

In Homa Bay, Kenya—Students Dying and Finding Life



In Homa Bay—the area most affected by HIV/AIDS in Kenya—Isaac Okoth watches young people around him die every week and buries them on the weekend. Reading this report is heart wrenching. Weep for the teenagers who die in Homa Bay and rejoice with the ones who find life in Jesus.

Isaac brings into stark relief the importance of what Reach Out does in Kenya. You will see why our African leaders expend so much energy training leaders to share the gospel with teenagers, and then discipling them. Doing this may or may not get them out of poverty or keep them from dying an early death, yet it does give them the Hope of a better world to come, and the Reason to live wisely with the time they have. Doing this gives them the Hope of a better world to come, and the Reason to live wisely with the time they have. According to Isaac...

Dying and Crying

Approximately one million people live in Homa Bay County. About half of the population is 20 years of age or younger. The lack of employment around Lake Victoria has lured parents into offering their daughters to fishermen—“FISH FOR SEX” the signs read. With nowhere to turn economically, mothers will send their young girls to the lake, and fishermen will trade fish for sex with them. At the end of the day, the young girl will return home sexually abused, but bringing fish for her mother—usually a widow—and siblings to eat. Most likely the girl will have been infected with HIV/AIDS or impregnated—or both.

Youth leaders like me deal with this every day of the week! It is the biggest challenge we face. Statistics show that 1 in 3 persons in Homa Bay is HIV positive. We bury our youth every weekend. Even as I write I have tears in my eyes.



Living and Changing



As painful as it is to walk into death with teenagers, I have hope for living. Reach Out's training has equipped me to take the gospel to large numbers of students in private and public schools. Last week our team went into 10 schools and shared the gospel with 15,000 students. With an overwhelming response, 3,000 students prayed to receive Christ. Many others made a fresh commitment to Christ. Now we have entered the follow-up phase of engaging students in discipleship groups using Barry St. Clair's "Moving Toward Maturity" books.

Only Jesus can get us out of the HIV/AIDS mess our young people and their parents are in. Yet we have discovered that the schools and students are thirsty for what we offer them. They have begged us to return. We will continue to go with the little resources we have. If we had more trained leaders we could speak in more schools! May God help us to help our youth!

-Pastor Isaac Okoth—Eagle Leader