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# SUCCESS STORY: SENEGAL

## MTV Inspires Radio AIDS Education

### **“Staying Alive” campaign connects through radio**



*At a garage outside Dakar, Senegal, 67-year-old boss Malick Ly talks with the young garage workers and MTV community campaign outreach workers.*

**For six months, 32 radio stations in Senegal talked about HIV several times a week—something that had never happened before.**

**April 2005**

U.S. Agency for International Development  
[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

Family Health International Stephanie Savariaud

“THIS PROGRAM HAS TRIGGERED SOMETHING in myself personally and for the whole radio station. It has really changed us,” says Alioune Ndiaye of 7 FM radio, speaking of sweeping changes brought by adaptation of MTV’s “Staying Alive” campaign for radio in Senegal. The campaign was a catalyst for many segments of the country to focus attention on AIDS education and reducing stigma.

Radio stations invited a wide range of people to talk on air about HIV and how to curb it. Stations organized games, giving a shirt or cap for correct answers to questions about HIV/AIDS. A Dakar community station, Ndef Leng FM, which reaches nearly two million people in 14 languages, sponsored skits at festivities where young people played roles of ordinary Senegalese facing the epidemic. “We provide information to a lot of young girls from the country coming to Dakar as domestic workers without their families,” says Station Director Babacar Diof.

“Let youth speak out to curb HIV/AIDS infection,” the local campaign slogan, and the “Staying Alive” slogan—*Rester en Vie*, in French—were reproduced on t-shirts, caps, and scarves. The campaign created a favorable environment so that youth would adopt secure behaviors and attitudes towards AIDS. The campaign also respected Senegalese culture and had the consent and active participation of community, civil, and religious authorities, both Christian and Muslim.

Funded by USAID, Family Health International’s YouthNet program participated in the global 2002 MTV “Staying Alive” campaign in which messages on HIV-prevention, stigma awareness, and positive actions related to HIV/AIDS were broadcast by stations reaching almost 800 million homes—64 percent of television households worldwide.

Aside from its youth focus, program workers saw “Staying Alive” as an opportunity to build on its earlier HIV/AIDS training of local media. Prior to the MTV campaign, Senegalese radio stations covered AIDS through a medical approach and rarely interviewed community members on air. YouthNet proposed a partnership to change that approach by providing stations with story ideas, financial support, and key contacts.

For six months, 32 radio stations in Senegal talked about HIV several times a week—something that had never happened before. Many journalists acknowledged that the focus on youth and the new partnership with MTV enabled them to introduce HIV/AIDS into their regular programming. Today, social workers and nurses report that people who ask about HIV are more relaxed because of what they have heard on local radio.