

CORPERS' WATCH

...Creating Awareness and Saving Lives

2nd Edition, Issue 2

Creating Awareness and Knowledge transfer on HIV/AIDS and Sexuality in Rural Communities

Youth Corp Members speak out on their work pertaining to creating awareness and transferring knowledge on HIV/AIDS in their host communities.

Corper' activities have positively impacted on the sexual health of their host population and on their lives. For the corpers, their capacity building obtained from training on sexuality and community mobilization increased their ability to transfer knowledge, to contribute to HIV/AIDS prevention, and invariably to save lives are awesome experiences. "We are indeed grateful for this opportunity, which has afforded us to reach out to humanity". Corpers' activities have increased level of HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge in comparison to the time they entered their host communities. This is evidenced in the work done by corpers and the level of the community and youth responses to our programmes.

The community has increased its' level of awareness and knowledge. This assertion is succinctly buttressed by the comfort at which youth and community members discuss and participate in seminars on HIV/AIDS prevention.



On our arrival, we embarked on an aggressive house to house HIV/AIDS talk. Many families invited us to chat with them. A lot of them have confirmed that they know much about the disease now, than before. In addition, we provided lectures inviting guest speakers and making our presentations to

the elders at their various councils, in different quarters of the community, and targeting other groups such as women, youth, motor bike riders and small scale businesses (e.g. barber and hair salons)

More and more youth have also been mobilized by us through our various study groups and competitions. The mediums have provided us opportunities to reach and mobilize youth towards building AIDS competent communities. Our current strategies of network study programmes have also further expanded HIV/AIDS knowledge and prevention to those who could not attend our lectures.

In communities where we have health centres, they have witnessed a huge turnout for voluntary HIV/AIDS testing. Accordingly, the adult and youth population turn out in large numbers to be tested. In the communities where we

have no testing centers, there are agitations for the establishment of such centers and willingness among many to be tested. Many now travel to nearby communities where they can find a free HIV/AIDS volunteering counseling unit.

Lots of people are abandoning cultural practices that increase their exposure to HIV infection. For example, many no longer seek the services of traditional nail cutters. Where they do, they supply their own blade razors. In addition, girls and women now take or request the use of new needles and razor for their hair and shaving on their visit to the hair salon. A lot of compromising sexual lifestyles such as non-use of condom has changed.

Most youth are now better informed as their earlier misconceptions are giving way to healthy sexual lifestyles. Misconceptions about contracting HIV through using the same toilet, hugging or shaking of hands, lying on the bed with a carrier are gradually fading away.

We have touched the nook and crannies of our communities and community members talk freely about issues on HIV/AIDS and sexuality. Thus we are successfully building AIDS Competent Communities.

In Summary, we can proudly say that;

- There is adequate information on HIV/AIDS in the community.
- Decrease in the number of people with multiple sex partners.
- There is an increase sale of condom in the communities.
- HIV/AIDS preventive measures become chat topics and talk among peer groups in the community.
- There is an increasing visit to health centres by the people for VCT.

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Successful Interventions in BINI Speaking Communities

Oghede Community in View

The youth and adult population in Oghede community have benefited from the intervention activities of youth corp members. They have carried HIV prevention messages into the schools, the churches; youth hang out areas, all in a bid to ensure that the members of the community are free from HIV/AIDS.



A Youth Corp Member in one of the Seminars so Organized in the Community

In the schools, they have committed themselves to educate in-school youth (junior and secondary) on specific weekdays. Corpers organized quiz, debate and drama competitions as medium of getting their messages on the nature of HIV/AIDS, mode of prevention to the people.

The churches have not been left out as there have been seminars for both the young and old. A talk show has been organized for the community as a whole where youth from different quarters came to express their feelings on HIV/AIDS, sexual desires and pleasures, sexual abuse, parents' communication on issues centered on sexuality, and condom use.

They have also being able to involve in-school youth as peer support group members in the community, and they have been very active in disseminating information on HIV/AIDS and

sexuality. This has helped a lot in raising awareness and building knowledge about HIV/AIDS among the people.

Ugo Niyekorhionmwon Community in View

Ugo community as it is fondly called has not been left out in corpers activities to build an AIDS competent community. Corpers have adopted participatory approach in which corpers have worked with the community to identify, design, implement and monitor activities. Such approach is to promote community ownership and sustainability. Corpers and youth have carried out projects that cut across the community, which took place in schools, churches, market, hang outs, and the health centre.



Workshop organized by CPED Youth Corp Members for In-school Youth

They have organized debates for in-school youth, wherein the youth were tasked to critically think and project on supporting and opposing the motions on **HIV as an Epidemic**. This activity helped to increase the interest on HIV/AIDS and also contributed to boosting knowledge transfer and confidence on ways to protect and prevent HIV/AIDS among the youth.

The other sub-sectors within the community have also benefited from the quiz competitions through the participation of

different churches and schools. Corpers erected sign posts in various quarters of some host communities, bearing HIV prevention and sexuality messages.

Umaza Community in View

Corpers organized an HIV/AIDS seminar in Umaza, which was the first of its kind to ever take place in the community as a whole. It was very successful with over 270 people, mostly community residents in attendance. The community elders, youth, teenagers and children were all present. The seminar was very educative, entertaining, and also fun in nature. There was room for questions and answers, during which the participants expressed themselves freely without shame.



Cultural Dance Display by Umaza Youth

The seminar was coupled with songs, role-play, Urhobo cultural dance, Benin cultural dance and different presentations as well. We were able to carry everybody along by using Pidgin English and translation into Benin dialect for the benefit of some of the elders who do not understand the Pidgin English.

The people of Umaza were so happy to witness such an educative seminar in their community. Thereafter, some of their leaders thanked and asked us when next we will be organizing another seminar for the community.

Events and News Flash

First Set of Youth Corp Members pass out in Grand style

The first set of CPED Corpers (Group 1) completed their service year with CPED on Wednesday, June 23, 2010. They received a heroic reception at CPED's head office in Benin City, Edo State. Certificates were presented to them for their commitment and dedicated service in their host communities.

However, outstanding corpers were given awards and separate certificates of distinction. CPED offered an appointment to one female youth corp member, who has since resumed work.

CPED Staff and Co-Investigator visits Camp Ground in Okada to Orient them on HP4RY Community Mobilization Component.



From left; Ms Ese Akpede (CPED, Programme Officer), Mr. Ajayi (NYSC HIV/AIDS coordinator, Mrs. Orji (Mobilization Officer), Mr. Olugbenga Atilola (NYSC State Director), Dr. F. I. Omorodion (Co-investigator, Community Mobilization Component), and Mr. Johnson Dudu (CPED, Programme Administrator).

CPED Staff, Mr. Johnson Dudu, Ms. Ese Akpede and a co-investigator, Dr. Francisca. I. Omorodion, over-seeing the community component of HP4RY visited the camp ground at Okada. They met with director and officials of NYSC. Thereafter, they were introduced to the corpers and given the opportunity to briefly address corpers on CPED's HIV activities as well as corpers' work in the community.

Group 2 Youth Corp Members arrives CPED and gets training

The second set of youth corp members arrives and gets training in the month of

April, 2010. CPED organized a capacity building training for a week on sexuality, HIV/AIDS and community mobilization. This training was coordinated and facilitated by Dr. Francisca I. Omorodion, Prof. Andrew G. Onokerhoraye, Johnson Dudu, Eloho Tobrise, and Ese Akpede was to prepare the new corpers to be comfortable talking about sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, as well as prepare them to work as community mobilization officers in the task to build AIDS competent communities.



Group 2 Corpers in a group shot with Dr. Omorodion, Mr. Johnson Dudu, and Ms. Ese Akpede

Poetry Section

HIV PREVENTION CREED

I believe in Abstinence, the best method of HIV prevention, and in condom use, the only alternative, for those who cannot abstain
And to whom mutual fidelity follow to save man from HIV/AIDS;
Born of unprotected sex; suffered under risky sexual intercourse.
On the third day of sexual intercourse, it rose again from the sexual fluids and ascended into blood stream, from there it shall multiply to suppress and destroy the immune system resulting to the entry of opportunistic infections that kills.

I believe in Abstinence,
I believe in a consistent and correct condom use, the alternative brother to raw leather, the faithfulness to one uninfected partner, and the rejection of un-screened blood for transmission, Amen.

Ojo Jennifer (Emuhi Community)

HIV/AIDS IS REAL

I am a time bomb detonating daily
A landmine waiting to explode!
I am a highly infectious virus annihilating individuals daily and slowly.
I respect "ABC"

Abstinence

Being Faithful to one partner
Correct and Consistent use of condom,
They will keep me away from existence if I am not careful.

I am HIV/AIDS and I am so real. By: Osaro Anthony Osagiede

Captain's Corner

Send your questions to eselove2002@yahoo.com or text only 08052077759.



This edition on the captain's corner, she will be talking about the Basics of HIV/AIDS.

HIV stands for *H u m a n Immunodeficiency Virus*. It is found only in

humans and not in animals, insects, water, or the air. And an infected person has less efficient body defense system. It is not a bacteria, protozoa or fungus. This virus infects the human CD4 cells and uses them to make copies of itself.

On the other hand, AIDS is an **acquired** group of **symptoms and signs** that occur when a person's **immune system is damaged** by HIV: It stands for **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**.

Relationship between HIV and AIDS

HIV is the virus while **AIDS** is the later stage of HIV infection when a person starts falling ill. It can take between 512 years for HIV to become AIDS.

Before HIV infection can be contracted, there are **two things** that need to happen.

- There must be an **entry point** into the blood stream usually a cut or a bruise
- HIV must be **present in sufficient quantity** before it can infect.

The main body fluids of an infected person that contains HIV in sufficient quantity to infect are:

- Blood or blood products
- Sexual fluids semen or pre cum in a man and vaginal fluids in a woman
- Breast milk and secretions.

To be continued.....

Communicating HIV/AIDS in Rural Communities

By Ihehiulo, Chukwumere
Marvelous

Continues from last Edition

HIV/AIDS sweeping across the nation have been widely reported. In most cases, attention has focused mainly in urban population, while giving little to the rural populace. The spread and effects of HIV/AIDS are often very different between these areas. Although the number of people who have HIV/AIDS is estimated to be lower in rural areas than urban areas. Greater understanding of the spread of HIV/AIDS within the rural communities is required to prevent the problem reaching to the level experienced in the urban areas. The causes of HIV/AIDS transmission in rural areas differ from urban areas.

The main risk affecting rural communities are examples, such as: *Poverty, arising from insecure livelihoods that are unable to provide food for the family; Men staying away from home during seasonal migration or transaction in other market places; Limited access to HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health information in the local language; Lack of voluntary counseling and testing centers in rural settlements; Gender inequality, women and girls are disadvantaged with regard to safe sex due to discriminatory social and cultural practices; Young people staying away from home for education or seeking employment; and Lack of detailed understanding about HIV transmission, AIDS Symptoms and methods of protection.*

Communicating HIV/AIDS in rural communities is not without its problems. Some of such problems include:

Rural communities' prides themselves much on their culture and tradition. Therefore strategies for conveying messages on HIV/AIDS in rural settings; strategies must respect and

accommodate such cultural values, beliefs and norms, until the communities are comfortable to break away from such cultural context.

The issue of language is another barrier to communication. Many of the rural communities have their own local dialect and when the language of the sender is different from that of the receiver, communication will not be effective and feedback is not always adequate, although interpretation comes in, but when the interpreter is not able to interpret in full all spoken words, it will obstruct communication.

Time constraint is another problem faced. Community members are mainly found at specific times at home (evening periods), as their major preoccupation is farming and at evenings may be too tired to listen and effectively comprehend the message one brings.

HIV/AIDS is not only a health problem, but a development problem. The social economic impact of HIV/AIDS is felt more by the rural people than urban dwellers because rural people do not have easy access to resources. Unlike other diseases and sickness, whose impacts remain localized in the individual, the shock created by HIV/AIDS is related to the pervasiveness of its impact on the whole community. However rural communities can also play an important role in reducing the impact that HIV/AIDS may have on the community. By promoting alternative income generating activities among rural people, corpors believe it may reduce the need for the youth population to migrate or reside temporarily in high risk urban areas, Improving the communication between parents and children and between couples will surely increase knowledge and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Brain Storming Session

This section is meant to tease the knowledge of readers on

HIV/AIDS. And enable them send in their responses on the questions. The questions are:

(Answers to last edition: Q1: B; Q2: A; Q3: B; Q4: C; Q5: A)

1. What does STIs stand for?

- a) Sexually Transmitted Infections
- b) Sexually Transferred Injections
- c) Sexually Treated Infections

2. HIV/AIDS can be caused by the following except

- a) Sharing of food and clothes with people
- b) Having multiple sex partners
- c) Using unsterilized sharp objects

3. Most diseases that are spread by having sex go away without taking medicine.

- a) True
- b) False

4. Mention three modes of HIV transmission

5. Two major things that discourage people living with HIV/AIDS to disclose their HIV-status are:

- a. Stigmatization and Discrimination
- b. Love and Care
- c. Love and Discrimination

(We sincerely apologize for our inability to reach out to persons who sent in their answers, it was due to eventualities beyond our control, all necessary amendments have been made so you can send in your answers now).

Answers to these questions should be sent to the following numbers:
08052077759, 08037274397 and 08131047555.