

## SEEDS - BREAKING THE SILENCE

TIME CODE	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE
0:00:13	NARRATOR	Africans face a devastating health crisis which threatens human life across the continent. Since the early 1990's, the AIDS pandemic has placed growing demands on already depleted resources. An estimated 40 million people worldwide are HIV positive. Approximately 70% live in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Ethiopia, one of the most densely populated countries, information about the virus and how to prevent transmission is beginning to reach the population, but attitudes and behavior are slow to change. Fear has led to a persistent stigma against those who are HIV positive. The majority of Ethiopians who live with the virus keep their status a secret. Some are willing even though they risk being shunned to become activists and speak out.
0:01:40	SHEWA TSEHAI	When I found out I was HIV+ I went to my family. I thought they would accept me. But they had nothing good to say. This hurt and humiliated me. I was working at their house -- I'm married, but I live there because of my illness - I was making dough and cleaning up. They wanted to keep my utensils separate. They said, "We love you, but...don't touch our things."
0:02:28	TADESSE AYNALEM	We took a big risk, to come out as HIV+. We were sick and risked losing our homes. We were seen as promiscuous sinners. Our relatives were ashamed of us. We risked everything when we came out.
0:02:55	SAHLIYE TIRFE	When I found out I was HIV+, I said, "This has to stop...others have to survive." When I die, I will leave my brothers and sisters behind. I don't want them to die. I had a sister who is dead now. This is why I came out.

0:03:25	HADRA ZIER	I am HIV positive -- I live with HIV. The father of my son infected me. At first, I didn't know he was infected. But he often got sick while we were together. He had signs on his body - wounds and things. I never suspected at that time. Looking back, I think he knew he was infected. When I wanted to get tested, he would discourage me. Our coming out will break the silence and will encourage others to come out. They will not be afraid.
0:04:25	TSEGAYE TESHOME	I lived in a hotel when I was growing up. In that situation, I saw all kinds of behavior. As a child, I was exposed to adult activities. As a result, I began sleeping with many women. I began to notice some signs. A girl I was seeing died. This made me suspicious. I was tested and told that I have the virus. When I came out, I knew that I would face rejection. But, if I can convince two out of 100 to be safe, it will be worth the try.
0:05:20	YESHI KEBEDE	I came out because I saw this HIV+ man, who was deliberately infecting women. I got very angry. I thought, "How could he?" Soon after I came out, I exposed this man. Because of me, two others came out. Now, where I live, there are three of us. I don't hide my illness. When people ask, "What's wrong? I say that I am HIV+. People thank me for this. When they ask, "Why do you reveal your status?" I tell them I have empathy for my sisters and brothers.
0:06:13	NARRATOR	Over the last decade, more than 200 non-profit organizations and government groups have begun to educate the community and support people living with HIV. Some provide home care for those with late stage AIDS. Others arrange placement for AIDS orphans. All work to promote prevention. Some of these groups focus on rebuilding self-esteem by offering counseling.
0:06:52	HADRA ZIER	When I first found out, I was shocked. People tried to console me, but I cried. They referred me to Dawn of Hope.

0:07:08	TADESSE AYNALEM	<p>We founded Dawn of Hope in 1998. Those of us who founded it are HIV+. There were eleven of us with the virus in our blood. In the past three years, seven of the eleven have died. Only four of us are still alive.</p> <p>[0:07:37] When we get new members, they come to us feeling depressed and helpless. We counsel and help them, so they can be productive members of society.</p>
0:07:58	HADRA ZIER	<p>I didn't know what I was doing for a long time. I tore up the referral paper and lost all hope. I said to people, "I will die tomorrow." I asked others to take care of my child. After this, I joined Dawn of Hope. I met others like me and felt consoled. I learned how to take care of myself, how to approach others, and how to protect them. I was counseled about all of this. When others find out they are HIV+, they are afraid, and I comfort them. I tell, them, "We were like you." I offer support and counsel them.</p>
0:09:01	TADESSE AYNALEM	<p>If both counselor and counselee are HIV+, the opportunity for good communication is greater. The discussion they have will be clearer. The search for a solution will be more direct. Why is this? Because they have a common problem, they see eye to eye and face to face. They can talk more honestly. For HIV+ people, counseling is a kind of medicine, a kind of food. Without counseling, I doubt I'd be alive.</p>
0:09:53	NARRATOR	<p>The Cheshire Foundation like Dawn of Hope offers many services, including basic health care and counseling. In addition, they give HIV + people a small amount of money to begin or sustain home based businesses.</p>
0:10:13	GETACHEW YEHALASHET	<p>The counseling service is very helpful. I also got 500 birr (\$60 USD) for my weaving business. Being able to work gives me hope. I live by continuing to work. The counseling taught me to be healthy, to eat and drink normally, and not to worry. If I don't worry, I can live like everyone else. If I do this, I can live a normal life.</p>

0:11:09	NARRATOR	In a society which often treats those who are HIV positive as useless, their work is especially important.
0:11:18	ALMAZ GETENEH	Rather than begging, I cherish what I work for. You are forced to beg when you are sick and suffering. But, if I am OK and can move around, I can feed myself. What I earn through my labor satisfies me. My work refreshes my mind. My work satisfies me, and gives me pride. I have come this far, I want to work. I want to give my children opportunities...as long as it's God's will.
0:12:11	NARRATOR	Mekdim began as an informal group for HIV positive people. They now offer resources and education to create a sense of community. The former program director, Ato Tenagne, who is not HIV+ knows he is making a contribution to those who are.
0:12:32	TENAGNE ALEMU	I am not a member of Mekdim. But after coming to the organization, and observing the suffering and hardship endured by people with AIDS, I am more sympathetic and eager to work. I can feel their suffering as my own. Our long term plan is not only for HIV+ people to go out and teach, but for the community to be supportive, and participate in those teaching activities. The goal is for HIV+ people not to hide. We want the community not to hurt people with AIDS, or discriminate against them.
0:13:20	NARRATOR	Throughout Ethiopia, people are working actively to reduce the spread of AIDS. They teach methods of prevention such as abstinence, monogamy, and the use of condoms. From the cities to the rural countryside, people are raising awareness in their own communities.

0:13:45	SENKENESH MENGESHA	[Rural Educator] When you use it... there is a mark here. Don't tear it with your nails. You tear it like this...and take out the condom. Hold the tip to avoid excessive air. You can only use a condom when you are hard. Again, put it on when you have an erection. This is to protect your life. That's a good question, I'm happy you asked it. It will break if you force it on too far. After use...immediately take it off, tie it in a knot, like this. Bury it where children can't reach it. Or burn it.
0:14:55	NARRATOR	In urban areas, one of the most successful approaches is teaching people who are at high risk how to protect themselves and educate others.
0:15:08	COMMERCIAL SEX WORKER	Most women and men already know about AIDS. Only animals don't know. Even kids know. We are afraid. Instead of being afraid, we should be brave. I was taught to use a condom. When a man comes to me, instead of expecting him to have a condom, I should have one and put in on him myself. We need to talk honestly. We get embarrassed, but we should be able to talk. It's about your life.
0:15:58	NARRATOR	Another crucial step in reducing infections is to reach teenagers and young adults. In "Save Your Generations"'s peer educator training, they talk about AIDS not only to encourage prevention but to help reduce discrimination towards HIV+ people.
0:16:18	ADISSU SHEWAMOLTOT	[Youth Educator] We tend to judge people by appearance. But we can't really judge, can we? Can you tell if someone is HIV+ or not?
0:16:30	FEMALE PARTICIPANT IN "SAVE YOUR GENERATION"	You can't tell if someone is HIV+. A person can lose weight for many reasons. And then there are those who are HIV+, who take care of themselves and appear healthy. So I can't tell by looking.

0:16:51	NARRATOR	In addition to educating youth, "Save Your Generation" encourages HIV+ people to teach about AIDS by sharing their personal stories.
0:17:06	YESHI KEBEDE	I could dress up to look appealing, and harm my brothers. But, I don't choose that. We did not expect this illness. We tell people to be cautious, and take care of themselves. This is what I want...I don't want the next generation to be victimized by this illness.
0:17:34	TENEGNE ALEMU	To ask someone to teach when they are HIV+, this is difficult. Our culture and values are very rigid. We encourage people to go slowly, in steps. Many people have trouble telling their families. But, some share openly that they are HIV+. They tell their stories in community settings.
0:18:12	TSEGAYE TESHOME	I was interviewed by Ethiopian TV. I did it because of how my friends were behaving. My friends did things that were unsafe. [0:18:29]After I did the interview, I went back home. I waited three months for it to air on TV. I couldn't sleep during this time. I was worried. No one knew I was HIV+. I did the interview to save my friends' lives. Instead of getting information from a stranger, if it comes from a friend, then people will examine themselves.
0:19:08	NARRATOR	Even though myths about transmission persist, some HIV+ individuals report that they're being treated with more respect and less fear.

0:19:19	SAHLIYE TIRFE	<p>Before, people were afraid to shake hands. They would offer their hand, then pull it back. Now, people greet me with hugs and kisses. This shows how people's attitudes have changed. Now, people drink from the same glass I use.</p> <p>[0:19:51] In my organization, we don't have well-educated people. We all know that educated people who are HIV+ exist, especially people in high positions. If they would come forward, others might not be infected. If everyone, from all income levels, came forward and spoke against the spread of AIDS, then the spread of HIV would slow down.</p>
0:20:39	ALMAZ GETENEH	<p>I can learn from someone. Someone can learn from me. We should share our problems. By exchanging ideas, we solve problems. Instead of pointing at those who are ill, people should ask, "What is wrong?" "What can I do for you?" Instead of insulting me, I wish people asked, "How do you feel today?" Praise god...that's a blessing! This would give me hope. But if I look sick or troubled, they say, "There's that one with AIDS." Imagine how devastating that feels.</p>
0:21:28	NARRATOR	<p>Most people living with the virus continue to face misunderstanding and rejection.</p>
0:21:35	SHEWA TSEHAI	<p>[VOLUNTEER, Home for AIDS Orphans] Some people avoid you. Even your family won't get close. We are rejected by society. We are seen as different beasts. But we are not different.</p> <p>[0:21:52] If we have food and shelter...and our minds are at peace, we can live longer. If there are problems, we will die sooner. The disease ravages you, people harass you...[crying]We don't want society to exclude us.</p>
0:22:16	NARRATOR	<p>The stigma against AIDS is beginning to lift as the larger community supports HIV+ people in speaking out.</p>

0:22:28	TSEGAYE TESHOME	The issue is knocking on everybody's door. Most families have lost a loved one to AIDS. Each of us must do our part. It's no one person's responsibility. I am already positive. Can I stand by and watch others get infected? Can I really do nothing?
0:22:52	HADRA ZIER	The number of cases is getting worse, not better. This is because we run away, we hide. If there were no running away or hiding, people could discuss AIDS, and find solutions.
0:23:14	GETACHEW YEHALASHET	Some people have a wide view...they have a broad perspective. Others say hurtful things. Educating these people is good for society.
0:23:35	ALMAZ GETENEH	I want us to be role models, to realize our dreams...without betraying our faith or changing our word, in our wholeness, as when we are born. That is what I wish. [0:23:58] I teach with tears...because I know my own situation. [0:24:07] Why do we hear, but not act? Why walk into the fire with our eyes open? Why walk into the abyss? We need education, so this doesn't happen. We can save our brothers and sisters.