



# SUCCESS STORY: NIGERIA

## Radio Deejays Tell Listeners, "I've Been Tested! How About You?"

### USAID helps radio deejays and singers integrate HIV/AIDS information in youth broadcasts



Internews

The Black Family & Skufaze encourage listeners to "know your status" in their popular rap, currently on the Nigerian top-ten hit list.

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—Deejay Daughter Jack

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RADIO DEEJAYS IN NIGERIA'S THREE biggest cities are delivering lifesaving messages to an audience of nearly 40 million people—most of them youth—after learning how to integrate HIV/AIDS information into their broadcasts at training courses funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through USAID.

The 10-day courses, conducted by Internews' *Local Voices* project and held in October 2003 and September 2004, helped 39 deejays and four musicians improve their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and understand the role they could play in encouraging their young listeners to be tested and get counseling.

Georges Collinet, whose weekly public radio broadcast, *Afropop Worldwide*, is aired by 150 stations in Africa, Europe, and the United States, trains the deejays to present AIDS awareness information subtly rather than aggressively. Because all the deejays now present the same message on so many stations, AIDS awareness has become something of a fad among their listeners.

Particularly important to the success of the training, according to Collinet, is that participants "see the face of AIDS" during visits to health care facilities. After learning about HIV testing at Wuse General Hospital in Abjua, all the trainees decided to be tested, and now they talk about the experience on their shows. "Listeners were intrigued that I'd taken the test myself," says Daughter Jack, a deejay at a station in Abuja. "They ask me how I summoned the courage and how it felt. I tell callers testing isn't as scary as it sounds, and they say they'll go and try it too."

Aisha Ibrahim Abubakar, a Kano deejay and trained volunteer counselor, is permitted to provide counseling about testing on the air. "Sixteen listeners have gone for the test and called my show to share their experiences," she says. Another caller said hearing the deejays and their listeners had given him the courage to go back for a second test that he had been asked to take.

As a class project during the 2004 training session, rap singers The Black Family & Skufaze wrote a song about counseling and testing that has been on Nigeria's top-ten list ever since. *Hanlele*, which means "hurry up," advises listeners, "You've got to know your status.... HIV is an issue you should not refuse to listen to."

"Other bands sing about girls, love, and silly stuff, but we like to sing about the things that matter and make a difference for Nigerians," explains the group's lead singer.