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Committee for Health in Southern Africa
(CHISA) Records, 1981-1998
(Bulk dates: 1985-1991)
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SUMMARY INFORMATION

Creator

Committee for Health in Southern Africa

Title and dates

Committee for Health in Southern Africa Records, 1981-1998 (Bulk dates: 1985-1991)

Abstract

This collection documents the efforts of the Committee for Health in Southern Africa, a human rights organization once based in New York State, in its attempts improve the health of the people of Southern Africa through research, education, training, and consultation.

Size

7.56 linear feet (18 manuscript boxes)

Call number

HR# 0006

Location

Columbia University
Butler Library, 6th Floor
Rare Book and Manuscript Library

535 West 114th Street
New York, NY 10027

Language(s) of material

English, Afrikaans

History of the Committee for Health in Southern Africa

The Committee for Health in Southern Africa (CHISA) was a not-for-profit North American human rights organization consisting of volunteers--most of them health professionals--who recognized the urgent need for better health care, education, facilities, and medical training in the nations of Southern Africa. Founded in 1984 as South Africa approached a state of emergency, the group was especially concerned about the disparity between medical care for white and black patients in that country, and about the direct effects of apartheid on health and mental health. CHISA served as the U.S. liaison with the National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA), an anti-apartheid professional group in South Africa, and worked closely with a number of other organizations, most of which merged to become the South African Health and Social Service Organization (SAHSSO) in 1992.

CHISA met its goal of improving health care for all people in Southern Africa by conducting research, educating and assisting health care workers, and raising awareness among the international medical community. Much of the group's initial work centered on resisting apartheid, and members presented the results of apartheid health studies at conferences and in medical journals such as *Lancet* and *American Journal of Public Health*. Beginning in 1987, CHISA gave programs on health in Southern Africa at the annual meetings of the American Public Health Association, drawing large audiences and increasing public awareness of issues such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 1989, CHISA organized a delegation on health and human rights which visited South Africa to study health issues, and published its findings in a monograph. CHISA members also acted as technical and professional consultants, lending expertise to many projects, including the creation of a School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape.

Among CHISA's most significant achievements was a series of four International Workshops on Health in Southern Africa, held in late 1980s and early 1990s. The first three focused on the themes of Health Activism and Primary Health Care, the Health of Workers, and Women Under Apartheid. The fourth workshop, entitled *New Models of Health Sciences Education and Health Care Delivery: Strategies for Change in a Time of Transition, Conflict, and Epidemic* and generally known as the Maputo Workshop, was a groundbreaking event that had a major impact on South Africa's health systems. Organized and funded by CHISA with the help of many other organizations, the conference was held in Maputo in April, 1990 at the invitation of the Minister of Health in Mozambique. For the first time, representatives from all of South Africa's major health organizations met with the African National Congress Executive Committee and Health Department, government health officials from other African states, and professionals from the U.S. and Europe. For seven days, the nearly 200 delegates discussed the current state of health care in South Africa, examined the nature of and possible solutions for the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and created new goals for the transitional period. The conference represented a shift in focus from resisting and documenting apartheid to planning new policies, primary health care systems, financing, and health education for a post-apartheid state. It resulted in the Declaration on Health in Southern Africa and the Statement on HIV and AIDS in South Africa, which formally recognized the epidemic and outlined a plan for change.

Committee for Health in Southern Africa

In 1992, CHISA took on the Human Resources Data Bank project, a database which listed North American professionals from many areas of expertise who were willing to work or volunteer in South Africa. The project aimed to create "an efficient pathway for the thousands of requests--and offers--that now move in each direction."

After free elections were held in South Africa in 1994, members of CHISA considered disbanding the group, as many of its original goals had met with success. Instead, CHISA remained for several more years with a new mission to assist in the rebuilding of South Africa.

Description

The collection is made up primarily of correspondence, which is found throughout the files, as well as a fair amount of conference and project information. Much of the material concerns the work of CHISA's president Mervyn Susser, a South African doctor and professor of epidemiology at Columbia University, and it is likely that the files originated in his office. The collection also contains meeting minutes, newsletters and mailings, financial reports, grant proposals, and a small number of cassette tapes, video tapes, and booklets on hygiene and general health care intended for the South African public.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in four series.

Series I: Correspondence, 1981-1995	PAGES 7-8
Subseries I.1: Alphabetical, 1984-1995	PAGES 7-8
Subseries I.2: Chronological, 1985-1994	PAGE 8
Series II: Administrative Files, 1984-1998	PAGES 8-9
Series III: Conferences and Workshops, 1985-1992	PAGE 9
Series IV: Activities, 1984-1995	PAGE 9
Subseries IV.1: NAMDA, 1984-1993	PAGES 9-10
Subseries IV.2: Projects, 1981-1995	PAGE 10

Series I: Correspondence, 1981-1995.

This series has been divided into two subseries: [alphabetical correspondence](#), filed either by individual correspondent name or by organization title, and [chronological correspondence](#). There is considerable overlap and all files contain a similar mix of letters and memos between CHISA members, other human rights organizations, and medical professionals. Many discussions relate to event planning or fundraising, although others are more in-depth conversations on health issues. CHISA's president Mervyn Susser is well represented, and these files may have come from his office. There is also some material on the Maputo Workshop, but correspondence files relating specifically to this event can be found in Series III.

Series II: Administrative Files, 1984-1998

Documents in this series relate to the operation and promotion of CHISA as a non-profit organization. Minutes and notes for national, board, and other meetings provide an overview of CHISA activities and goals. Meeting materials are filed chronologically but not by type; a folder may contain information about several meetings from a particular year. CHISA's national meetings were often held at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA).

Committee for Health in Southern Africa

The series also contains general information about CHISA, by-laws, annual financial reports, announcements and mailings sent to members, and copies of occasional letters, which served as the group's informal newsletter.

Series III: Conferences and Workshops, 1985-1992

Most of the documents in this series relate to the highly successful Fourth International Workshop on Health in South Africa, also known as the Maputo Workshop. Although many organizations were involved, CHISA was the primary coordinator, responsible for drafting the program, inviting speakers, and raising funds. It took two years and considerable effort to plan, in part because participating organizations were scattered across fifteen countries and faced political and technical problems that made communication impossible for months at a time. Letters between CHISA members and other organizations discuss overall goals, potential workshop sessions, speakers, and logistics. Members were particularly concerned about funding, but CHISA was able to raise enough to pay for travel and accommodation for many African delegates. In addition to correspondence, the Maputo files contain workshop outlines, conference programs, follow-ups and reports on the conference's impact, and a copy of the proceedings.

This series also contains smaller amounts of information on other conferences CHISA participated in, including the Symposium on Poverty and Change in Southern Africa and the National Conference in Support of the ANC. Files are arranged alphabetically by event title.

Series IV: Activities, 1984-1995

This series contains material related to projects and causes CHISA organized or participated in. The first subseries documents CHISA's role as the U.S. liaison for the National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA), an anti-apartheid professional group that aimed for an equal opportunity health care system in South Africa. CHISA worked closely with NAMDA to protest the detention of health workers, plan workshops and raise funds. This subseries holds general information about NAMDA in the form of newsletters and reports, as well as correspondence between CHISA and NAMDA members, minutes and notes from joint meetings, papers on violations and health problems, and other documents that show how the two organizations worked together.

The second subseries holds information on a variety of other projects such as *Priorities for Prevention*, a proposal outlined by a CHISA task force to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic by studying high-risk groups, training health workers, and educating the migrant worker community. CHISA often acted as a consultant, advising anti-apartheid nursing organizations and assisting in the formation of a School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape. This work is documented mainly through proposal drafts, notes, and correspondence. There are also several folders of educational brochures, printed in English and Afrikaans that represent attempts to educate the public about health problems. Files are arranged chronologically.

ACCESS AND USE

Access

This collection has no restrictions.

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

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ACQUISITION AND APPRAISAL
Provenance and Acquisition

Donated by Mervyn Susser in 2000.

Accrual of Records

No additions are expected.

PROCESSING AND OTHER INFORMATION
Processing Information

This collection was processed by Carolyn Smith. Finding aid written by Carolyn Smith in March 2008.

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*

Encoding

Finding aid written in English.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Committee on Health in Southern Africa; Box and Folder; Center for Human Rights Documentation and Research, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

Subject Headings

These papers have been indexed in the Columbia University Library online catalog using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

AIDS (disease)
Anti-apartheid movements
Apartheid
Committee for Health in Southern Africa
Discrimination in medical care
HIV infection
HIV/AIDS awareness
Human rights
Medical care
Mozambique
NAMDA (Association : South Africa)

Namibia
Post-apartheid era
Right to health care
South Africa

Series I: Correspondence, 1981-1995
Subseries I.1: Alphabetical, 1984-1995

Box 1

Individual Correspondents

F.1	Bassett, M.T., 1989
F.2	Benatar, S.R., 1990-1994
F.3	Broomberg, Jonathan, 1992
F.4	Brutus, Dennis, 1985-1987
F.5	Cherry, Violet, 1984-1991
F.6	Coodvadia, H.M., 1989-1990
F.7	Crane, Charles, 1995
F.8	De Sweemer, Cecile, 1985
F.9-10	Dommissie, John, 1979-1990 (2 folders)
F.11	Geiger, H. Jack, 1994
F.12	Henderson, Martha, 1989
F.13-14	Kistnasamy, Barry, 1990-1991 (2 folders)

Box 2

F.1	Lackey, Miles M., 1990
F.2	Mandela, Nelson, 1993
F.3	McBeth, William, 1992
F.4	Mennin, Stewart and Arthur Kaufman, 1989-1990
F.5	Mji, Diliza, 1987-1988
F.6	Orr, Wendy, 1988
F.7	Reddy, Jairam, 1991
F.8	Rice, Michael and Ruth Fisher, 1989
F.9	Ritterman, Jeffrey, 1988
F.10	Sachs, Jonny, 1988
F.11	Salim Abdul Karim, 1988-1990
F.12	Simonsen, Richard, 1988
F.13	Sinclair, Michael, 1987-1989
F.14	Sisulu, Walter and Albertina, 1989-1990
F.15	Susser, Mervyn, 1991
F.16	Tambo, Oliver, 1990
F.17	Tobias, Phillip, 1985
F.18	Yach, Derek, 1990-1993

Box 3

Organizations

F.1	Africa Fund, 1981-1987
F.2	Concerned Nurses of South Africa, 1992
F.3	Global Exchange, 1990
F.4	International Council of Nurses, 1993
F.5	Kellogg Foundation, 1993
F.6	Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, 1986-1989
F.7	MAŠA, 1989
F.8	New York Academy of Sciences, 1986
F.9	Operation Hunger, 1988
F.10-11	Physicians for Human Rights, 1987-1989 (2 folders)
F.12	University of the Western Cape, 1991
F.13	U.S. Aid, Pretoria, 1990

Committee for Health in Southern Africa

F.14 U.S. Information Agency, 1995

Subseries I.2: Chronological, 1985-1994

F.15 General, 1985-1986

Box 4

F.1-2 General, 1986-1992 (2 folders)

F.3-7 General, 1987-1988 (5 folders)

Box 5

F.1-6 General, 1988-1990 (6 folders)

Box 6

F.1-6 General, 1990-1993 (6 folders)

F.7 Letters of Support, 1994

F.8 President's Correspondence--Faxes Sent, 1989-1990

F.9 President's Correspondence--Faxes Received, 1989-1990

Box 7

F.1 -5 President's Correspondence, 1986-1991 (5 folders)

Series II: Administrative Files, 1984-1998

Box 8

F.1 Articles about CHISA, 1985-1990

F.2 By-Laws, 1987-1991

F.3 Bibliography, circa 1990

Chapter Files

F.4 Atlanta, undated

F.5 Baltimore, 1986

F.6 Boston, 1989-1993

F.7 East Bay, 1988-1989

F.8 Los Angeles, 1989-1991

F.9 Seattle, 1988

F.10 Toronto, 1988

Financial

F.11 Audit Report, 1989

F.12 Financial Statements, 1992-1993

F.13 General, 1987-1991

F.14 Human Rights Internet Survey, 1996

F.15 Information Packet, undated

Mailings

F.16 General, 1985-1989

F.17 Occasional Letters #1-8, 1984-1987

Box 9

F.1 Occasional Letters #9-13, 1988-1989

F.2 Newsletter Attachments, 1988

F.3 Solicitation Letters, 1990

F.4 Membership Lists, 1986-1992

Meetings

F.5 CHISA-PPHC Joint Meeting, 1987

Committee for Health in Southern Africa

F.6-12 Minutes and Notes, 1984-1991 (7 folders)

Box 10

F.1-8 Minutes and Notes, 1992-1994 (8 folders)

Box 11

F.1-6 Minutes and Notes, 1994-1998 (6 folders)

Series III: Conferences and Workshops, 1985-1992

Box 11

F.7 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) South African Delegation, 1990
F.8 African National Congress, 1987
F.9 Beyond Apartheid Health, 1992
F.10 Beyond Medical Care in the South African Transition, 1990
Fourth International Conference on Health in South Africa (Maputo Conference), 1989-1990
F.11 Planning Notes, 1988-1989

Box 12

F.1-2 Planning Notes, 1989 (2 folders)
F.3-6 Correspondence, 1989-1990 (4 folders)
F.7-8 Agendas, 1990 (2 folders)

Box 13

F.1 "Action on AIDS in Southern Africa"--Proceedings, 1990
F.2 "Proceedings of Maputo Conference on Health in Transition in Southern Africa," 1990 April 9-16
F.3 "Declaration on Health in Southern Africa," 1990
F.4 Roster of Speakers, 1990
F.5 Press Release, 1990
F.6 Human Rights Delegation, 1985
F.7 National Conference in Support of the ANC, 1992
F.8 South African Health Workers Congress, 1989-1991
F.9 Symposium on Children in Detention, 1987
F.10 Symposium on Poverty and Change in South Africa, 1989
F.11 Third Workshop on Poverty, 1989
F.12 Workshop Programs, 1987
F.13 Working Group Notes, undated
F.14 University of the Witwatersrand, undated

Box 18

Audiocassettes
Special Section: Action on Apartheid, 1987 October 18-22
Women, Children and Health in South Africa, 1987 October 18-22
(2 tapes)

Series IV: Activities, 1984-1995

Subseries IV.1: NAMDA, 1984-1993

Box 14

F.1-7 General, 1984-1992 (7 folders)

Committee for Health in Southern Africa

Box 15

- F.1 Denouncement of Torture Cases, 1985
- F.2-3 Progressive Primary Health Care Committee, 1985-1988 (2 folders)
- F.4 Slide Presentations, 1987-1988 (56 slides)
- F.5 Human Rights Fellowship, 1990

Subseries IV.2: Projects, 1981-1995

- F.6 Medical Education for South African Blacks, 1985-1990
- F.7 Alexandria Township Report by Tim Wilson --Transcript, 1986
- F.8 Alexandria Clinic--Correspondence, 1986-1987
- F.9 Medical Aid Project, 1987
- F.10 Protest of Child Detention, 1989
- F.11 CHISA Center in South Africa--Proposal, 1987
- F.12 Reebok Award--Ceremony Packet, 1988
- F.13 "Health-Pac Update: Health in Southern Africa," by Mervyn Susser--Report, 1988
- F.14 Baragwanath Hospital Crisis, 1988
- F.15 "A Proposal for Increasing Columbia's Participation in the Education and Training of Black South Africans and Namibians," by Gail Gerhart--Draft, 1988

Box 16

- F.1-3 Educational Health Booklets by Department of Health and Welfare (South Africa), 1981-1988 (3 folders)
- F.3-4 Academic Boycott of South Africa, 1989 (2 folders)
- F.5 Health Assessments in Mozambique, 1989
- F.6 Hunger Strike by South African Prisoners, 1989
- F.7-8 "AIDS Prevention in Southern Africa,"--Proposal, 1990 (2 folders)
- F.9 Mervyn Susser Visit to South Africa, 1990 (includes photographs)

Box 17

- F.1-2 Treatment of Black Nurses, 1991 (2 folders)
- F.3 "HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa: Priorities in Prevention--Proposal, 1991
- F.4 Medunsa Installation Address by E.T. Mokgokong, 1992
- F.5 University of the Western Cape School of Public Health--Proposal, 1991-1992
- F.6-7 CHISA Office Proposal, 1992 (2 folders)
- F.8 Fogarty Grant Application for Training Program, 1992
- F.9 "A National Health Plan for South Africa"--Draft, 1994

Box 18

- F.1 Nkosazana Zuma's Visit to the U.S., 1994
- F.2 Multicountry Projects, 1995
- F.3 Solly Rotmanae Visit, 1995
- F.4 "Proposal for the Establishment of a Regional Weekly Newspaper in Durban," 1995
- Hlabisa Trust, undated (VHS tape)