

HAMSAFAR

Potential of Entertainment in Attitude Change towards HIV/AIDS

IMPACT

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RNP+

RNP+ is of, for and by of people living with HIV/AIDS. RNP+ is a state level community based organization registered under society registration act. RNP+ puts in effort to improve the quality of life of PLWHA and has achieved positive experiences within Rajasthan. Much has changed since RNP+ began its work almost 8 Years ago. RNP+ has made real progress towards halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and protect and promote the rights of PLWHA. RNP+ has membership strength of more 14,000 HIV positive people across the state, linked through 30 districts Level PLWHA and the PMA (Positive Mothers Association). RNP+ has diversified interest of activities in prevention, care & support of people living with HIV in Rajasthan. Apart from these, RNP+ is making efforts to protect the rights of PLWHA and thus represent them at various levels.

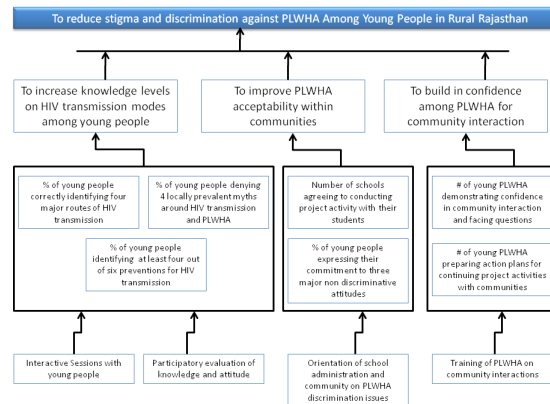
Hamsafar

Hamsafar is an entertainment based project aimed at raising awareness against stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. The pilot was supported by UNDP and implemented in partnership with Rajasthan SACS and Department of Education in 50 rural schools of Rajasthan by the teams constituting HIV positive and non positive young people.

The 2 hour entertainment workshop consisted of teaching dance to school children to the tunes of specially created song, testimony by HIV positive young people, imparting knowledge and resolving quarries with regards to modes of transmission, myths and misconceptions and stigma/ discrimination against people living with HIV. The teams implemented the project between July and September 2009 in Jaipur and Sri Ganganagar districts reaching out to more than 12,000 school children and school administration.



Project Evaluation: Methodology



Evaluation was in built component for the project at the conception stage. The project used pre post methodology to assess the project impact. A simple self administered questionnaire was developed that was implemented on 50 students in each of the school where the workshops were conducted. Randomly selected 50 students were given the questionnaire before the workshop and another set of 50 randomly selected students were given the same questionnaire after the workshop. Follow up visits were conducted 2 months after the workshop and the same questionnaire was administered again to randomly selected 50 students to assess the retention levels. During this follow up, 12 control schools (where no workshops were conducted) were also visited and the same questionnaire was administered on 50 students from each school. The data from target and control schools is compared to assess the project impact and these results are presented in this paper.

Sample Size

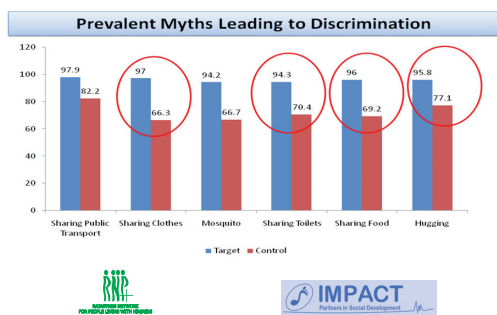
The existing evaluation is based on the information from 1481 students from target schools in Jaipur and 915 students from target schools in Sri Ganganagar, bringing the aggregate to 2396 students from target schools, contacted during the follow up, 2 months after the workshops. Another 597 students from 12 control schools are also included in this sample size and used for comparison with the target schools.



Project Achievements

Since the project was aimed at reducing the discrimination against people, particularly children, living with HIV, the results are presented here to conclude on the change in knowledge and attitude of children towards people living with HIV. The results are broadly divided into four main categories discussed below.

Positive Change in Knowledge



Total of 10 questions were included in the section to assess the knowledge which included four questions on modes of transmission and six questions on myths.

Each correct answer was given value "1" and incorrect answer was given value "0". The scores were statistically reliable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.77). The average knowledge score in target group was 9.6 (Stn Dev 1.09) and that of control was 7.49 (Stn Dev 2.14). The difference between the two was highly statistically significant ($z=23.3$; $p<.001$). Of the four questions on four routes of transmission the correct knowledge score among target group was 3.83 (Stn Dev 0.48) and that of control group was 3.17 (Stn Dev 0.93). The difference was again statistically significant ($z=16.8$; $p<.001$). On the six questions of myths, the knowledge score in target groups was 5.76 (Stn Dev 0.69) and of control group was 4.32 (Stn Dev 1.76). This difference was also statistically significant ($z=19.6$; $p<.001$). Myths where the difference in knowledge between target and control was more than 30 percentage points included HIV is spread through sharing of clothes, toilets, food and hugging a person living with HIV.

Change in Attitude on Discrimination

The questionnaire included 5 specific questions to assess the attitude of young students towards persons living with HIV. These included their opinions about whether people living with HIV should be moved away from the village/home; encouraged to attend school; advise to rest; engage in social functions and advise to protect from infection. The target group had an average score of 4.52 (Stn Dev 0.9) and the control group had a mean score of 3.67 (Stn Dev 1.04). Each of these questions had a difference of at least 20 percentage points between target and control groups.

Acceptance of Children Living with HIV in Schools

The questionnaire included 4 specific questions to assess if children living with HIV have acceptance in schools and the analysis of control group depicts that the acceptance is 75 percent or less. This was however 94 percent or above among target groups. The average score for target group for four questions was 3.82 (Stn Dev 0.67) and of control group was 2.9 (Stn Dev 1.54). It is crucial to note that only 65 percent children in control group stated that they would not mind sharing food with a child living with HIV.

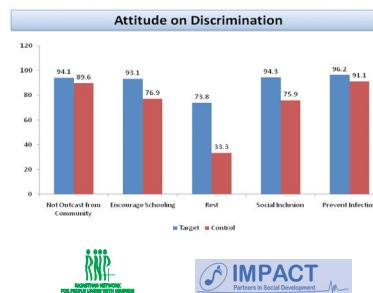
Continued Sharing of Information

The most interesting aspect of this project was second level of dissemination of information by the target groups. Since the project intervention was entertainment based, not only that the students enjoyed engaging in the process, they willingly shared the information with their friends, parents and others. Nearly 95% of the students who attended this workshop stated that they shared the information regarding the workshop, modes of transmission and attitude towards people living with HIV with someone; the largest group being peers and friends.

Conclusions

The first major conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of this information is about the low level of knowledge and positive attitude on HIV/AIDS among school children in the state of Rajasthan. As represented by the control group analysis, the knowledge gap is in the range of 25 to 40 percent. The prevalence of myths (sharing of clothes, food and toilet) is particularly higher which directly contributing to stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.

The second conclusion that this analysis aims to draw is on the efficacy of an entertainment based intervention in impacting on knowledge and attitude on broad issues like HIV transmission and myths. The data has adequate indications to prove that



entertainment can be an effective medium to transmit knowledge on broad aspects like modes of transmission and myths on HIV/AIDS. The follow up data also demonstrate the retention of knowledge nearly two months after the interactive session

and thus it is expected that the attitude change brought about by the workshop will have sustained effect on the minds of these children. Though the direct targets are students, it has a strong secondary target including teachers, school administration, parents and peers.