In southern Africa, a deadly strain of drug-resistant tuberculosis, called MDR-TB, is hitting a growing number of people. Particularly affected are people living in remote areas.

In the mountainous kingdom of Swaziland where TB is the leading cause of death, efforts are underway to bring the much needed care to people like Khulsile.

She contracted tuberculosis two years ago.

“I was feeling feverish. I was coughing a lot, and had night sweat.”

For people here, making regular visits to the nearest clinic, often miles away, is a huge challenge.
SANELE, NURSE, ON CAMERA

“Whether you want to reach there or not, you can’t, because there’s no transport.”

NARRATION

SANELE SHAKING HANDS WITH VILLAGERS

Sanele Mkhonta, a nurse and head of the tuberculosis section of the local clinic is now bringing the crucial medication to Khulsile.

KHULSILE EATING SUGAR CANE/

SANELE GIVING MEDICINE

She has developed MDR-TB, because she couldn’t complete her earlier treatment. This virulent strain occurs when patients fail to adhere to the prescribed medicine. And it’s more difficult to treat.

SANELE: (ENGLISH)

“I think it’s very important for us to bring services to the people, instead of the people coming to us. If we can do that, we can try to eliminate it in Swaziland completely.”

NARRATION

WS. VAN/LANDSCAPE

To improve care for the rural population, the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross has recently strengthened its home-based care, sending nurses to people’s homes, making sure that patients get their medicine and receive their treatment.

SANELE DRIVING AND VISITING VILLAGER

SANELE SITTING/TALKING TO VILLAGER

Home visits are vital, believes Nathi Gumede, the Secretary-General of the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society.

INTRO TO NATHI GUMEDE
“For us, going closer to the people is key. We would also like to provide the service at the community level...make sure that our nurses are given capacity to provide testing and treatment at the community level.” 15

Swaziland, which has one of the highest tuberculosis rates in the world, is facing a momentous battle against this highly contagious disease. 8.5

Lucica Ditiu is the Executive Secretary of the World Health Organization’s Stop TB Partnership. 6.5

“We need to do everything we can to dramatically reduce TB globally. We can do it in partnership. If we work together, we can find ways to prevent, diagnose and treat Tuberculosis.” 12

Working closely with local communities is critical in saving lives. Khulsile is getting better. 6.5

“It makes me happy to know that I’m feeling stronger.” 5
Despite hardship, the people of Swaziland are resilient. There are many who are determined to work together to beat the scourge of tuberculosis so that the children of this country can move into the future with hope.

This Report was produced by Kim Cloete for the United Nations.