



Voices OF HOPE

El Salvador



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In El Salvador, most people with HIV and AIDS live in secrecy and isolation. Maria and José (not their real names), both of whom are HIV positive, fear they will be shunned and their business lost if their status became public knowledge. They met through a support group run by PWRDF partner CoCoSI (the Committee Against AIDS). Staff from CoCoSI first met Maria when her daughter, who is also HIV positive, was only 12, and since then have been conducting regular home visits.

CoCoSI provides training, workshops and education for issues related to human rights, gender-based violence, HIV education and prevention as well as the support groups for those who are living with HIV. Its radio program spreads information to thousands about adolescent reproductive and sexual health, violence against women and HIV.

“When I first met CoCoSI I thought I was going to die very soon,” Maria said. “That was a long time ago and, as you can see, we are still here!”

In July 2017, PWRDF supported CoCoSI's Educators for Solidarity initiative that brought 14 Canadian youth to El Salvador to attend workshops and live with local youth. The Canadian youth were able to share their skills with the Salvadoran youth while witnessing the resilience of those struggling with HIV and AIDS.