

A New Voice of COURAGE

Abstinence-based Program Advocates HIV/AIDS Prevention

By Flora Rittenhouse

Home to nearly two-thirds of all adults and children living with HIV, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the brunt of the global AIDS epidemic. According to a 2006 UNAIDS report, that staggering statistic translates to 25 million people living with HIV in the region.

For 20 years, TWR-Africa has responded to this devastating pandemic with instruction and care through programs like *Africa Challenge* and *The Honey That Kills*. In 2005, TWR developed a fresh approach regarding HIV/AIDS outreach in collaboration with Samaritan's Purse and Kerus Global Education. The new program, *Tiya Hlanha* (*It Takes Courage!* or ITC!), focuses on prevention of infection through education, particularly aimed at preteens.

During the last two years, TWR translated and printed the Kerus on-the-ground training materials, developed drama scripts and produced the first ITC! radio broadcast designed to complement and reinforce the curriculum education the teenagers receive. *Tiya Hlanha* is a 32-program series, with two 30-minute broadcasts covering each of the 16 key character traits emphasized in the ITC! curriculum. Stories center around a grandmother raising her two grandchildren after their parents died of AIDS.

Four young children, five teens and two adults from a local church voice the drama in the Xitshwa language for a people group who had previously never seen an HIV/AIDS book printed in their own language. "They believe they are doing something important not only for their own lives, but also for the lives of their families, friends and the whole Mozambique society," says Tomas, TWR's director for



Mozambique. One of the teen actors added: "The program is helping youth to learn about abstinence before marriage and fidelity in marriage. We learn how to live without AIDS after we get married. It gives the sense of a healthy, happy life for youth and adults."

Pedro in Mozambique has recognized the importance of the ITC! broadcast, which began airing in September 2006 over two local FM stations. "I didn't hope to hear a program that speaks about HIV/AIDS as educational as this. When it begins, I call all my grandchildren to listen. It is very interesting," he says.

"Every Saturday at 3 p.m., my friends and I listen to the ITC! program. It is helping a lot of families know how to participate in the HIV/AIDS prevention process," writes another young listener. "It also helps infected people learn how to live well even with the disease. ITC! teaches families with relatives that are infected by the virus how they can live together."

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