U.S. Agency for International Development

Bureau for Global Health

SUCCESS STORIES

HIV/AIDS

Kaunda Campaigns Against HIV/AIDS in TV, Radio Spots

WHEN FORMER ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT Kenneth Kaunda lost a son to HIV/AIDS in the late 1980s, he decided to turn his grief to good works. He created the Kenneth Kaunda Children of Africa Foundation, which pays for food, medical care, and schooling for AIDS orphans. Kaunda also became the first African leader to publicly announce that AIDS had affected his family, thus compelling him to take a personal stand against the pandemic.

Now 80, Dr. Kaunda is featured in several AIDS prevention public service announcements promoting openness about HIV/AIDS, abstinence, mutual fidelity, condom use, voluntary testing and counseling, and compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS. Created by Population Services International (PSI) and the local Society for Family Health, and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the television and radio campaign represents one of the few times that a former head of state has been so forthright about condom use and HIV/AIDS issues. He speaks from the heart in the 10 television and radio spots, hoping they will help turn back the tide of AIDS on the continent he loves so much. The spots aired from December 2002 through April 2003.

> "I tell you, if we are to win the battle, we must confront this problem openly."
> — Kenneth Kaunda

"My own son died of AIDS in 1986," he says in one announcement. "There were some who thought I should remain silent about it. But Mrs. Kaunda and I decided to make this public. I tell you, if we are to win the battle, we must confront this problem openly." In other messages, Dr. Kaunda encourages people to tell their HIV-positive friends that they "will always be there for them" and "to use every tool at our disposal," including condoms, to prevent HIV infection. Describing HIV/AIDS as Africa's most deadly enemy of the 21st century, the former freedom fighter and anti-apartheid campaigner says, "We've conquered slavery, colonialism, and apartheid. We must now fight HIV/AIDS with increased political will from our leaders."

The Kaunda Campaign Phase II focused on further reducing the stigma around HIV/AIDS prevention by involving other key leaders in Zambian society, such as the Minister of Health and traditional chiefs, as well as people living positively with HIV, young Zambia music stars, and actors from a popular soap opera. The Phase II spots, opening with Dr. Kaunda, were launched in June 2003 using the famous anticolonial song "Tiyende Pamodzi" (We shall all go together) to much comment from Zambians.

Photo courtesy of PSI

Kenneth Kaunda was one of the first African leaders to campaign against HIV/AIDS.

The public service spots are only the latest collaboration between Dr. Kaunda and the Society for Family Health, PSI's local affiliate. In a dramatic gesture AIDS activists hoped would boost their campaign to raise awareness about voluntary counseling and testing in Zambia, Dr. Kaunda took a public HIV/AIDS test at the New Start center in Lusaka in March 2002. He launched PSI's first voluntary counseling and testing center by being the first person to be tested. The Lusaka New Start center has already counseled and tested over 11,000 people.

President George W. Bush sees great promise in the work of Dr. Kaunda. The former President of Zambia was an

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honored guest when President Bush signed the initiative to fight HIV/AIDS abroad in June 2003. “Mr. President, we honor you for your service and for the example you have shown to others who live on your ravished continent,” President Bush said amidst applause from the audience. “We see hope in the work of individuals like the former president of Zambia.”

Zambia, October 2003