

# HIGH FIVE CLUB

changing lives, £5 at a time

## Project Briefing

### Building Community Capacity for HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care Mozambique

We are pleased to be supporting Concern America's effort to address the rising incidence of HIV and AIDS in Mozambique's largest Province, Niassa, through community-based interventions.

The High Five Club is joining forces with our sister organization in America, the \$10 Club, to jointly purchase 35 bicycles needed for outreach work in the most remote regions of Niassa. This outreach is carried out by **Equipas da Vida (Life Teams)**, local teams of volunteers from the community that provide support to people living with HIV and AIDS, children orphaned by HIV and AIDS, and prevention education in their communities.

#### **About Concern America**

Concern America is an international development and refugee aid organisation that provides long-term, community-based development and support to economically impoverished communities throughout the world.

What distinguishes the work of Concern America from many other organisations is that it shares the same belief as the High Five Club that the transformation of impoverished communities comes from engaging local members in the solutions to their problems. Concern America does this by training community members in health, education, appropriate technology (e.g. potable water systems), and income generation, so that the villagers themselves become the health care providers, educators, well diggers, cooperative members, etc. Since its establishment in 1972, Concern America has worked in fifteen countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, making a measurable difference to the lives of more than two million people in thousands of communities. The High Five Club is hence proud to be working with them.

#### **Project Overview**

Mozambique has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, and life expectancy projections for the year 2010 have dropped from 50.3 to 36 years. In response, since October of 2000, Concern America has worked in Niassa, Mozambique's largest and most rural Province, to address the rising incidence of HIV and AIDS. Utilizing a multifaceted approach, the project has trained over a thousand HIV and AIDS education activists, created the *Associação Conhecimento é Poder* (Knowledge is Power Association, a locally-staffed and locally-run HIV and AIDS prevention training organisation), organised grassroots responses to HIV and AIDS through an ever expanding number of *Equipas da Vida*, provided capacity support and accompaniment to community and church-based HIV and AIDS organisations throughout the Niassa Province, and has brought together communities, organisations, and government institutions to increase access to and improve the care of people living with HIV and AIDS.

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## Population Served

The target population includes materially impoverished Mozambicans living in the Niassa, a province of nearly 800,000 people. Educational and literacy levels are very low. Some 55% of the men and 85% of the women of Niassa can neither read nor write. Although the official language of Mozambique is Portuguese, 40% of the men and 77% of the women in Niassa do not speak it. The other major languages spoken in Niassa are Macua (55%), Chi-Yao (37%) and Chi-Nyanga (8%). According to the 2005 statistics, the estimated percentage of adults (ages 15-49) living with HIV/AIDS was 16.1%; of these adults, it is estimated that 60% are women. However, it is important to note that anecdotal evidence suggests that the actual prevalence rates are higher. Consultants for the Ministry of Health have reported, based on death rates among teachers, for example, that the HIV prevalence rate for this group may be in excess of 20%. Recently, HIV tests were administered to a group of community health workers employed by the Ministry of Health in the southern part of Niassa and these results showed that 40% of those tested were infected.

## Project Activities

The primary goal of the project, "Building Community Capacity for HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care," is to build local capacity in communities in the Niassa Province to impede the further spread of HIV and AIDS and support those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. In summary, the project includes the following activities:

### PREVENTION

- Ongoing support to the local and Mozambican-run Knowledge is Power Association (which grew out of this Project) and their training of AIDS activists
- Organising, training, and supporting local *Equipas da Vida* to provide education in their villages. A recent door-to-door campaign to teach about the importance of testing and to connect with neighbors involved 366 *Equipas* members who visited more than 8,700 homes, schools, and health posts
- Peer education groups of youth are being formed and trained
- The expansion of the availability of HIV testing, and enabling individuals to get to testing sites, is a key focus

### CARE/SUPPORT

- More than 150 *Equipas da Vida* are now operating across the Province and provide visits, food, and support to people living with AIDS in their villages, and more than 6000 children orphaned by AIDS receive food, support to attend school, and recreational activities, all through local, grassroots efforts of community members who give their time to the people of their villages
- Patient Advocates have been trained recently to accompany HIV individuals when they visit hospitals and clinics for care, and then help them to adhere to their strict ARV treatment regimes
- Enriched porridge is provided to individuals for the first six months they are taking ARVs
- More than 40 volunteers are receiving advanced training in home-based care and are being accredited by the Ministry of Health
- Self-support groups of HIV+ individuals are being formed

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## ADVOCACY

- The Project and the Anglican Church in Niassa are leaders in the response to HIV and AIDS in the Niassa Province. Many institutions from Niassa, throughout Mozambique, and other parts of the world have visited the Project to learn from the successful efforts taking place. Learning from the work of the *Equipas da Vida* is especially powerful for many visitors
- Members of the Project and the Church have recently been invited to present at international conferences including the Global Health Council in Washington D.C., the Mexico City International AIDS Conference, the "Scenarios of Africa" conference in Amsterdam, and others

## CAPACITY BUILDING

- All of the above groups receive ongoing capacity-building support to increase the ability of local people, most of whom live in serious economic poverty with few years of formal education, to be the leaders in preventing HIV and AIDS and supporting those who are ill. Support includes:
  - HIV and AIDS information, from basic facts to advanced care
  - Leadership skills
  - Teaching skills
  - Organizational effectiveness and administration skills

"At a recent gathering, after some cynical clergy referred to us as the "group of death," we formally changed our name from the *Equipas da SIDA* (AIDS teams) to the *Equipas da Vida* (Life teams). Our goal is to promote life, not AIDS. And not just survival, but real, deep, abundant life. Life in the body, life in the spirit, life in community. Beautiful life-filled stories were told and created during our conference."

~ Concern America Field Coordinator, Rebecca Vander Meulen, MPH

## **Project Budget and Request**

Concern America is **requesting \$3,700 from the High Five Club and \$10 Club** to purchase 35 bicycles for use by the *Equipas da Vida* to better carry out their work that includes visiting fellow villagers who live in remote areas and for members to travel between communities to attend meetings and trainings. It is not uncommon for *Equipas* members to travel many hours by foot to do a home visit, or to attend a training course. The *Equipas* members are all volunteers, and their dedication is inspiring. When asked what outside support would most help the work that they do, *Equipas* members say, without hesitation: bicycles. Each bicycle, purchased locally (and therefore will have affordable parts easily available for upkeep and repair), costs \$100. A grant of \$3,500 would enable the Project to purchase 35 bicycles, with the additional \$200 necessary to cover the time and transportation costs of purchasing the bicycles and delivering them to the *Equipas* in the communities.

**The High Five Club aims to purchase 5 bicycles (\$500 donation equiv. to £325) and the \$10 Club 30 bicycles, in line with the relative number of members each Club has to date.**