Lesotho to offer free HIV tests

Une initiative à saluer... (Article en anglais)

- VIH/Sida - Actualités -

By Madeleine Morris - 29 novembre 2005 - BBC News

Some 30% of adults in Lesotho are HIV positive The government of Lesotho is to offer free HIV testing to all its citizens in a bid to reverse the spread of Aids.

In what is believed to be the first programme of its kind in the world, every villager in the tiny, mountainous kingdom will be offered a test.

Under the scheme, local leaders will be consulted on how best to offer HIV tests to everyone.

Current estimates show 30% of adults in the southern African country are infected with HIV but very few know it.

'Door-to-door'

Knowledge of HIV status is considered key to preventing the spread of the disease but - as in most countries of the world - until now Lesotho's testing facilities have waited for people to come to them.

This programme wants to reverse that, taking the tests to the people.

One of the most innovative options is door-to-door testing where health workers will visit every house armed with an HIV kit.

The government plans to employ 7,500 additional health care workers to administer the tests.

Lesotho - with a population of about 1.8 million - is entirely landlocked by South Africa.

The devastating Aids epidemic in that country has spilled over into its tiny neighbour, brought primarily by migrant workers returning from South Africa's gold and diamond mines.