



Giving AIDS Patients A Reason To Live



Photo: Surya Narayan Shrestha/Population Services Int.

People living with HIV/AIDS package USAID's "Number One" condom in a warehouse in Kathmandu, Nepal.

"I never thought that someday I would be able to live a normal life. Thanks to USAID, my mother now values me. As I leave for work in the morning, she shouts out to check that I have taken my lunch and she welcomes me home at night. USAID, thank you for giving me and my HIV-positive friends a reason to smile."

- Devendra Shrestha

The early death of Devendra Shrestha's father left him to support his mother, his two younger brothers, and three younger sisters. Overwhelmed by this responsibility, he began injecting drugs at the age of 23, and soon became addicted. Devendra tried to fight his addiction by putting all of his resources and effort into starting a small business that required frequent travel to New Delhi, India - there he contracted HIV. Devendra was diagnosed as being HIV-positive when he was 34-years-old. Life became increasingly difficult and he resumed his drug habit.

Devendra's life changed when his friend informed him that USAID was funding a program to help people living with HIV/AIDS through a job program. The program employs people infected with HIV/AIDS to package the newly launched "Number One" condom. He now packs more than 650 condoms per day. The support and encouragement he receives through the organization and his family has enabled him to quit his drug habit. With his income, Devendra supports his family, and feels that he is making a difference in society.

First Person

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