

## Studio 263 TV – HIV/AIDS Programming A Hit

### Challenge

Over twenty-four percent of sexually active adults in Zimbabwe are HIV-infected. There are an estimated 3,290 deaths due to AIDS each week in Zimbabwe. The disease has severely reduced the country's workforce at the same time as the country is experiencing a severe economic downturn. If not contained, Zimbabwe's high infection rate will continue to curtail social and economic growth in the country.



Photo: PSI/Zimbabwe Library

Characters from the popular USAID-funded TV drama Studio 263.

***“The drama enables viewers to consider the consequences of their options and how they might cope without having to actually live through the experience of a poor decision.”***

***- Soumitro Ghosh Technical Advisor, PSI/Zimbabwe***

### Results

According to the Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey (ZAMPS), Studio 263 is the most popular TV show in Zimbabwe -- especially among the youth, with 88% of 11-29 year-olds watching the drama. The messages conveyed by the drama include HIV prevention, importance of self-control and self-respect, understanding love and friendship, unwanted pregnancy prevention, importance of abstinence, the dangers of having unprotected sex, and knowledge of HIV testing. ZAMPS revealed that these messages influenced 48% of 15-19 year-olds to delay the onset of sexual activity; 33% of 25-29 year-olds to use voluntary counseling and testing services; and 26% of 25-29 year-olds to discuss HIV testing with their spouse/partner.

### Initiative

USAID supports a locally-produced TV series in Zimbabwe, called Studio 263, which presents social issues about HIV and AIDS in sensitive ways that help people question long-accepted behavior patterns. The drama aims to improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of Zimbabwean youth by helping them understand the risks and responsibilities associated with sexual activity, especially HIV and AIDS and unwanted pregnancy.

Studio 263 – whose name is derived from the country's international dialing code -- is the story of a young 19-year-old woman named Vimbai Jari. The main character is from a lower-middle-class family who decides to try out for the prestigious Miss Zimbabwe pageant. The story focuses on her relentless struggle to overcome different obstacles at home and work, her relationship with her lover, family members, friends, and her financial responsibilities. She eventually emerges as a confident, assertive winner, as well as a woman of great accomplishment.