



## ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

### Organisational Overview

The Traditional Healers Organisation (THO), is a non-statutory, professional organisation for traditional health practitioners' who subscribe to the THP Act. It is an independent, not for profit Section 21 organisation based in Johannesburg, South Africa. THO organizes about 29,000 traditional health practitioners in the country and has networks in some parts of Africa. We are passionate about preserving our proud tradition of healing. We hold knowledge about tradition and healing of different kinds of ailments and share this knowledge through our training programmes. Some of these training programs have been accredited by the Health & Welfare SETA (Accreditation Number- HW592PA0400064). We now certify 10 different specialists in traditional health practice.

The Certificate of Competence assures every patient that the practitioner has completed training and is now capable of healing patients in an ethical, efficient, safe and hygienic manner. We fight for our members' rights to practice traditional medicine by providing legal advice and support when these rights are violated. THO works with government to support and bring to the surface the good work of traditional health practitioners.

There are two million traditional health practitioners in Africa and our goal are to unite all of them raise the level of professionalism of the trade to make Africa a safe, healthy and happy continent.

### Historical Time Lines of the THO

- 1970: Establishment of the THO
- 1980: Registered as the Traditional Healers Organisation but later withdrawn by the apartheid government on the assumption that healers were practising witchcraft.
- 1982: A high powered THO delegation met with the Department of Health officials led by Ms. Reena' Venter to demand declassification of healers as practising witchcraft. This was after a majority of members were killed in the Northern Province and kaNgwane on witchcraft related violence
- 1982: the THO started a programme on Primary Health Care to educate healers in the kaNgwane Region
- 1987: Our Primary Health Care programme was reviewed to include indigenous ways of life and incorporated cultures which promoted health including food and other environmental management lessons. Thus, our programme was renamed "Traditional Primary Health Care".
- 1989: A letter permitting the THO to operate was received and lawyers in Malelane in the Nkomati region were approached to register the THO formerly in Pretoria

- 1990: Sanlam-Cape Town funded THO to strengthen its primary health care programme and reach out to other provinces for a period of 3 years. This was the first time the organisation received funding.
- 1992: THO brought together associations of healers to form a Council but for different reasons the THO withdrew from that structure. In the same year Sanlam bought a building for the THO for Administrative purposes as the organisation had no permanent facilities. These offices were at Nugget street and called SIYAVUMA CENTRE. To this day when you go to Siyavuma centre you can still find the THO logo. The THO moved out of these premises after serious divisions and cracks in the establishment to a new home.
- 1996: Together with about 150 other associations from different provinces, the THO managed to form what was called an Interim Coordinating Committee (ICC), which was tasked with unifying the sector and lobbying government to establish policies and legislations to promote and protect traditional health practitioners in the country.
- 1997: THO managed to get offices.
- 1997: the ICC was disbanded as the process of the THP Bill was already underway and things were beginning to shed some light. Hearings began the following year where the Traditional Health Practitioners Bill of 1998 was discussed. The bill was introduced as a formal document in 2004 but later withdrawn due to contest from other organs of society. It later resurfaced after 18 months. In all of these stages the THO voice has been the most loud and good public relations was done to create public awareness of the Bill.
- 1997: Gauteng Department of Health wrote a letter to the THO requesting that we come on board and partner with them in training healers in Primary Health Care in the province.
- 2002: AMETRAMO in Mozambique invited the organisation to establish relations with it and applied to affiliate to the THO. Subsequently, THO and AMETRAMO established formal bilaterals.
- 2004: Zambia and Botswana Healers Associations Presidents' visited our Johannesburg offices where an MOUs was signed and a capacity building training program formulated.

## Objectives

1. To promote African Traditional healing as a holistic health care practice.
2. To develop and manage an information and knowledge management system on African Traditional healing
3. Focus on training & development, indigenous knowledge systems, gender issues and traditional healing, community development projects, norms and practices for benchmarking best practises in traditional healing.
4. Promote disease management through preventative, promotive, curative and rehabilitative healing measures that can be linked to Government initiatives on healthy life styles, health promotion and primary health care programmes.
5. Actively participate and influence initiatives of research institutions, parastatals and entities that are involved in research and development of ATM eg. African traditional medicines
6. Facilitate information sharing and communication as well as good working relations between healers and patients. Strengthen partnerships with stakeholders that support THO's vision and Mission.
7. To promote awareness of good cultural practices and facilitate, where necessary and appropriate, understanding of certain cultural practices.

## **Our Values**

Professional freedom, Dedication, Ubuntu, Responsibility, Compassion, Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, Collective effort, Excellence, Solution-focused, Collaboration, Cooperation, Knowledge protection and preserving, User-Centred, Gender sensitivity, Acceptance, Learning and Experience

**Vision:** Leadership in Healing; healing the people of Africa

Providing, preserving, developing and documenting African traditional healing

## **Mission**

THO is an organisation that organises, trains and certifies traditional health practitioners. It fights for member's rights to practice traditional healing. We ensure values, quality of treatment, efficacy, safety and ethical standards of member practitioners.

## **Qualities of a competent Traditional Health Practitioner**

- Good Healer
- Having good mentorship
- Well trained
- Loving and passionate
- Ubuntu
- Ethical practice
- Good values
- Preventing diseases
- Hygienic
- Leadership in the community
- Honest, Courageous and Decisive

## **Target Audience**

**THO** targets both initiated and non-initiated traditional health practitioners who, among others, include; herbalists, sangomas, umbelethisi, iingcibi and izangoma zomkhaya. THO capacitate healers in all their specialities.