



RAPID FUNDING ENVELOPE FOR HIV/AIDS: TANZANIA



PIONEERING OPENNESS IN HIV/AIDS AWARENESS



The Pemba Island Relief Organisation (PIRO) won an RFE grant in 2005 aimed at raising awareness and providing education on HIV/AIDS on the island of Pemba. The organisation did this by establishing an extensive network of peer educators that included youth, community leaders, and religious leaders. They also opened a youth centre in Mkoani, an underserved urban area. PIRO laid a strong foundation of HIV/AIDS awareness in Pemba not seen before on the island—men and women, boys and girls, people from all walks of life speaking openly about AIDS. In late 2006, PIRO received a second RFE grant aimed at strengthening the overall HIV/AIDS competency of the communities in Pemba.

Mr. Alawy Bakar Hamad, PIRO's Executive Director, explains the inspiration for their current program: "When you hear the world talk about AIDS, they say things like it's a cross-cutting issue, that we need to mainstream HIV, that there needs to be commitment at all levels. . . but what does that all mean? Here, we are just starting to recognize the problem, and the language the rest of the world speaks is very technical and many don't understand." PIRO identified six local organisations to work with, to build their capacity in HIV/AIDS. In addition, government and other local leaders were invited to participate in workshops aimed at improving the technical knowledge of the community. PIRO launched the project on World AIDS Day, with Asha Abdulla, the director of the Zanzibar AIDS Commission present. PIRO also used some of the grant to scale up the work of their first grant, including the establishment of a second community youth centre and training additional youth peer educators in the most remote areas of the island.

In 2005, PIRO was known as a capable organisation working for the development of Pemba, one of the least developed regions of Tanzania. During and following the successful implementation of its first RFE grant, PIRO's experience and reputation grew, and their partnerships have increased with donors and other organisations in Pemba. Now in 2007, PIRO is implementing a project as a proven leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

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"All of us!" Everyone's instant reply when asked who is willing to help the network in its next project. The shehia of Cambini went from 15 peer educators who were trained by PIRO through its first RFE grant to 50-strong today. All the new peer educators, most of whom are women, have been trained by other network members. Other than information and printed materials from PIRO, they receive no outside support. The network has gone beyond simply sharing information—recently, they have mobilized the community to establish a centre (seen in photo) and set up a small micro loan program to assist in various income-generating activities.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- Developed informational materials: 50 videos, 1,000 posters, and 3,000 leaflets have been ordered;
- Established the Konde Community Youth Centre;
- Aligned activities at the Mkoani Community Youth Centre with local peer educator activities—the centre has become a permanent forum for AIDS education and local youth have received voluntary testing, something that never occurred in the past;
- Trained an additional 32 youth peer educators in the north, expanding the network to island-wide coverage.



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