

CORPERS WATCH

...Creating Awareness and Saving Lives

1st Edition, Issue 1

Executive Summary

The programme on HIV Prevention among Rural Youth (HP4RY) in Edo State includes the community mobilization component using National Youth Corp Members. The first batches of Youth Corp Members (20) are currently serving in 10 communities, representing ten Local Government Area Councils. Under the (HP4RY) programme, these Youth Corp Members working with specific groups are designing and implementing intervention activities aimed at raising awareness and improving knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the population. The goal is to ensure that HIV/AIDS preventive messages get to the entire community.

The goal of Youth Corp Members who are serving as Community Mobilization Officers is to ensure that the various Communities are geared towards being AIDS Competent Communities. Aside youth been the primary target, adult population including parents and the aged have not been left behind in the preventive messaging of HIV/AIDS.

The HP4RY mobilization component adopts the "Social Action Model". The model has indeed been very effective; it has provided measures for Youth Corp Members to take action by using empowerment-based practice, collaboration and partnership, alliances, and development and action plans.

The Youth Corp Members have however been involved in various intervention activities such as House to house meetings, Social Networking and establishment of support groups, Street messaging, One on one messaging,

Market messaging, Enlightenment campaigns, Students, and the adult population, the entire community; Seminars; for bike riders, women groups, health workers, youth groups, for Churches, Schools and so on; Rallies, Engaged in-school and out-of-School youth in drama competitions, quiz competition, various quarter competitions, poetry, and songs.

This monthly publication is an aspect of Corpers work in the communities that can help sensitize, create awareness, give accurate knowledge about sexuality and HIV/AIDS and create an interactive forum between the experts on HIV/AIDS and the general population.

This publication is designed to help communicate and take the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS beyond the urban settlements into the rural communities.



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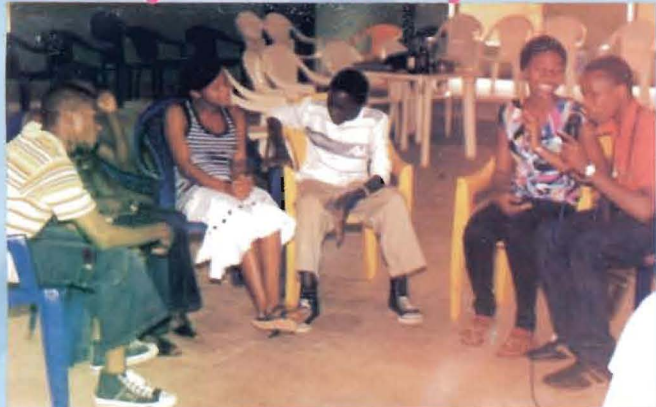


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SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES FROM THE ISHAN SPEAKING COMMUNITIES

Ebhoiyi Community in view



Out-of-school Youth drama presentation

In their conquest towards making Ebhoiyi Community an AIDS Competent one, the Youth Corp Members serving there, identified some of the peoples vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS, and some of such includes; *Commercial Cutting of nail, High rate of unprotected sex, Cultural practices on women whose husbands are dead; People's ignorance over the existence of HIV; High level of pre-marital and extra-marital affairs; Multiple sex partners; Poverty.*

In their quest to upturn these vulnerabilities the corpsers focused on three thematic areas; *Increasing Awareness and improving knowledge of HIV/AIDS; Critical thinking; and Access to Services and Resources.*

The activities they carried out included **Seminars** for traditional rulers, Okada Riders Associations, In-school youth and out of school youth, churches, and health workers. **Drama, Quiz, and Debate Competitions** involving inter-community quarter competitions and inter-school competitions highlighting HIV/AIDS and sexuality vulnerabilities.

Interactive forums have also been held to address issues on HIV/AIDS, Sex and Sexuality. **Stakeholders' Participation** involving leaders/chiefs in the community, representatives from churches, the health centre, and other community elites. They have also collaborated with the Elders Council, General Hospital and an NGO, Women Right Development Initiative.

However, Ebhoiyi Youth Corp Members have experienced tremendous successes in organization of workshops with the help of the community elites, elders and youth. One of such workshops was titled **THE YOUTH AND SOCIETY**, with the aim of discouraging some society cultural practices that makes the youth vulnerable to HIV and to address issues of multiple sex

partners. To create awareness on HIV/AIDS among youth. The target groups were the in-school and out- of-school youth. Paper and talks were given on: **Child Abuse, Prostitution and Rape Effect to the Youth and the Society** by Mrs. C.A Osawe; **Coordinator, Women Reproductive Right Development Initiative; Implications of some socio-cultural practices to HIV/AIDS** by Dr. Francisca Omorodion; Dr. Nambuso Dlamini also talked on the **Role of knowledge to HIV/AIDS control.**

Also there was Drama presentations from the in-school youth and out- of- school youth, jokes on HIV/AIDS; STDS were added to spice up the workshop. In all a total of 116 persons were reached, this comprises of 40 out school youth in attendance and 56 in-school youth and about 20 elders.

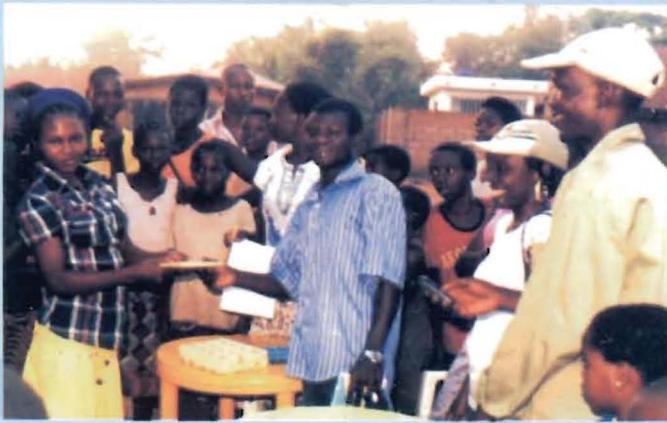


In-school Youth during their drama presentation

Emuhi Community in view

Youth Corp Members/ Community Mobilization Officers have also experienced tremendous successes in messaging (house to house; street, and market) with the help of the support groups formed in the community and in the organization of quiz and debates competitions for in-school and out-of-school youth, and inter-quarter drama and dance competitions.

The drama organized in the community was played out in the market square. The title of the drama was **HIV/AIDS IS REAL**. There was huge turnout as a pre-mobilization mass enlightenment campaign move was made by the corpsers and their support groups to the seven quarters in the community inviting them (parents, the aged and youth) to come watch their children's drama presentations.



Presentation of prizes to best actors in the drama competition organized by the Youth Corp Members.

Prizes were later presented to best actors for their outstanding performance.

Emu Community in view

Emu Youth Corp Members have experienced success in building neighbourhood network study groups, through study group members. Wherein, each member of the group carries out small group talks on HIV/AIDS in his/her house and within neighbourhoods.

CPED-Emu peer education study group formation came when it was important to get youth in various quarters involved in the messaging of HIV/AIDS. It thus led to the formation of different peer education groups in three of the major quarters in the community. To keep this approach and expand their horizon, Corpers involved 20-30 youths in each quarter in the study groups. It worked well as there was gender balance in each group formation. The neighbourhood network study groups are run by the trained peer educators in the community while Youth Corp Members Supervise.

Some Questions asked by the Elderly

The strategies embarked upon by the corpers have lead to some questions such as:

1. As an old man taking to the hospital when sick how can I know whether the syringe used is new or not?
Corpers Response: It is simple Sir; all you need to do is ask the person who took you to the hospital to ensure that the syringe is torn from a sealed package and you can tell the nurse attending to you to ensure that the syringe is new.
2. If our spouse refuse the use of condom what can we do? **Corpers Response:** If you suspect that your spouse is cheating on you, and he/she refuses to use a condom, you tell him/her that no sex without condom.
3. Can we use the same sponge with an infected person? **Corpers Response:** You cannot use the same sponge, at least for personal hygiene and other skin diseases.
4. Can we contact it through kissing? **Corpers Response:** Yes and No; yes, if you engage in deep kissing with an infected person that has a cut on his or her mouth; and No if you simply give an infected person a peck on the cheek.
5. How reliable is condom? **Corpers Response:** 98% reliable
6. How can we know an infected person? **Corpers Response:** You can only know that by testing, you cannot see someone on the road and say you have HIV/AIDS, this can only be known through testing and self disclosure.

7. If an infected man impregnates his wife who does not have HIV will they give birth to infected baby?

Corpers Response: There is a high possibility that the baby will be effected except the baby is brought from the mothers' womb before due date.

8. Can two persons use one condom? **Corpers Response:** No

9. Can you use condom on an infected person?

Corpers Response: Yes, as it protects both partners from contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

10. Can we contract HIV by sharing one stick of cigarette or Indian herm? **Corpers Response:** You cannot contract HIV from smoking cannabis/Indian hemp. However, smoking cannabis/Indian hemp can impair your judgement and you may engage in unprotected sex, which increases your chances of contracting the HIV virus.

11. Can drinking of beer (alcohol) and smoking give room for HIV/AIDS? **Corpers Response:** Indirectly it can. For example, if you get drunk with alcohol, you tend to become irrational and are bound to do stupid things, and you may not know when you will sleep with a lay about who may turn out to be infected. This singular act can get you infected.



12. Can sex cause HIV/AIDS? **Corpers Response:** Yes it can
13. Will quick withdrawal during sex prevent the transmission of HIV virus? **Corpers Response:** Quick withdrawal is not the issue as long as one comes in contact with the woman or man without using protective measures like condom, there is high chance of contracting HIV/AIDS.
14. Probe: What if the condom burst in the process? **Corpers Response:** If the condom burst you can still contract the virus
15. Is a person at risk if he engages in anal sex? **Corpers Response:** Yes
16. Can someone enjoy sex with condom more than flesh to flesh? **Corpers Response:** Sex can be enjoyed with condom like flesh to flesh.

Summary of what the people now say

1. People should know their status before getting married.
2. The pastors should include the awareness in their preaching while in the church and outside programmes like crusade.

3. The town criers should also include it to their community job.
4. Free condoms should be made for the people especially the youth.
5. Organize programme for the community about the awareness of HIV/AIDS.
6. Bills should be produced and given and pasted around the communities
7. People involved in the activities should also be motivated so that they can take it seriously.
8. Marrying more than one wife should be forbidding in our community.
9. HIV and Sexuality Education should be one of the courses in the Secondary Schools.
10. The community Elders, Local Government Officials and Politicians should be carried along in the knowledge and awareness campaign of HIV/AIDS.

Captain's Corner



Mobilizing Communities towards being AIDS Competent involves all aspect of the community. It focuses not only on certain age group but on all groups. The idea is that HIV prevention is not the responsibility of a certain population but the entire population.

I did like to congratulate the team of Youth Corp Members in their creative and dedicative selflessness to carry on the fight against HIV/AIDS scourge. This is indeed a call for service to humanity and the

creation of an HIV/AIDS free society.

Having done well in creating awareness, knowledge translation, and capacity building in these rural communities, there is an undoubted believe that these communities are being integrated as AIDS COMPETENT COMMUNITIES.

On arrival at the communities Youth Corp Members observed that the awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS, sexuality transmitted diseases, and reproductive health issues was low. They embarked on massive enlightenment strategies. Howbeit, this has yielded outstanding benefits by drawing the attention of the communities' populace towards risk-free behavioural and social changes on healthy leaving, sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

To this end, the communities' populace have participated and are clamouring for more activities from the Youth Corp Members. The youth are now exposed to safer sexual activities and accurate knowledge of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health issues which is helping them build healthy living among themselves.

There is also general belief and acceptance by parents that sex education to their children begins from the home. And as such, it creates better communication, and confidence between parents and their children.

In the light of the above, HIV/AIDS is a major health issue that concerns the social aspect of the society, and we must all join hands together to fight the scourge of these diseases. Always remember the road to safe health begins with you and I.

Brainstorming Session

This section in the corporers watch is meant to test your knowledge on HIV/AIDS and win you prizes. Here are some questions to tease what you know about HIV/AIDS.

1. What does HIV stand for?
 - a. Human Infectious Virus
 - b. Human Immunodeficiency Virus
 - c. Human Inflammatory Virus
2. What does AIDS stand for?
 - a. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
 - b. Acquired Infectious Disease Syndrome
 - c. Affected internal deficiency Syndrome
3. HIV is Gods punishment for the unfaithful
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. How can one tell if someone is infected with HIV or AIDS?
 - a. By the size of the person
 - b. If the person is always falling ill.
 - c. you can only know someone infected with the virus, if the person has been tested.
5. Can consistent and correct use of condom help to keep you safe from being infected with HIV?
 - a. Yes it can
 - b. I don't really know
 - c. condoms are not 100% effective, so it can't protect one.

Answers to these questions should be sent to jedudu@yahoo.co.uk; ebonyb@yahoo.com; eselove2002@yahoo.com; loyaltyisgood@yahoo.co.uk; or you could text your answers to the following numbers: 08052837422; 08035676902; 0805207759; 08080472801. All lines are open. Be the first to win.

Write up on **COMMUNICATING HIV IN RURAL COMMUNITIES** by **IHEHIULO, CHUKWUNMERE MARVELOUS**

Introduction

Communication can make or mar a community. Positive information communicated in a positive approach transforms a people, therefore information becomes an antidote to ignorance while lack of it gives way to darkness even deformation and demotion not only that, it may lead to death. When one is not informed you will be deformed it brings out the fact that communication is an agent of civilization and power.

Communicating HIV/AIDS in rural areas or communities is a preventive and interventionist approach adopted to fight against HIV/AIDS pandemic in the world today. This act focuses on behavioural change and to increase the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS in the country mostly in rural communities. This task has attracted the attention of many NGOs both within and outside the country example CPED, USAID, GHAIN etc in other to eradicate or reduce its scourge in our communities.

The word *communicating* is derived from communication which is the process of sharing ideas, information and message with others in particular time and place, or the process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings. It includes writing and talking as well as non verbal communication (such as facial expressions body language or gestures) visual communication (the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photograph, video or mail, cable television or satellite broad casts). **To be continued.....**