

Behaviour Change Project for HIV/AIDS prevention among out of School Youths in Cross River State – Nigeria: A Multi art approach.

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In a communiqué at the end of the 3rd Cross River State HIV/AIDS summit for young people, it was observed that:

The awareness level of many high risk population is low especially among out-of-school youths.

Attitudes and Behaviour towards sexual issues amongst young people is still largely unchanged.

Low literacy rates often limit the access of out of school youths to HIV/AIDS information and Services.

Few interventions target out-of-school youths.

There should be use of more indigenous creative communication strategies for young people. (Enter-educate – drama, dance, T.V., And music).

This project was conceived to fill this gap.

Objectives

- ✚ By the end of 18-months, increase demand and access of 3000 out-of-school youths to VCT services.
- ✚ By the end of 18-months increase tolerance of PLWHAs/PABAs to 10% among out of school youth through media education.
- ✚ Increase the knowledge of 500,000 out-of-school youths with high quality HIV/AIDS prevention and clinical services information by 80% within 18-months in Calabar South and Calabar Municipality.

Duration

The project lasted for 18 months (From July 2005 – December 2006)

Location

It was done in three local governments Calabar, Odukpani and Akpabuyo of Cross River State.

Methodology

A number of interactive and participatory approaches were used. It began with a baseline study that used participatory learning approaches such as transect walk, mapping, focused group discussion, checklist, interviews. Participants were recruited through gate keepers.

Participatory approaches used included

Arts Festival on HIV for young people

Rather than narrow its scope to only drama, Creative Arts like Drawing, Painting and Music were incorporated. Faith Based Organizations, and musical groups were all involved. 19 Youth groups participated, about 350 young people were present. Prizes were won. The festival was supported by GHAIN, UNAIDS gave a lot of IEC materials, World Bank and European Union gave their support as well.

Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE)

Community Capacity Enhancement is a series of facilitated dialogues. It facilitated change process based on theories and experience of how individuals and communities change their values, attitude and practices. Community Conversation will allow us dialogue about Cultural issues that fuel HIV/AIDS or how HIV/AIDS threaten our cultures. It is also known as Community Conversation. It provides a platform for people to think through all the repercussion of a situation – the way their individual values behaviors and these of their family and neighbors affect people lives. Community Conversations create a space for mutual learning and result in new perspectives. They help reshape relationships in line with transformed values. They are inclusive processes for enhancing the capacity of all groups in the community. They make use of transformative tools and processes that generate hope through the exploration of concerns, possibilities and opportunities for addressing the complex challenges of HIV.

Street Theatre

These performances will target those who mass media hardly reach, in motor parks, markets and 4 peri-urban communities within Calabar and six other communities in Odukpani Local Government. The performance will take on the theatre for development strategy. Performance will be followed by evaluation sessions done through ‘hot seating’, ‘forming’ and workshop to allow for a two-way communication between performers and audience. It will be participatory to allow for feedback from audience.

Enter-Educate TV Drama

The logic of enter-educate TV drama serial is premised on the fact that people enjoy the complexities and problems which soap opera characters face in the unfolding drama of life and the fact that the entertainment quality of theatre attract like light attracts moths, thus providing the means and the opportunity for development and change information exchanges to place in a playful and informal atmosphere. This is especially agreeable for poor, illiterate and partially literate population. The serial will use English, Pidgin and Efik languages and will cover a broad range of HIV/AIDS issues culled from real experience of people’s struggle to cope with the illness burden.

Though the main focus will be HIV/AIDS stigma and Discrimination, other HIV/AIDS issues like care and support, PMCT, ARVs, VCT as well as Transmission,

myths, policy, legal, programmes will be incorporated. Other Reproductive Health issues which will include topics like Teenage Pregnancy, Rape, Abortion Family Planning, STIs etc will be included to add variety to the serial. The strategy will be used mainly in Calabar though the video tape will be played in Odukapni for audience members.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The objective of Monitoring and Evaluation included:

- ✚ Collate and analyze feedback or the project from field staff target communities, donors
- ✚ To determine the degree of achievement or failure of project's objective.
- ✚ To identify barriers associated with programme planning and implementation
- ✚ Provide guidelines for planning of future projects

Monitoring and Evaluation done in three phase,

- ❖ Needs Assessment
- ❖ Interim Assessment – Quarterly report
- ❖ Summative Evaluation – Terminal which determined project's outcome.

Instruments used were both quantitative and qualitative.

Result

- More than 250,000 young people were reached with prevention messages.
- 1052 did VCT
- 3 broke the silence
- 5 art groups emerged from various communities working with other young people
- More than 100 youths volunteered as care givers for home based care.

Lessons Learnt

- ✓ Prevention works but the scope of prevention programmes is often not enough, the most vulnerable to infection and marginalized groups are more likely to fall beyond the realm of prevention efforts.
- ✓ There must be a balance and link between prevention, care and support if we must reap large social and economic benefits. The provision of effective treatment care and support strengthens prevention efforts.
- ✓ Investing in prevention among young people offer great hope for altering the course of the epidemic.
- ✓ Effective prevention is rooted in communities and often originates from grassroots, communities play a central role in HIV/AIDS programmes.
- ✓ There is a need for sustained effort over time in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Behavioral change and cultural transformation most often is not automatic.
- ✓ Poverty is still a major challenge and until it is reasonably alleviated the spread of HIV and AIDS death cases will be on the increase.