

SASKATOON PARTNERSHIP

Mozambicans celebrate health project

'We'll keep things going'

JASON WARICK
THE STARPHOENIX

A delegation from the Mozambican city of Massinga travelled to Saskatoon to celebrate the accomplishments of an innovative project that has trained thousands of health-care workers in both cities.

Canadian funding for the Training for Health Renewal program ends in June,

but all sides say they hope to stay connected.

"The relationship has gone beyond our institutions. It's been very important, so we'll keep things going one way or another," director Antonio Tanda said.



Antonio Tanda

Tanda and his colleague, Horacio Mendev Chissaque, were at an international health conference in Saskatoon during the weekend to share their experiences.

More than 17 years ago,

Saskatoon's Murray and Gerri Dickson, Don Kossick and Denise Kouri joined others in a partnership with a group of Mozambicans. They established a teaching centre in Massinga, instructing local people in areas such as public health and dentistry. The long, slow process of building trust and relationships has paid off. The centre is run by Mozambican instructors, with a graduating class this year of 350 maternal-child health nurses, preventative medicine inspectors and medical technicians. More instructors for the centre have also been trained.

Those workers fan out into the countryside, providing

health care and education to hundreds of thousands of the world's poorest people.

"I can't imagine what it would be like without this program," Chissaque said.

Mozambican health ministry officials are enthusiastic supporters, and the Massinga model is being adopted across the country.

The program is also a huge benefit to Saskatchewan, Kossick and Kouri said. Dozens of nutritionists, doctors, physiotherapists, nurses and other health workers from the University of Saskatchewan have trained in international rural health care there. They brought those experiences home to Saskatoon, where they



Latrine-building seminars are part of the public health courses offered by the Massinga Centre staff.

helped spur more ground-level services in core neighbourhoods, they said.

"This weekend is a cel-

ebration of this phase," Kouri said. "We're not sad, and we're not ending anything."

WORD ON THE STREET



Chef and author Michael Smith speaks at the Word on the Street Festival in Saskatoon on Sunday.

