



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

PLHIV Break the Silence in Yunnan

First HIV-positive host brings a new voice to Chinese radio.



Yi Mu joins radio host He Ping for an installment of “Evergreen Life.”

YUNNAN | On August 31, 2007, the Yunnan Provincial People’s Broadcast Station Channel 88.7 FM aired the first episode of “Evergreen Life,” an eight-part series exploring the experiences of people living with HIV (PLHIV). Yi Mu—a member of the Evergreen Tree PLHIV support group—joined radio journalist He Ping to host the show. The airing of “Evergreen Life” marks the first time an HIV-positive person has served as a recurring host on Chinese radio.

During the broadcast, Yi Mu invited fellow PLHIV to discuss their feelings upon learning they were HIV positive. The director of the STI Clinic of the Yunnan Center for Disease Control joined the show to offer information on available services and the need to eliminate discrimination against PLHIV.

Both He Ping and Yi Mu are actively involved in activities to reduce HIV-related stigma within the media. In April 2006, the USAID | Health Policy Initiative established media steering committees in Yunnan and Guangxi that include representatives of local health agencies, publicity bureaus, media organizations, PLHIV groups, and other stakeholders. Their goal is to help improve media reporting on HIV, raise public awareness, and reduce stigma.

Between October 2005–June 2007, the Health Policy Initiative conducted workshops and meetings for 577 PLHIV, journalists, and editors on the importance of accurate reporting and the role of the media in combating stigma. The trainings sought to strengthen skills specific to HIV-related reporting—such as compassionate interviewing techniques, improved public speaking skills for PLHIV, and issues surrounding public disclosure. In April 2007, with support from the Health Policy Initiative, He Ping and Yi Mu designed and mobilized support for the “Evergreen Life” radio series. The Asia-Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations provided additional funding.

Yi Mu struck a positive note in his broadcasts, emphasizing how PLHIV are gaining self-confidence and “getting along very well.” Following the first broadcast, several listeners called the radio’s hotline to ask questions and share their feedback and congratulations.