



## **READ Group Vision and Mission**

The READ (Research Education AIDS and Disability) group was born in response to the growing interrelationship between HIV/AIDS and disability in KwaZulu-Natal and beyond. READ is envisioned as a network of academics, health professionals, PLHIV (people living with HIV) and PWD (people with disabilities) who want to advance evidence based responses in the field of disability and HIV. The group recognizes the interrelationship of disability and HIV as a challenge for both the field of rehabilitation/disability and the field of HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa and in KwaZulu-Natal in particular.

On the one hand people with disabilities are particular vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. On the other hand since the onset of ART HIV has become a chronic illness yet with the experience of HIV-related disability. Both issues have not been sufficiently understood and addressed in the region as yet. The network wants to advance knowledge on and responses to the interrelationship between HIV/AIDS and disability through collaborative research, dissemination of knowledge to appropriate stakeholders, capacity building of health care professionals and PLHIV and/or PWD and support of the implementation of evidence-based intervention programmes. Through this the network aims to support disability and HIV prevention interventions as well as to improve the situation of PLHIV who are also experiencing disability.

READ was founded by academics of the UKZN department of physiotherapy and HEARD (Health Economics HIV and AIDS Research Division) namely Verusia Chetty, Saul Cobbing and Jill Hanass-Hancock. Currently it is working on the disabling effects of HIV with its umbrella project *Developing a Model of Care to Address the Disabling Effects of HIV in the Context of resource-poor Settings taking KwaZulu-Natal as an Example*. This includes several sub-studies. For more information check <http://www.heard.org.za/african-leadership/disability/projects>