevention knowledge, sustained and heightened efforts are required for this goal to be achieved.

### TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

The face of HIV in Africa is that of a young women/girl. Since the start of the global HIV epidemic, women have been disproportionately affected by HIV. Women between the ages of 15 and 24 years are three times more vulnerable to HIV infection than young men of the same age. Two factors have hampered progress towards the target set for HIV incidence reduction. Firstly, there is sub-optimum ART coverage among women. In this regard, we need to do better in linking HIV-diagnosed women to care and retaining them in care. Secondly, there is increasingly strong evidence of reduction in condom use, relative to the levels we would expect in the context of high levels of HIV. Despite a reduction in AIDS-related deaths, AIDS-related illnesses remain the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age. Putting women at the centre of the HIV response in South Africa is key to achieving epidemic control.

### REFERENCES

- Cloete A, Wabiri N, Savva H, et al. The Botshelo Ba Trans Study: Results of the first HIV prevalence survey conducted with transgender women (TGW) in South Africa. 2019.
- Department of Health. District Health Information System. 2018/19.
- Morison T, Lynch I, Essop R, et al. Dating rules and intimate partner violence in township schools: Findings from SeVISSA baseline study. 2017.
- National Department of Health. The 2017 National Antenatal Sentinel HIV & Syphilis Survey, South Africa. 2019.
- SANAC. Global AIDS Monitoring (GAM) Report. 2018.
- South African National Department of Health App. 2017/2018
- South African National Department of Health. Annual Report: 2015/2016.
- South African National Department of Health. Annual Report: 2018/2019.
- South African Social Security Agency. Annual Report: 2016/2017 to 2018/19.
- The Aurum Institute, Anova Health Institute and UCSF. The Second South African Health Monitoring Survey (SAHMS2), Results Summary Sheet: A Biological and Behavioural Survey Among Female Sex Workers, South Africa 2017–2018. Johannesburg: The Aurum Institute. 2019.
- Thembeisa Model, Version 4.2. Johnson LF, et al. Estimating the impact of antiretroviral treatment on adult mortality trends in South Africa: a mathematical modelling study. (2017). PLoS Medicine; 14: e1002468.
- The viral hepatitis C initiative for key populations in South Africa. 2018.