

Mandla: embrace traditional values to fight Aids

NELSON Mandela's grandson Mandla spoke yesterday of how Aids had robbed him of his father.

Mandela issued the statement as he joined the campaign to fight Aids by talking about his father, Makgatho Lewanika Mandela.

Mandla said great strides had been taken since his father died, especially after his grandfather had moved to destigmatise HIV-positive people by admitting that his son, Makgatho, had died of Aids-related infections.

Mandla suggested a return to traditional values as part of the fight.

"We must ensure that we encourage and advocate a culture change that ensures that young and not-so-young people revert to our traditional cultural values that encourages delayed sexual gratification until marriage, safe sex, taking responsibility and providing support to those affected and infected by HIV/Aids."

As World Aids Day is commemorated across the globe, many civil society and non-govern-

ment organisations struggle to raise funds in an increasingly competitive environment.

Lauren Gillis, founder of Relate, which makes and sells beaded bracelets for different causes, sees "lots of small contributions" as the way forward to raise funds.

"With global funding on the decrease, Relate uses the model of drawing lots of small contributions from people on the street," she says, adding that over the last five years since the organisation began, they

had raised nearly R30-million.

Their latest bracelet is a red one for mothers2mothers, a non-profit that trains and employs "mentor mothers" – mothers living with HIV – to work alongside doctors and nurses in understaffed health centres as members of the healthcare team.

Zikhona Mongameli, 30, employed as a mentor mother at Nolungile Day Hospital in Cape Town, says organisations cannot always rely on volunteers and that

she "gives and gains" a lot by being employed to do what she does.

Through mothers-2-mothers she met Pumla Bulelwa, an HIV-positive mother who mentored her through the process.

"Because of her I came out of 'the box' of my HIV status.

"She helped me emotionally, and also gave me all the information I needed.

"By the time I had my baby, Khayone, in August last year, I had done everything right to make sure she didn't

have HIV."

Her daughter, now 15 months, is clear of the virus so far.

She will have her final check at 18 months.

Mongameli now pays it forward by mentoring other women in the same situation. — *TMG Digital/The Times*