



U.S. Agency for  
International  
Development

Bureau for  
Global Health

# SUCCESS STORIES

HIV/AIDS

## Enlisting Kenyan Journalists in the Fight Against AIDS: “Local Voices” Project Targets Radio Professionals

SANDRA NDONYE, A RADIO BROADCASTER on Metro FM, the Kenya Broadcasting Company’s (KBC) youth station, recently featured on her program an HIV-positive teen girl who had been molested by her father and had gotten help to stop the abuse. In Nyeri, a young listener, also a victim of incest, heard the broadcast and was prompted to phone Metro FM to ask for help. In response, Ndongye enlisted the services of a counselor, personally went with the girl to get an HIV test, and contacted an organization for legal assistance. The Nyeri girl’s relative was convicted and jailed. Ndongye later returned to Nyeri to produce a follow-up program on the girl and the influence her HIV/AIDS broadcast had had on the conviction.

This story is one powerful example of the impact of Internews’ HIV/AIDS initiative called “Local Voices” and how it works in Kenya to prevent and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), “Local Voices” offers workshops to train radio journalists, disc jockeys, and talk-show hosts to improve coverage of HIV/AIDS. In addition to training, Internews, an international organization that promotes open media worldwide, supports the production of reports from its offices by assisting with story idea development, travel costs, recording equipment, scripting, and editing.

“The Internews course and the story you helped me with, taught me so much about the difference that the media can make in this epidemic,” said Ndongye, a graduate of an Internews Kenya workshop. “I’ve realized the power of putting human voices on air that talk about real life experiences of HIV.”

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— Sandra Ndongye, KBC  
Metro FM Broadcaster

Among the successes of “Local Voices” are two journalists from Radio Citizen who secured regular weekly HIV/AIDS slots and another reporter who was promoted from junior reporter to assistant producer of the KBC’s weekly AIDS program.

Family Radio’s Ndu Okoh and Citizen Radio’s Anne Waithera won first and second place, respectively, in UNESCO’s HIV/AIDS Red Ribbon Media Award for Eastern and Southern Africa. Okoh’s report focused on Muslims and HIV/AIDS and Waithera’s on discrimination against HIV-positive children in schools. Waithera was the only



Photo courtesy of Internews Kenya

Nasteha Mohammed, of KBC, and Bevin Bhoke, of Citizen Radio, interview a scientist with the Kenya AIDS Vaccine Initiative.

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Kenyan selected for a six-week scholarship for health journalists at the International Institute of Journalism in Berlin, Germany.

On World AIDS Day, December 1, Zainab Aziz, anchor of the morning show for the KBC Kiswahili service, aired her program on Muslims and HIV/AIDS, which was produced in Mombasa with support from Internews. Excerpts from a letter she wrote to Internews illustrate the ongoing success of the Internews' training and its impact in the community:

*... A lot of people called to ask me to repeat a story I featured concerning a Muslim woman living with HIV/AIDS who fought against stigma and discrimination in her community. Many Kenyans phoned in, commending this woman for being public about her HIV status, saying that they did not know of one Muslim who has done this.*

*I am a Muslim myself and felt great about being able to play a role, even if it's a small one, in destigmatizing the disease in my community ...*

*— Zainab Aziz, KBC Kiswahili Service Radio  
Nairobi, Kenya, December 2, 2003*

[http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/global\\_health/aids](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids)

<http://www.internews.org>

Kenya, April 2004