



SCOPE HIV SUCCESS STORY

MALAWI

LOCATION

Nankumba Traditional Authority,
Mangochi, Malawi

SUMMARY

Faith leaders in Nankumba Traditional Authority are helping to create demand for HIV testing for their congregants utilizing teachings from Messages of Hope.

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MESSAGES OF HOPE CREATES DEMAND FOR HIV TESTING IN TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY NANKUMBA

Faith leaders in Nankumba Traditional Authority are helping to create demand for HIV testing for their congregants utilizing teachings from Messages of Hope.

Recently, faith leaders from Mvumba Church shared the importance of knowing one's HIV status during a congregational meeting. They shared how an HIV positive status does not mean that it is the end of someone's life. The message, supported by Bible verses, prompted 14 boys from the church to go for HIV testing. These boys shared that they previously held misconceptions around knowing one's HIV status. But when leaders at Mvumba Church shared that God expects his children to take care of their health and going for HIV testing is a way of doing so during a church gathering, they knew it was important for them to get tested.

As one boy who was prompted to learn his status shared: "Going for HIV testing meant that one is ready to kill themselves with a heart attack. In my case, I have always had the fear about what would become of my studies once I get tested positive". He further indicated that he had always believed that "what you do not know does not kill you." Therefore, he chose to stay in the dark about his HIV status.

Other boys expressed happiness at how knowing their status has now given them confidence.

ABOUT MESSAGES OF HOPE

Messages of Hope is a sermon guide with information and messages on key HIV topics meant to help religious

leaders support their congregations. Through these tools, faith leaders can help provide guidance and support for those in their community to know their HIV status and those who are HIV positive to receive care.

Messages of Hope uses faith leaders' religious texts, including the Bible and the Quran. By the end of 2022, 1,400 faith leaders will be reached through Messages of Hope to reduce HIV

stigma and promote positive messages about available testing, care, and treatment for HIV. Faith leaders will, in turn, reach nearly 70,000 people with HIV treatment literacy by disseminating these messages with their congregations.

This story is written by Linda Banda, SCOPE District Coordinator.