

HIV Prevention on the Roads of East Africa

PATH has designed an innovative campaign to catch the attention of truck drivers on East African highways and get them thinking about ways to avoid AIDS. The campaign – anchored by a series of bold billboards – uses traffic light imagery to convey the Kiswahili message: Kaa, Chonjo, Epuka Ukimwa (Stop, Take Care, Prevent AIDS). The campaign is designed to help truckers and other mobile populations make healthy choices about sexual behavior to protect themselves and their families from HIV infection.



Billboard unveiling at launch in Nairobi in January

Photo: PATH, C.Y. Gopinath

Activities in Kenya exemplify the project's emphasis on public-private partnership. PATH has collaborated closely with the Government of Kenya in the fight against HIV; the billboards are supported by the Ministry of Transport, the National AIDS Control Program, and USAID. The Kenyan billboard campaign is part of a larger regional program along the major transport corridors of East and Central Africa. This program, called the Regional Outreach Addressing AIDS through Development Strategies (ROADS), is managed by FHI and supported by USAID/Kenya and USAID/REDSO.

PATH is leading the behavior change communication activities for the ROADS Project, including the conception and design of the overall multi-country branding of the project. PATH developed designs that were tested and approved by focus groups of truck drivers in Mombasa and Western Kenya. The Ministry of Transport erected six billboards at Kenya's major border towns and truck stops, where they are seen by truck drivers each day. Trucks, matatus, and other vehicles, including those contracted by the World Food Program (WFP), will soon begin carrying the message. But the campaign is much more than billboards for truckers. PATH's behavior change activities extend to community members along the transport corridor.

In addition to the billboard campaign, PATH is leading other behavior change interventions, particularly community capacity building. PATH trainers have trained 967 members of women and youth groups in peer education skills and HIV and AIDS content. Those trained will be implementing peer education activities in their communities using materials developed by PATH specifically for ROADS. PATH staff have also trained 151 young people in Magnet Theatre skills and HIV and AIDS competency. Theatre troupes will perform in communities along the transport corridor to share information, encourage discussions about HIV and AIDS, and offer referrals to services.

PATH improves the health of people around the world by advancing technologies, strengthening systems, and encouraging healthy behaviors.

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