

Living with Science

CD2 English Script

Song 1 intro...

DJ Tira: Hi, you are listening to DJ Tira. As you might know, I was born and bred in Hlabisa but these days I spend most of my time in Durban at the Afrotainment studios. When I get a chance though, I like to come back to my hometown to relax and catch up with friends and family. Lately, I have been hearing a lot about the Africa Centre. Everyone is talking about the 'research' that they do there. Today I have decided to travel around asking people what they know about this place and this research. I want to know how it benefits my community. I will start with Xoli from the AC Community Office to see if she can answer some of my questions.

Beep beep

Usicabha: Are you going

DJ Tira: Yes, brother!

Driver: Hi Tira. Where are you going?

DJ Tira: to Africa Centre

Song 1

DJ Tira: Hi Xoli. How are you?

Xoli: I am fine.

DJ Tira: Thanks for meeting me here at the AC. I wanted to ask you about the AC.

Xoli: Sure Tira, no problem I am happy to fill you in. AC has been working in Umkhaynekude for over ten years now. It is a part of the University of KwaZulu Natal. It does not make any money from its work. Since 2000, it has been collecting information from all the households in the region. This information helps the AC to understand the community better and we share this information with the South African national and provincial government so that they can bring better services to the area.

DJ Tira: Why do the AC field workers ask the same questions every year?

Xoli: They are looking at how changes in the community affect health.

DJ Tira: And why do they ask about how a person died?

Xoli: We ask about the death of a person -- **the verbal autopsy as we call it** -- because we are trying to determine the cause of death. Was it a car accident? Was it from violence? Was it from diabetes? Was it hypertension, HIV, TB? This information can help us to know more about the health of the community.

DJ Tira: And sexual practices, why do you ask about them?

B: We ask this because we are trying to understand more about HIV.

DJ Tira: And, is HIV quite high in this region?

Xoli: Yes, our data has shown that HIV is very high. About 5 out of 10 of women between 25-29 years and 4 out of 10 of men between 30-34 years are positive

DJ Tira: Wow, I can see by those numbers that the youth are at risk. They must be careful because the youth is our future!

Xoli: Data shows that HIV is low in secondary schools but rises quickly after young people leave secondary school. This is mostly because they are starting to enter into sexual relationships and do not take the precautions to protect themselves from the virus. There are some simple steps that people can take to prevent infection. But, for this I suggest that you speak to Thando, he is one of the youth leaders in our community and has all the information that you want to hear. He is in grade 11 and attends Nkodibe High, but today you can find him at KwaMoja car wash where he works on weekends.

DJ Tira: Thanks for your time. I will go find him. (To himself). I am interested to hear what Thando will say. I don't really know what a young person can do to prevent HIV do you?

Taxi: *hoot hoot hoot!!*

Usicabha: Uyavaya?

DJ Tira & Young female passenger: Yes!

Song 2:

Driver: So Tira, Where are you going now?

DJ Tira: I am going to KwaMsane to KwaMoja

Usicabha: Sure, that will be **R6.50**

DJ Tira: Here is it is.

Young female passenger: Here is it is

DJ Tira: Woo girl what do you have there?

Young female passenger: In my wallet?

DJ Tira: Yes? What are you carrying with you?

Young female passenger: I have some condoms. I always carry at least one. You should also do so if you want to protect yourself from HIV.

DJ Tira: Oh I see. Is this the thing to do these days?

Young female passenger: Yes, it is

DJ Tira: Ah... I think that I am beginning to see what a person can do to protect themselves from HIV. I am interested to speak to Thando and learn more about this...

Song 3 and 4

Mandla: Wow Tira skhoskho! How can I help you?

DJ Tira: Yes, you can. I am looking for Thando.

Mandla: Yes, that's me.

DJ Tira: I am here because Xoli from Africa Centre said that you might be able to talk to me about HIV/AIDS in our community.

Mandla: Well, I don't know whether Xoli mentioned that I am a youth leader in our community?

DJ Tira: Yes

Mandla: I speak at many of the AC road shows because I have first hand experience of the virus. Two years ago, when I was sixteen I found out that I am HIV positive.

DJ Tira: Do you find it easy to speak about it?

Mandla: Well, it was not always easy, but I have a lot of support from my counsellor and my family and when I found out that I am positive I decided to be open about my status so that I can help other young people like myself and reduce stigma. I want young people to know that there are some simple steps that you can take to fight HIV. But, the first, very important step is to know your status.

DJ Tira: Why is this important?

Mandla: Well if you know your status then you can be empowered to take control of your life.

DJ Tira: So, how can you find out?

Mandla: You can do a test for free at your local clinic, at the AC road shows, or at a mobile clinic. I did my test at a mobile clinic before a sports match. It was a bit scary, but I had counseling before and after the test and that helped me a lot to take the best action with the results.

DJ Tira: And, did the nurse not call your parents and your teachers?

Mandla: No, they are all sworn to confidentiality and will only share information if they need to with medical staff at the clinic. It is up to you to speak to your friends and family. I decided to tell my friend Sipho before I did the test and I was glad that I did because he has been such a good support. After the test the counsellor advised me to tell my parents so that they could understand what I was going through and my girlfriend so that she can also be tested and seek help if necessary. The counsellor helped me to do this.

DJ Tira: And, when you tested positive, how did you find the strength to carry on living your life knowing that one day you are going to die? Were you not afraid?

Mandla: Well, not really because I had so much support. I have my HIV support group, my family and the counsellor.

DJ Tira: And, are you taking these ARV drugs?

Mandla: Not yet, my CD4 count is not at the right level.

DJ Tira: Tell, me, how do these ARVs work?

Mandla: The best person to speak to about this and ARVs is Sister Ndlovu from Machibini clinic. She has been working with HIV for many years.

DJ Tira: Ok, thanks Thando. See you round!

Mandla: Yes, cheers

DJ Tira: I wonder what Sister Ndlovu will say about ARVs. I do not know how these medicines work. Do you know?

Beep Beep

Usicapha: Machibini, are you coming?

DJ Tira: Yes, I am coming.

Driver: Hey Tira. Where you going?

DJ Tira: I am going to Machibini clinic.

Song 5 and 6

DJ Tira: Hello, where can I find Sister Ndlovu?

Receptionist: Wow uTira!! (Screams with excitement!) Yes, I will call her...

Sr. Ndlovu: Wow, Tira is it really you? I am Sister Ndlovu. How can I help you?

DJ Tira: Yes, it is me. I wanted to learn more about how ARVS work.

Sr. Ndlovu: Anti Retro Virals or ARV drugs work in different ways to slow down the growth of HIV in your body. ARVs do not get rid of HIV but they keep the virus under control so that the immune system can get stronger. Since 2004, AC has joined with the Department of Health to run the ARV programme. AC has provided the clinics with staff, medical equipment and park homes. There are now many adults and children taking the anti-retroviral drugs in this community.

DJ Tira: This is good, but I have heard that ARVs can make one feel sick. Is this true?

Sr. Ndlovu: This is true, but all medicines including ARVS can make one feel sick. People are told about side-effects before they start taking ARVs and should report to the clinic if they feel unwell after starting ARVs. It is very important to take the pills at the same time every day.

DJ Tira: But, why do some HIV positive people get ARVs and others don't?

Sr. Ndlovu: ARVS are only given to people when their CD4 count is ready or if you are positive and are very sick.

DJ Tira: CD4 count?

Sr. Ndlovu: The CD4 count is a blood test that tells us how strong or weak the immune system is and whether a person needs ARVs. If your CD4 count is high, then you might not be ready to take the ARV drugs yet, but it is important to keep in contact with the clinic by coming back every 6 months for a checkup so that you can receive the drugs at the right time. ARVs are given when the CD4 shows the immune system is very weak

DJ Tira: So these ARVs are really helping people.

Sr. Ndlovu: Yes, ARVs allow people to lead fulfilled lives, to go back to work and to have children. But first, it is important for people to know their status, only then can we help them.

DJ Tira: Thanks for your time sister. I must hit the road. I have one more stop before I go home.

Sr. Ndlovu: Bye Tira

DJ Tira: (to himself) I did not know that ARVs could help a person so much? Did you?

Song 7

Beep beep

Usicapha: Are you coming?

DJ Tira: Sure!

Driver: Hey Tira. And where are you going now?

DJ Tira: I am going to town.

Driver: But, you have been on the move all day! I met you this morning on your way to AC, now I see you in Machibini going to town. What have you been up to?

DJ Tira: I am here visiting home. In the morning I decided to ask people here about AC and its research. I want to know how it is helping our community.

Driver: Ok, and what did you find out?

DJ Tira: From speaking to all these people, I can now see that the AC benefits the community a lot. Not only does it employ hundreds of people, but it is having such a good impact on the health of the people living here. I feel so much more confident about HIV now. I don't have that sense of fear that I had before. In fact, I have decided that instead of going straight home to Hlabisa, I am going to stop off in town to meet my girlfriend. She is having her hair done at Generations town and I want to speak to her about us and our future. I think that it will be good for us to have an HIV test together. There is so much that we can do to control the influence of HIV in our lives but firstly we have to know our status so that we can take the right action. It is really up to us, the future is in our hands.

Song 8 and 9