



**N'weti**

*Where Inspiration  
is Real*

Stories of Impact 2013

## Introduction

From October 2011 to August 2013 N'weti - Health Communication (N'weti), a Mozambican NGO, implemented a social and behavioral change communication intervention in northern Mozambique. The intervention fell within the framework of Millenium Challenge Account (MCA's) construction and rehabilitation of road, water, and sanitation infrastructure being implemented throughout the province of Nampula and in the city of Quelimane, Zambezia.

In keeping with the missions of N'weti, this project sought to contribute to improving the health status of Mozambican citizens and communities through communication interventions that promote social and behavioral change at individual and community levels, which lead to healthier lifestyles and behaviors. Project activities focused specifically on the prevention and mitigation of HIV and AIDS among workers living in and outside of MCA camps, as well as the resident population around them.

N'weti's evidence-based, multi-pronged approach for social and behavioral change communication combines methods such as community dialogues, interpersonal communication, film screenings followed by dicussion, community theater, and roadshows, complemented by Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT).

Based on the premise that coordination and partnership are essential to success, N'weti partnered with state actors, donors, peer NGOs, business leaders, and community leaders alike to achieve its desired program results, operating as a part of networks and groups working for the health rights of Mozambicans.

The following pages tell the story of N'weti's work in Nampula province, from the perspectives of the people impacted by the program's varied yet complementary social and behavior change activities.







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## Community Dialogue

### Community Dialogue

Through community dialogue sessions, the project empowered communities to rethink their health behaviours, improve interpersonal skills, and build social capital, thus creating better social contexts in which behavior change can occur. This participatory approach is organized around a planned activity and uses films, group discussions, and role plays to facilitate dialogue among various community members and leaders around gender-based violence and HIV AIDS, encouraging them to contribute to solutions to identified problems.

### Complementary Health Counselor Support

Information disseminated during community dialogue sessions often raises questions and leads to additional information needs among individuals. Being aware of this, as well as the fact that the bustle of people during such activities does not always lend itself to the desired level of privacy for profoundly personal issues, the project adopted the “visiting counselor” method. The visiting counselor is a supported, trained health worker assigned to the health facility located near the camp or community, who travels once a week to the location to carry out HIV tests, provide counselling, clarify misunderstandings about health issues, and refer patients as needed.



Zainabo Amade, a lovely young woman, sits on the veranda of her home with her mother, cooling herself on a hot day in Netia, Monapo Distirct, Nampula. Her 18-year-old son Danilo went to the river to bathe and her 15-year old daughter Tânia is at the well fetching water for the family. Zainabo is HIV positive, but appears to be in good health - much more so than before she started receiving support from community health workers. Her husband left her and the children two years ago. Neither of her children have been in school for about two years now, due to lack of money to purchase school supplies, and they all live with Zainabo's mother.

"I had been considerably ill for four years without knowing why I was suffering. My husband abandoned me, leaving me with two children to care for. My health situation worsened: I could not have the same strength as before, and sometimes I didn't want to do anything at all. The local health clinic was always giving me medicine for malaria and for pain.

One day I was invited to attend one of the community dialogue sessions from N'weti. After the session, the facilitators introduced me to the health activists, and in turn they advised me to go get tested in Natete locality. I did not have the courage! I thought a lot about both of my children and later made the decision to go there. After the analysis, they told me that I was HIV/AIDS positive.

Actually, I was afraid to take the test because of how sick I was, and that I probably was living with HIV-AIDS. The test only came to confirm [my

status]. Now, I feel more courageous and somewhat peaceful. I always take the prescribed medication, and the health activists have become my friends and counselors. My neighbors have grown close and accept me [now] - something that did not happen two years ago.

I would advise others to be courageous and to head to the nearest health center as quickly as possible to do testing before it's too late... because having HIV/AIDS does not have to mean the end of life. Thanks to N'weti facilitators and the [local] health post, I am on ARTs, and I am doing better."

“ Life is so precious that it is worth fighting for. ”



# Theater



## Theater

Community theater can enable individuals to gain insight on how they construct their own identities. It can also lead audiences to question and revisit their own attitudes and behaviours towards HIV prevention, as well as stigma and discrimination. Furthermore, it encourages individuals to identify themselves with different positions, to examine their past experiences, and to come to new understandings through theatrical means. N'weti utilizes Community Theater as a comprehensive approach that involved community members and staff at construction sites in fostering social circles and networking benefits

that group endeavors can provide, including referrals, group support, and information about available services.

In a cultural context where stigma and discrimination in regards to HIV AIDS is very strong, community theater can be critical in drawing attention to or revealing the hidden stories of a specific community through testimonies of PLWHAs; it thus becomes a strong catalyst of change, instilling a sense of agency in community members, as they gain a greater understanding of themselves and their situation.





Fernando José and Rosário Alfredo, laborers for CMC Razel, are working in Nampula, northern Mozambique to pave the new network of highways connecting the capital of the province to the port and other critical commercial centers. Like many construction workers in this part of the country, both young men are married and working hard to provide for their families at home. When asked about what aspects of this program they value, both men readily enthuse about the dramas and workshops it has brought into their work sites, the workers' camp, and the surrounding communities.

"Workers are happy with this program because, through the workshops combined with dramas, we have learned to change negative behaviors, how to prevent many sexually transmitted diseases, and to decrease the numbers of partners we have while we are away from our families," says Fernando.

"The implementation of theater during the workshops is most commendable and encourages the workers a lot," adds Rosário. "Because of the messages in the dramas, people are getting tested to find out their HIV status and rather than continuing to be silent, they are being open about it with one another... now, when workers know that a colleague is sick, they provide moral support to them."

Fernando draws a stark before-and-after contrast regarding the impact of the community dramas: "Before this work, we had no knowledge about HIV, and the majority of workers ignored condom use because it was shameful to go to the health tent to acquire a condom. It was also shameful to be seen

as sick, so workers would resist getting tested and would hide their health status from others. After this program, [we learned] to reduce the number of our sexual partners, and to be responsible in society before others."

"Yeah, [workers] are very happy now because they live happily with their families without conflict, and have learned to forgive and not blame each other," adds Rosário. Because of this program, he now shares expenses with his wife and saves money to educate their children... "I also learned to confront illness in the event that my partner finds herself sick."

“ I came to respect my colleagues and family, and to help my wife take care of our child. ”



## Films



## Films

This approach uses a kit of nine video profiles of women, men, and couples who became role models to others by overcoming negative barriers and challenges in their own lives (i.e. gender barriers, HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination, etc). During community-based workshops, participants view these profiles, which provide a focal point for subsequent discussions. Trained facilitators drawn from the local community lead the discussions, with the aid of a facilitator's guide developed by the program. The profiles are the centerpiece of each session and are intended to ground the discussion in the reality of people's lives.

The facilitated screening sessions are centered on nine central themes, such as HIV/AIDS Basic Facts; Gender equity and HIV/AIDS; Social Roles, Traditions and Cultural Norms in the context of HIV/AIDS; Multiple and Concurrent Relationships (MCP); Transactional and Cross-generational Sex; Women's and Men's Reproductive Health; Stigma and Discrimination; Violence between partners; Referrals and Networking. The conceptual basis is that people learn new behaviors and identify their own strengths by seeing them modeled in others. The role models are often people from the target groups' community. This approach results in promoting community ownership and sustained engagement since it draws participants and facilitators from amongst the local community.



Porciano Paulo (30 years) and Anchita Kaulauale (28) are married and live in the town of Natete, in Netia, the Monapo district of Nampula. They live by farming and the sale of dried fish, salt and Bagia (local pastries). They have been married for nine years, and have eight children between them, ranging in age from 9 months to 12 years.

Mr. Porciano married Mrs. Anchita when she had 2 children from a previous marriage. "Even so," he says, "our relationship was going well, until five years later I started to have a little more money from the sale of certain products at home. I started to drink more and then our relationship began to change for the negative. I would not stay at home to talk to my wife, and sometimes I slept elsewhere, not caring about what my family was going eat, not giving them money to buy clothes. Practically, my wife was alone with abandoned children. When she questioned me, I would scold and beat her. My wife's family did not come to our home to visit because I would not let them, and threatened to beat them."

When asked what the turning point was in his behavior, Mr. Porciano recalls: "One day I arrived home late and did not find my wife there. The neighbors told me that she had gone to watch a video. Irritated, I arrived there and saw a concentration of people, and approached slowly to see what was going on. I saw that they were doing a film screening session. Curious, I stayed close by to listen to what they were explaining and to watch the video. After finishing watching, I withdrew silently. The next day I asked my wife to tell me what she had seen in the video, pretending that I knew nothing. I told her that

I was interested in participating, should they return. A few days later I asked to attend a session, I liked it, and I signed up to continue to participate."

Mr. Porciano says that "my behavior and my way of thinking has changed," and for this he attributes two things: "the strength and courage of my wife," and the community video and discussion sessions facilitated by N'weti. "I was touched by the stories in the videos that portray actual events. I was ashamed and regretted what I had done to my wife and children. I sought as much as possible to relate well to my family, my neighbors, and my community, pledging we will live in harmony."

“ I appreciate the advice I received from the videos... I am now a happy man! ”



# Interpersonal Communication



## Interpersonal Communication

Inter-Personal Communication (IPC) is a form of communication that takes place between a trained health agent and one or more members of a specific target population. For HIV/AIDS awareness raising, IPC was utilized to conduct one-to-one or small group sessions, in order to foster increased awareness and understanding about HIV/AIDS among members of the target community. In order to make interpersonal communication more effective, the sessions included distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials produced in the local language, as well as condoms.

## Materials Production & Distribution

N'weti produced targeted communication materials, following a rigorous process of research. The process is highly participatory, always ensuring the conduction of a pre-test, and takes into account the context and language of the target group for whom the materials are produced. Kinds of materials produced include printed materials such as magazines and flip charts, audio-visual materials such as radio soap operas, documentaries, short films and movies, and promotional materials such as radio and TV spots. Materials are also usually designed to be accompanied by a complimentary user's guide.



Albertina António, 23 years old, lives with her husband and five children in the community of Cutuche, in Monapo district, Nampula. Cutuche is situated between a large MCA dam project and the laborers' camp, and thus has been heavily impacted by the presence of itinerant workers. According to Albino João, Cutuche community leader, "With the presence of the workers in our community, there are many risks because they are men who come from other parts of the country, are far away from their families, and may feel the need to look for other women in our community... Shortly after the arrival of the camp workers, some women from our community started going to the camp..."

Albertina's experience exemplifies this emergent trend, as she herself used to go to the camps to seek extra-marital affairs with the workers there. "Before the arrival of this project," she recalls, "our home was not as comfortable ... there was a lot of betrayal on my side, as well as my partner's ... there was no unity in our home nor education for our own children ... it was not the best situation..." The António household remained discordant for a while, until visited one day by Clementina, a trained community activist and fellow Cutuche resident. Clementina talked with Albertina about her problems, and reinforced messages about the family values, HIV risk, and importance of VCT that Albertina recently heard through community film screenings.

"With house to house communication, everything is well explained," says Mr. Albino. Clementina gave Albertina some magazines in Makua, her local language, so that Albertina could read and reflect

further about negative and positive examples of behavior. "With this program," recounts Albertina, "especially the movies and magazine distribution, we received teaching on many topics, such as having the courage to go to the health post to do HIV testing." Albertina appreciates these teaching methods because the story is told in the first person, and in her own language, too. With ongoing encouragement and reinforcement from Clementina, Albertina has changed her behavior, and is now living in harmony and fidelity with her husband. She believes that "the project should go on... because the community has changed a lot already through this program..."

“...they should take this program to other communities and countries because it helps in opening people's minds.”



# Road Show



## Road Shows

The Road Show is used as an umbrella approach for community mobilization, combining various principles of entertainment and health promotion to reach thousands of people at the district level. Road show elements include community dramas, performances by popular local musicians, facilitated games, dance performances, testimonies of people leaving with HIV / AIDS, and distribution of educational materials and female and male condoms.

## Complementary Mobile Units

Complementing road shows are Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Mobile Unit sessions. During the Road Show - a five- to six-hour event that typically draws thousands of people - a tent for VCT is mounted at a distance of not more than 500 meters from the event site. This also establishes a system of reference and counter reference for health units and other partner organizations that provide ongoing VCT and treatment.



Angélica Francisco sits outside her home in the community of Micua, in Murrupula district, Nampula province. Accompanied by four of her seven children, she prepares dinner for her family in their outdoor kitchen.

Before this program in her community, there were many conflicts in her home, and no mutual understanding. "Before, my husband did not treat me as a wife ... he was very aggressive and physically abusive, even to the point of injuring my leg ... he did not share the expenses of the home, buying clothing for our children, etc... he also drank a lot and committed many adulteries ..."

As far as her own behavior was concerned, Angélica says that she, too, was having affairs. She was also very private with her problems, hiding everything, and she did not know very much about HIV/AIDS. After this program, however, she says she learned to be responsible, to stop drinking alcoholic beverages, to fully assume her responsibilities as a mother, to be faithful to her husband and to make him her only partner, and to have the courage to do HIV testing.

When asked what brought about this change in behavior, Angélica cites N'weti activities in her community, specifically the Road Shows. In fact, she exhorts N'weti to "encourage more communities

in the teaching of behavior change, and to not stop doing the Road Shows in our communities, and in the future in other communities too... I wish that you continue to work within the communities to encourage condom use and behavior change, because it helped a lot in improving our lives."

The Road Shows and the N'weti project was a unique combination of efforts from partners ranging from Government to civil society, private sector, and cultural groups from targeted communities. This includes Município de Nampula and Quelimane, Direcção Provincial de Saude em Nampula e Quelimane, Instituto de Comunicação Social (ICS) in Nampula and Quelimane, SCIP, PSI-Jeito, Ikhano sa Miravo, Centro Dream in Quelimane, Governos Distritais de Rapale, Meconta, Erati, Nacala Porto, Cidade de Nampula e Cidade de Quelimane, Núcleo Provincial de Combate ao HIV SIDA (NPCS) in Nampula and Zambezia, Associação de Músicos de Nampula and Zambezia, and Associação Esperança.

“ now in our house,  
we live in harmony. ”





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