

Community-Based Outreach through ‘STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS’ Social Campaign: What Have We Learned?

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Abstract

The concept of strengthening community action within the context of HIV prevention and awareness is often met with infamy even though the idea of HIV/AIDS is well noted. Community participation and engagement with this subject matter is not well achieved due to anxiety and stigma that is associated with HIV/AIDS patients, carriers or the caretakers. Assuming this, a social campaign under the umbrella of community-based outreach, consisting of a comprehensive program has been lined up to cater to the local community of Penang to tackle the prevention issues and build more awareness. The program outlined is aimed to realign the understanding and create awareness among the community so that issues, stigma and discrimination towards HIV/AIDS patients as well as people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) can be reduced significantly to ensure sustainable and harmonious living in the society. Preliminary research was done to identify factors that have put the community in high anxiety and stigma. Through this insight, a three month community-based outreach social campaign was executed carrying activities such as forum, health expo, HIV/AIDS screening, red-ribbon run, exhibition, visitation and sharing session with HIV/AIDS patient. This community-based outreach social campaign has managed to pull in a number of partnership and collaborators namely Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC), Pusat Sejahtera USM, and AIESEC Malaysia. Also, sponsorship (cash and kind) received from FWC, LivYoung Lifestyle Sdn. Bhd., Hovid Berhad, G Hotel, Flamingo Hotel, and Underwater World Langkawi. This paper presented the detail of the community-based outreach program that was named STOP.THINK.TEST that is targeted to the USM students, staff and local community of Penang, so that through this campaign, it is expected some degree of social change in behavior and acceptance can be altered significantly.

Keywords: *Community-based outreach, HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness, People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), stigmatization*

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Introduction

HIV/AIDS is one of the fastest growing epidemics in the East Asia and Pacific region. Malaysia especially, since the first detected case of HIV/AIDS in 1986, it is noted that until 2010 there are about 91,362 cases have been recorded consisting of men, women and children, with 12,943 having died due to HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2010). Even so, according to UNICEF in 2010 alone, new HIV/AIDS infections were reported to be at 3,652, with HIV/AIDS related deaths charted 904 cases. The average daily new infections in 2010 were reported to be one case in 10 days. Malaysia's HIV/AIDS epidemic was initially dominated by injecting/syringe drug use, but now the increasing number of cases is contributed by other factors as well for instance heterosexual intercourse. Data from UNICEF (2010) explained a dramatic increase by 27% reported cases due to heterosexual transmission in one year interval. The increasing number of housewives tested with HIV-positive to compare to sex workers by 4% in 1995, 12% in 2005 and 18% in 2010. According to Ministry of Health, the ratio between sex worker and housewives that has been detected HIV-positive is 1:13. Not only that, young population of Malaysia also remain vulnerable to HIV where it is reported 1 in 4 new cases of HIV in 2010 were between the age of 13 and 29 years old. It is likely that this group of people infected with HIV before the age of 30, probably in twenties or during their teen age. The increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS cases from time to time are due to ongoing stigma, where these groups are exposed to and experience acts of discrimination which lead to ostracisation, exploitation, homelessness and loss of education.

With this most compelling evidence, it is indeed much needed to continuously educate the community with facts on HIV/AIDS about the disease and transmission, giveaway as much information as possible on how to live in a community that comprises of HIV/AIDS patients and PLWHA, create awareness as well as to encourage HIV/AIDS screening for earlier detection. Hence, a social campaign was designed by the final year student of persuasive communication 2014 to promote awareness and educate the community on HIV/AIDS issues. Communication efforts through a social campaign promote and minimize social causes that is, in this case is HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. Creating a campaign involves creative and technical process where areas of Arts and Science come together. Aspects of communication plays the ultimate role in ensuring the social messages can be delivered successfully. The communicative aims of social campaign can be on the one hand to break down and undesired behavior or can be stimulated which is desirable to individual, community or the society in general. A social campaign is a large-scale attempt to communicate ideas and practices through mass media and interpersonal communication. The communication goal to change someone's behavior or attitude could be described as a form of persuasion. Persuasion is defined by Perloff (2003) as a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice.

By far, many local and community health communication campaigns were done. In varsities level for instance, Universiti Malaya has conducted the nationwide survey on HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and risk behavior in 2006 for the Health Education Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia. Based on the results, it is noted that there are significant gaps in community knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission along with some misconceptions (Li Ping Wong, Caroline Kwong Leng Chin, Wah Yun Low and Nasruddin Jaafar, 2008). Another study was conducted in 2013 on medical students from public and private

universities and colleges in Malaysia on their beliefs regarding testing, confidentiality, disclosure, and environment of care and attitudes towards PLWHA. Result indicated that the students were largely positive and non-discriminatory towards giving care to PLHWA (Koh Kwee Choy, The Jae Rene and Saad Ahmed Khan, 2013). Besides that, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) also conducted a research with 23,202 registered students on HIV/AIDS. The research found stigmatization and lack of empathy towards HIV/AIDS patients. Only 19.5% of all the students stated that they will inform their partners or family if diagnosed positive for HIV infection and 43% were willing to care for an HIV infected person in their own house (Rozina Rahnama, Lekhraj Rampal, Munn-Sann Lye, Hejar Abdul Rahman, 2010). All of this research recommended that a peer educational program on HIV/AIDS prevention should be implemented in schools and communication through media would be the best approach to minimize stigmatization, discrimination and lack of empathy on the subject matter.

Community-Based Outreach Social Campaign STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS

In undertaking community-based project under the umbrella of social campaign, engagement is the utmost important element to ensure the objectives of the project met. According to Carnegie Foundation (2010), community engagement is the collaboration made between institution of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources on the context of partnership and reciprocity (in Farish, 2014, p.49). Community engagement involve activities such as networking, advocacy and coalition building to empower communities to influence health, educational, social and economic conditions affecting the lives of community residents. To further understand the key factors that affecting the issues, a preliminary research was conducted as a basis to clarify the stage of awareness the community has so far and the occurring issues pertaining to the subject matter. With the information gathered from the preliminary research, social campaign STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS is then preceded with strategy and planning of activities and initiatives to encourage community-based outreach a success one.

For this, social campaign - STOP.THINK.TEST starts for 3 months, which begin from March to May 2015 with the objectives as below:

- To increase community awareness on prevention and the importance of HIV screening
- To increase empathy between non-HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS carrier/patients.
- To decrease the gap of stigmatization and misperception towards HIV/AIDS patients and the caretaker.

These objectives were expected to be achieved through a series of programs and events in this three months period. This campaign was designed to cultivate the concept of healthy lifestyle as prevention of HIV/AIDS among patients, carrier, caretaker and community. Few activities have been developed that stresses on healthy lifestyle and awareness on prevention, screening and test, and minimize the stigmatization and misperception towards PLHWA. For this 3 months campaign, it emphasizes on cognitive concept. Cognitive concept is used to direct campaign messages towards changing of behavior and belief of the

community. This campaign is described as preventive social campaign by highlighting on awareness. Having said this, the campaign idea was designed using three powerful connotations that explain preventive behavior STOP (stop misbehaving), THINK (think of the consequences of the behavior) and TEST (let's do HIV/AIDS screening as an early prevention).



There are three important elements in the social campaign logo that is: (i) palm, (ii) red ribbon, (iii) word of STOP.THINK.TEST and, (iv) red circle. Each of it represents different meaning:

- i. Palm: 3 overlapping hand palms indicate the encouragement and responsibility to overcome the issue which is the basic for determining the direction of the campaign
- ii. Red Ribbon: The red ribbon inside of the palm is used to show support for the HIV/AIDS movement, which is also a universal symbol of awareness towards this disease.
- iii. STOP.THINK.TEST: This represents the main idea of the campaign, which carry the brand of the social campaign
- iv. Red Circle: Red is the official color for universal symbol of red ribbon which explain the seriousness of this issue.

The slogan of the social campaign is 'Lead the Change', which shows the campaign initiative to invite the community to join campaign good course to fight HIV/AIDS disease, stigmatization and discrimination.

Preliminary Research: HIV/ADIS Context Today

First step in understanding the context of HIV/AIDS today concerning the community before detailing the campaign strategy and planning is by conducting a preliminary research using key informants interview. Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with someone who have knowledge on the subject matters, so that they can provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions. An in-depth interview was done with four key informants that is: (i) Dr. Nurulain Abdullah Bayanuddin, Director of Pusat Sejahtera USM, (ii) Dr. Azlinda Azman, Director of AIDS Action Research Group of USM, (iii) Dr. Chow Ting Soo, professional consultant of infectious diseases of Ambulatory Care Centre (ACC) of Hospital Pulau Pinang and (iv) Dr. Darshan Singh, Research Executive of

Pusat Penyelidikan Dadah dan Ubat-ubatan, USM. Respondents' views were sought based on categories of four main grounds that is on (i) health professional consultants, (ii) health professional management, (iii) HIV/AIDS issues and (iv) other societal issue. All four key informants felt that the increasing trend of reported HIV cases year by year has reached an alarming stage.

Dr. Darshan and Dr. Chow viewed that the general transmission of HIV/AIDS has changed from the sharing of needles / syringes among injecting drug users to sexual transmission between heterosexual and homosexual partners. While it was agreed that the lack of awareness of HIV/AIDS knowledge is the main factor leading to the spread of the virus, it was strongly held that sex education in early juvenile years should be implemented either in public institutions or private organizations. They exerted that the highest exposed risks of HIV/AIDS infected group comes from diverse societal groups – from the guardian or caregiver of people living with HIV to prostitutes and drug addicts. Also, the issue on transgender should not be neglected in determining the causes of HIV/AIDS as they would be assumed to have intercourse between their own genders whom are also in the high risks of being infected with the HIV virus. Dr. Chow also raised her concerns on the unfaithfulness of husbands who involve in unprotected sex with prostitutes or other sexual partners and later transmit the virus to their innocent wife.

Despite that, they note also that many young people in the society today is exposed to the variety of information from the Internet which make them unable to control their desires to have sexual interactions. Dr. Azlinda emphasized the ignorance of the society to educate the younger generations with correct information and knowledge about HIV/AIDS resulted in the increment of 13-29 years old Malaysian being diagnosed as HIV positive. Consequently, Dr. Nurulain expressed her concerned over unreported cases of HIV infection which could actually increase the total number of HIV/AIDS cases throughout Malaysia due to stigmatization issues and the fear of being discriminated by the society and family. Therefore, she urged the importance of HIV screening test should be made available, free of charge, and done confidentially anywhere in Malaysia. It is hoped that people who are with risk of infection can come forward for the screening giving them chance for early treatment that will certainly be benefit the in the long run. The interviewee also believes involvement by religion scholars could also help to educate the community with the do's and the don'ts including the forbidden of sexual engagement before marriage and pre-marital screening among couples might reduce the number of reported cases. Dr. Chow and Dr Darshan further add that latest technological enhancement and development in medical field will ultimately reduce the risks of HIV transmission. However, measures should be taken to correct information and knowledge of HIV/AIDS by series of workshops, forums, talks and counseling sessions to lessen the infection rates in Malaysia.

STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS Social Campaign Strategy

The insight received from the key informant interviews show that community at large still have not fully aware and understand on what HIV/AIDS is in total as one of the disease that can cause death. Considering all the factors, it explains that the interview findings still at some point have the same issues on subject matter as before. Several strategies and

planning that were designed specifically to tackle the concern and issues raised were as follows:

- i. Experiential Learning with PLWHA at Community AIDS Service Penang (CASP)
- ii. Road Tours
- iii. Health Wellness Expo and Forums
- iv. Red Ribbon Run

1. Experiential Learning with PLWHA at Community AIDS Service Penang (CASP)

CASP is established since 1989 and located in Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang. Currently, CASP has 20 PLWHA patients resided in the centre. Besides reconciliation and counseling to the patients and family, CASP also held support sessions and educational programs to other groups, organizations, and public pertaining PLWHA. Due to limited space at CASP shelter home, a small sample size was requested. In order to familiarize with the surroundings of CASP and residents there (i.e. PLWHA), the first visit by 10 committee members to CASP was done on 28th March 2014. The four hours visit (9am to 12pm) were mainly on informative talk by Madam Elizabeth Thomas, the Shelter Manager of CASP to explain in-depth on HIV/AIDS related knowledge and the current scenario, as well as a brief description of CASP and her own experience in dealing with stigma issue. The talk also included a sharing session by one of the PLWHAs resided there, where the person narrated personal experience from being diagnosed as HIV carrier and then now working voluntarily work with CASP. On the later session, the committee members had a one-on-one conversation with PLHWA patient.



[Figure 1: The First Visit to CASP, Bukit Mertajam]

On the second experiential learning visit with PLHWA was held on 25th April and this time 10 students from different courses in USM, 5 committee members, and Matron Azimah Hassan, representative from Pusat Sejahtera USM. The activities were mostly the same as what was done in the first visit, with an addition of bead-bracelet making session and singing and dancing sessions with students and CASP patients, so as to enhance the interaction between the participants and PLHWA. Participants that involved in experiential learning at CASP have gained in-depth knowledge on HIV/AIDS, the correct ways of how HIV/AIDS infection and prevention and information regarding rapid HIV antibody test. It is hoped that the participants would proliferate the knowledge on HIV/AIDS to other members – family and friends and practice 'healthy lifestyle', able to accept, interact, and get along well with PLHWA, and most importantly to minimize negative perceptions or stigma between PLHWA and society.



[Figure 2: The Second visit to CASP, Bukit Mertajam]

2. Road Tours

To promote on the upcoming activities in community health campaign, series of road tours were held from March until May 2014 in USM, 4 colleges and 5 universities in Northern Region. List of Road Tours including, Career Fair at USM Engineering Campus, USM Entrepreneurship Carnival (USMEC), Ekspo Kerjaya dan Pendidikan (EKSPEN) in USM main campus, Inti College, KDU College, Han Chiang College, Wawasan Open University, AIMST University, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah and Universiti Malaysia Perlis. Besides booth set up during the road tours, there were also mini exhibition on HIV/AIDS, health station on free rapid HIV Antibody Test and other health check-up, social media corner, photo booth and 'tree of hope' for visitors to give support to the campaign. Throughout these road tours, there were also mini games and quizzes pertaining HIV/AIDS, registration for Red

Ribbon Run and Red Ribbon Youth Club membership (by MAC). The team also had Flash Mob at Gurney Plaza, Pulau Pinang to gain attention as well as promote the campaign from visitors at the shopping complex.

3. Health Wellness Expo and Forums

The Health Wellness Expo was held on 7-9 May 2014 at Dewan Tunku Syed Putra (DTSP) Foyer, USM. The main objective was to provide knowledge and awareness on HIV/AIDS to varsity community – staff and students. Also, the expo was held to promote on healthy lifestyle as prevention from infection and diseases. This Health Wellness Expo and Forums was the main event for this community health campaign. The launching ceremony was done on 7th May and officiated by YB Dato' Seri Dr Hilmi Bin Haji Yahaya, the Deputy Health Minister. The invited guests came for the ceremony were Prof. Dr Adnan Hussien, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs and Development, USM, Ass. Prof. Dr Jamilah Hj. Ahmad, Dean, School of Communication, USM, Mr Ikmal Hisham Mohd Kamal, Head of Corporate Communication Department, Felda Wellness Corp. Sdn. Bhd., celebrities – Aaron Aziz and Bob Yusof and Dr Ilias Adam Lee from Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC).



[Figure 3:Opening ceremony (L-R), Ms. Angie Cho (Director, HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign 2014), Ms. Lee Wei Yin (representative from Pusat Sejahtera USM), Prof. Madya Dr. Jamilah Haji Ahmad (Dean, School of Communication USM), Mr. Ikmal Hisham Mohd Kamal, Dato' Seri Dr. Hilmi Bin Haji Yahaya, Professor Dr. Adnan Hussein, Dr. Ilias Adam Yee and other representatives from MAC]

Besides expo, there were also an exhibition and activities held at DTSP Foyer consist of health screening from Felda Wellness Corp., Pusat Sejahtera USM, North East District Penang Health, and National Anti-Drug Agency, North East District, Pulau Pinang. Meanwhile, Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) has a booth to promote Red Ribbon Youth Club (RRYC) and also brought three celebrities – Aaron Aziz, Bab Yusof and Owen Yap. The

AIDS Action and Research Group (AARG) USM shared latest materials about HIV growing trends and epidemic in Malaysia and displayed it in the booth. There were also, booths from Advanced Medical and Dental Institute (AMDI) USM, and School of Pharmaceutical Science, USM. Other health products were LivYoung Lifestyle Sdn. Bhd., Wellness Concept and BMS Organics. Also, there was Mutiara.FM booth counter to keep the visitors entertained.



[Figure 4: Representatives from LivYoung promote health products to Deputy Health Minister]

In addition to Health Wellness Expo, this 3-days event also had series of forum. It started with 'Wellmune: Boost Immune via Wellness' by Mr Mohd Redza Abd Rahman from Felda Wellness Corp. at DTSP Foyer. On the same day, a talk on 'Choose2Protect Workshop' with Ms Kristin Yap from Women's Aid Organization (WAO) and Ms Engie Ng from Federation of Reproductive Health Association Malaysia (FRHAM), Pulau Pinang held at Dewan Pembangunan Siswa 1, Kompleks Cahaya (COMCA), USM. On the second day of the event held at COMCA, a forum called 'It's Your Right to Choose' and the panels were Ass. Prof Dato' Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin from School of Humanities, Dr Janizah Abdul Ghani, AIDS/STD unit from Penang Health Department and Dr Azura Abdullah from FRHAM. Then later in the afternoon was a sharing session with MAC Celebrity – Owen Yap and a movie on HIV/AIDS titled, 'Dallas Buyers Club' that had won Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor in 85th Academy Awards (Oscar) Ceremony in year 2013.

On the last day, there was a sharing session from PLHWA. The invited speakers were Mr. Mohammad bin Wahid the President of Malaysian Positive Warriors Association and Mr. Boey, a volunteer from CASP. In this session, they shared their experiences and how they had gone through their life after HIV despite all the discriminations they faced. The last talk held at COMCA was an Islamic Talk on HIV/AIDS by Ustaz Muhd Burhan Zakarian, Pusat Islam USM. Ustaz has shared useful information in Islamic perspective on how to prevent human body from infection and diseases, particularly in HIV/AIDS.



[Figure 5: Sharing with PLHWA with Mr Boey Gan Heng (center) and Mr Mohamad Wahid]

4. Red Ribbon Run

In conjunction with International AIDS Memorial Day, a Red Ribbon Run was held on 18th May 2014 in USM Main Campus, Penang. This Run was mainly sponsored by Felda Wellness Corp. and LivYoung Lifestyle Sdn. Bhd. The 3.5km run was held in USM main campus that started and ended at Padang Kawad USM. Dr Juliana Abd. Wahab, Deputy Dean, Student Affairs and Networking, School of Communication flaged-off the ceremony and witnessed by Dr Nurulain Abdullah Bayanuddin, Director, Pusat Sejahtera USM. More than 500 participants registered this charity run with the payment of RM10 and RM3 were donated to CASP. Participants not only had gotten free T-shirt but also goodies bag and certificate of participation. Prizes in terms of cash, trophies and hampers were given to the winners in both men and women's category. Prof. Dr Adnan Hussien gave the winning prizes for men, meanwhile Dr Juliana Abd. Wahab gave winning prizes for women's category. There was also lucky draw session held after the winning prizes.



[Figure 6: Participants at Red Ribbon Run, USM]

STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS Social Campaign Outcomes

As noted, the ultimate aim of this campaign was to increase community awareness of HIV and the importance of HIV/AIDS screening. On top of that, the campaign also promotes healthy lifestyle as prevention of HIV/AIDS among students, patients and community. The Health Wellness Expo and Forum held became the workable mechanism to reach and invite the community to be involved and have the knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Most importantly, this community health campaign also wanted to educate the community regarding the empathy between non-HIV/AIDS and not the neglect PLHWA.

On the outcome of Health Wellness Expo launching, 16 media reporters from newspaper, radio and television attended. With the presence of honourable guests in Opening Ceremony that were YB Dato' Seri Hilmi bin Yahaya, Deputy Health Minister; Professor Dr. Adnan Hussein, Deputy Vice Chancellor of USM (Students Affairs and Development), Mr. Ikmal Hisham Mohd Kamal, FWC Sdn Bhd; representatives from MAC and celebrities Aaron Aziz and Bob Yusof, there were overwhelm news coverage. News from RTM1 and RTM2 (in the national news slots), and news print – 5 Chinese papers (China Press, Guang Ming Daily, Sin Chew Daily, Nanyang Siang Pau and Kwang Wah Yit Poh), 4 Malays (Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian, Harian Metro and Kosmo), 3 English (The Sun, 2 news in The Star), 2 online news (ISMA Web TV and Bernama), Berita Kampus, USM, and also USM news portal.

Free HIV screening test was available throughout the duration of Health Wellness Expo, Red Ribbon Run and Road tours. Since then, only 65 people voluntary did HIV screening test. This serves as the good sign especially for students' awareness on prevention and the importance of HIV screening. A post-campaign evaluation also was done on understanding of knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) on 346 respondents. Results shows, 74% of the respondents would able to identify the differences of HIV/AIDS, ABC approaches and know places that offer HIV screening test. Throughout the 3-days forum, there were 80% of

attendees attended and Choose2Protect talk was the most popular with 150 attendees (98%). 76% of the participant were wished that they could participate in this kind of activities more often in USM campus to raise more HIV/AIDS awareness among USM and communities nearby. In addition, in the community health campaign, 10 participants and 14 committee members (students) that were involved in experiential learning at CASP had gained in-depth knowledge on HIV/AIDS – infection, prevention and rapid HIV antibody test. They also had a chance to participate in the activities scheduled and interact with PLHWA patients. Hence, this experiential learning would give the reminiscence to the participants and it was hoped this kind of exposure would helped to minimize negative perceptions or stigma between PLHWA and society.

On the Red Ribbon Run, 491 participants turned up on the event, eventhough more than 500 participants had registered earlier. Participants were mainly from USM students, parents, students from colleges – INTI, KDU, and Han Chiang College and public. From this charity run, the organizer managed to collect RM1500 and this fund was donated to Community AIDS Service Penang (CASP), Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang. The mock cheque was given by Prof. Dato' Dr See Shing Mey, Deputy Vice Canselor, Division of Industry and Community Network to Mr Boey Gan Heng, representative from CASP at Communication Night at Bayview Hotel, Georgetown.



[Figure 7: Mock Cheque to CASP (L-R), Dr Nor Hazlina Hashim (the Advisor, HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign), Mr Boey Gan Heng (CASP representative), Prof. Dato' Dr See Shing Mey (Deputy Vice Canselor, Division of Industry and Community Network), and Prof. Madya Dr. Jamilah Haji Ahmad (Dean, School of Communication USM)]

Seeing is a Learned Behaviour

The success of community-based outreach program STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS is dependent upon good campaign communication strategy as well as involvement from the

community itself. This campaign has been a successful one as it has mobilized the resources and promotes strong awareness through activities and communication medium. It has also been strongly supported by the Ministry of Health, management of USM and the general public. From this community-based outreach program to promote awareness on HIV/AIDS as well as to give as much information as can to ensure that stigmatization towards PLWHA can be reduced. It is learned that through community engagement fear and expectations of HIV/AIDS and PLWHA is reduced in its capacity to change community perception towards subject matter. Community responsiveness in STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS campaign promise integration, coordination and sustainability for future program. By increasing awareness and lessening stigmatization, the quality of life of PLWHA, HIV/AIDS patient as well as the community to live, work and study in a positive living environment, hence contribute to the positive actions and outcomes through cooperative-based learning, partnership and collaboration. Community is learned to be affective and consciously showing positive reaction to the entire social campaign program and messages.

Contributing Factors to the Success of the Campaign

Several contributing factor should be dedicated to in ensuring the success of the campaign. It has been identified four key factors that contribute to the success of this community-based outreach programme, that are: (i) STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS Project Members, (ii) Institutional Support, (iii) Collaborators and Partnership, and (iv) Sponsorship, funding and donations.

The team behind the entire success of this programme lays in the hand of the project members that were the final year persuasive communication student year 2014. They project was instructed and monitored by lecturers from School of Communication, USM. Both parties between the students and lecturers were dedicated and willing to push extra miles towards achieving the common goals of the social campaign. Also, Community-based outreach programme basically cannot be a success, if there is not enough support by the institution and other members of the society.

This social campaign received full support from Community AIDS Service Penang (CASP), Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang and Pertubuhan Positive Warriors Malaysia (PPWM). Besides that, the campaign also obtained collaboration and partnership with several important associations and companies, especially from Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC), Pusat Sejahtera USM, and AIESEC Malaysia. Sponsorship is vital in ensuring the social campaign runs smoothly. Sponsorship, funding and donation (cash and kind) received from Universiti Sains Malaysia, business and corporate institutions such as Felda Wellness Corp. Shd. Bhd., LivYoung Lifestyle Sdn. Bhd., Division of Industry and Community Network (BJIM, USM), Dutch Lady, Sunquick, Khaleel, Cap Keluarga, Hydro Hotel, Flamingo Hotel, G-Hotel, B-Suite, Georgetown City Hotel, Fulian (M) Sdn Bhd, Hovid Pharmacy, Hi-Shop Malaysia dan Underwater World Langkawi. As such, this community-based outreach social campaign realized that establishing long term working relationship with business and corporate organization is vital in sustaining and carrying out long term charity programs. This program has gone extra length to procure sponsorships, funding and donation from business and corporate organizations which do not expect anything in return.

Challenges

The team encountered some challenges during the planning and implementation of this community-based outreach campaign. The big challenge faced by the team was ensuring the programmes and activities achieved with minimal errors, considering eighteen head counts of final year students that were practically applying what they have learnt during their undergraduate years. Communication is vital for the team to integrate and materialized particularly on the sponsors and collaborators. Some of the members were lack of confidence and communication skills in dealing with the sponsors and also the vendors during the expo.

Besides that, the team also faced on the timeline issues especially on mapping the VIPs schedule with the venue, and protocols. There were also some logistic matters occurred during the expo and Red Ribbon Run when dealing with vendors and USM Security Department. While promoting the events by having a few road shows or road tours at private universities and colleges, despite the strategic location set-up and participations, the team also faced inappropriate time schedule as some of the colleges had final semester exams.

Improvement

Effective and strategic plans must be formulated to ensure continuous support for long term programmes. Hence, there are few strategies that should be taken for consideration. Firstly, volunteerism especially from USM students and staff should have continuous community-based outreach programmes to create awareness. Through these community programmes would invite more participation from the public, which will increase generate more public awareness. Besides that, collaboration and support among USM clubs, associations, and society with Pusat Sejahtera, Penang Health Department, and FRHAM by scheduling continuous programmes on HIV/AIDS awareness will build up a caring society and minimize the stigma towards HIV/AIDS patients and PLHWA. In ensuring its sustainability, the existence and progression of these programmes will essentially enhance the public awareness.

The involvement from corporate or private institutions, government bodies, and other non-governmental organizations (NGO) support are needed. This is not only in giving monetary contribution, expertise or goods but also considering long term activities as part as the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Future programmes should also instill PLHWA with appropriate training skills and knowledge in helping them to improve their lives. As normal human being, it is hoped that PLHWA are able to be self-empowered to support their daily lives and medical expenses independently.

Conclusion

University-community engagement is a critical process responsive to the needs of the community. Based on the community-based outreach programme under STOP.THINK.TEST HIV/AIDS campaign, optimal results were achieved through strategic campaign planning, establishing partnerships and empowering communities. The extent to which community-based outreach to HIV/AIDS awareness starts and sustains a process will slowly resulting in

reduced risk behavior that in turns lead to a reduction of stigmatization and discrimination is the effectiveness of outreach in HIV/AIDS prevention in the community.

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