



CRWRC

CHRISTIAN REFORMED
WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

Living Justice, Loving Mercy



Greetings from Vila Ulongwe

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Choosing Life in 2009

Greetings from Mozambique, where the new year is opening well, albeit very wet and muddy! The rainy summer season is in full swing; over the last two months we have witnessed the transformation of the dry earth into a vibrant, living landscape. Much to the joy of the farmers, who make up 80% of the population, their crops are emerging after much preparation.

Despite signs of a healthy harvest, these are difficult times because the summer months are also the hunger and disease seasons. At this time of year, food stocks from last year's yield are depleting and water-related illnesses and malaria are rampant. It is in this context that our projects here at Sankhanimoyo (Choose Life) are operating. The change in seasons is reflected in our work as well, with less participation in our groups due to more time needed in the fields. At the same time, there is much preparation and anticipation for the various developments planned for the coming year.

We are currently starting more peer-to-peer groups. Along with forming new groups, time is spent training volunteer leaders and building relationships with beneficiary communities. We are also

excited to be implementing a new theater module. Theater is an ideal way to engage all demographics in development projects, and we look forward to encouraging the creativity of the youth in this effort. While we are promoting our

Within these energized atmospheres, we also create a space in which youth are comfortable to converse about HIV and AIDS, sexual behavior, and their personal lives and dreams. Being



A peer-to-peer group paused to pose during a session in January

strictly peer-to-peer groups, there is no adult figure leading the group and sessions do not resemble the traditional classroom setting.

prevention projects in new communities, we are also continuing to support groups in regions reached in previous years. One of our goals is to engage youth in a variety of activities, including sports, service projects, small businesses, choir, and now drama. These activities help them form a group identity and avoid the boredom that often prompts risky behaviors. To retain participation in groups and achieve effective learning, we promote an active environment. This also ensures that discussion of HIV & AIDS and sexual choice is not a passive process.

Volunteer youth leaders are trained by our organization, and youth participants are able to learn, retain, and act upon the knowledge and ideas generated in the groups. I have been repeatedly impressed with the creativity, energy, and openness of the youth involved in our projects, and I join them in their enthusiasm to choose life in the coming year.

Thank you for your prayers

Tim