

# Video game to teach young people in Kenya about HIV prevention

A video game in Kenya -- called Pamoja Mtaani and launched through a partnership between Warner Bros. Entertainment and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief -- is teaching young people in the capital of Nairobi about HIV/AIDS risks and prevention strategies

The game, which was developed and distributed by the private entertainment company Virtual Heroes, simulates real-life situations in which characters find themselves at risk of contracting HIV. The situations are made to represent realistic settings in the city. In order to advance to the next level of the game, players are required to make the best decisions to solve problems their characters face.

During the game, teenagers are given information about HIV/AIDS prevention, with the target age group being teens ages 15 to 19. Brad Wilson of Virtual Heroes said that during the game, each character initially engages in high-risk behavior and then interacts with other characters to "learn that these behaviors they are doing are actually risky" and have "ramifications." He added that the characters "realistically" change from the beginning of the game to the end and that the developers "are hoping that a lot of that is going to sink in to the youth." While developing the game, the company consulted with teens in Nairobi to determine what is important to them and what ideas they had for the game. PEPFAR officials now plan to offer the game in more sites in Nairobi and other parts of Kenya.

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