

Greater Tygerberg Partnership

INNOVATION

The Sha'p Left Centre provides accessible health care to low-income commuters in an inner-city downtown location. The centre is constructed from three shipping containers which are fully fitted with eye care facilities, medical nursing surgery and chronic dispensing unit.

Its location was selected specifically to ensure that commuters could access primary healthcare easily – especially for those patients who need to collect their chronic medication and to receive basic primary health care.

The Greater Tygerberg Partnership (GTP) is a not-for-profit organisation mandated to drive the regeneration of an urban area that has experienced capital flight over the past decades. It focuses on uplifting the central business district of Bellville, a busy commercial centre that hosts the busiest public transport interchange in the region. Around 300 000 passenger trips are taken through the PTI every day.

Bellville is Cape Town's secondary city, with over 250 healthcare facilities, ranging from large public hospitals to private specialist clinics. The centre provides much-needed supplementary capacity to the existing healthcare facilities in Bellville and accessible primary care to low-income earners who can ill-afford to spend a day waiting in queues at a clinic to access care and chronic medication.

The GTP facilitated this project with the Cipla Foundation, in an example of how partnerships between the public and private sector are able to address the fundamental needs of an urban population in an innovative, easily replicable model.

OUTCOME

Since it opened in November 2019, around 700 people have been treated at the Sha'p Left Centre in Bellville. The centre meets the needs of patients working in and travelling through Bellville. Many of those workers would otherwise be required to take time off work to attend their local clinic for health appointments and to access chronic medication, losing much-needed daily income.

The centre is convenient, accessible and well-managed. It is run by nursing staff who receive business and technical training, which enables them to become medical entrepreneurs running their own business under their own practising licences.

The GTP plays an oversight role of the location, and also provides refreshments on site, through its coffee food truck, GTP Express On The Move. The Cipla Foundation manages the logistics and supply chain, making products accessible to the patients.

Site manager and on-duty nurse at the healthcare hub, Mandisa Swart:

"While I was working at various different government clinics, I realised that there is a really big gap to fill in terms of providing healthcare services. Patients often cannot be seen at a time and a place that is convenient for them. This healthcare hub fills that gap because it is situated in a convenient area and patients can make appointments for a time that suits them. I have always had a passion for starting my own business and I believe that this will allow me to make a massive difference in my own life and in the Bellville community."

EXECUTION

The Sha'p Left concept is simple, providing primary healthcare without the cost or time required to build new facilities from scratch. The centre is constructed with three fully-fitted containers craned into place and connected to basic utility services. Once the containers have been fitted, ostensibly the centre can be operational within two weeks. The Cipla Foundation sponsored the construction and installation of the centre.

To facilitate the introduction of Sha'p Left in Bellville, the GTP activated its relationships with the City of Cape Town to negotiate and facilitate a lease for the land and an operating permit. This was a complex process requiring extensive stakeholder engagement and multi-layered discussions with city officials. Once the relevant agreements had been made, the centre was opened and oper-

ating within a week or two. The Cipla Foundation, the corporate social responsibility division of pharmaceutical corporate Cipla; and Muller's Optometrists, a local business with a long history of providing eye care in Cape Town, provided the construction and technical expertise.

This relationship highlights the importance of public-private partnerships in meeting the needs of urban populations. Those partnerships were critical in the GTP's role to facilitate the introduction of quality, affordable primary healthcare facilities for low-income earners.

REPRESENTATION

Cipla is a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Bellville, Cape Town's secondary city located about 20 kilometres from Cape Town. The Greater Tygerberg Partnership has a mandate to uplift and regenerate Bellville and its surrounding areas. The GTP approached the Cipla Foundation to support the construction of a Sha'p Left centre close to the Bellville PTI, as part of the GTP's Connected Communities programme.

The GTP was pivotal in engaging with the City of Cape Town to secure the relevant permits for the site. The GTP also engaged with the City's law enforcement branch to install a small law enforcement office on site, which monitors safety for patients – and commuters generally in the area.

To add to the comfort of patients, the GTP installed a mobile kiosk serving light snacks and coffees on site. Bringing a Sha'p Left Centre to Bellville has created at least four full time jobs for the nursing staff, as well as ancillary jobs for a server in the coffee kiosk.

The location is maintained by urban maintenance workers employed under the City of Cape Town's Expanded Public Works Programme.

REPLICATION

The Sha'p Left concept has been installed in several locations across South Africa. The centre can be easily installed and managed, and is staffed by nursing practitioners who received business development training, to run the centre as their own enterprise. At the Bellville hub, four direct jobs were created, with more indirect jobs related to the centre's operation and maintenance.

The modular containerized construction is ideal for providing high quality facilities, for low cost and designed to be installed easily. The plug-and-go configuration requires only connections to power and water utilities, though the centre can be run off a generator if power connections are unavailable.

An ablution container on site uses septic tanks which are cleaned and maintained regularly. The GTP intends to take this model to other public transport interchanges in the Voortrekker Road Corridor, a dense urban commuter and commercial corridor built on a spine road that leads into the centre of Cape Town.

COMPLEXITY/SIMPLICITY

Sha'p Left Community healthcare hubs are designed to simplify access to affordable, quality primary health care for urban populations, among which are many invariably low-income earners.

The core concept is simple: three fully-fitted containers craned into place in areas where they are needed most. Equally, if site conditions, or the need, changes, they can be removed to different locations if and when required.

In the case of Sha'p Left Bellville, the process was more complex. The City of Cape Town initially expressed reservations but the GTP fulfilled a crucial role in unlocking those complexities to see the project become a reality.