



Youth combat HIV & AIDS

Dear readers, it has been a while since we last communicated but Youth Visioning is alive and well. Through the funds provided by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) for 2008-2009, Youth Visioning has been providing support to the following ten projects:

Caribbean Region

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Take Care of My Life, Take Care of Your Life

GRENADA

Project Early - Puppet Television Show

HAITI

Public Awareness on HIV and AIDS Through Theatre

Indian Ocean Region

MADAGASCAR

Public Awareness Campaign on HIV and AIDS Through Sports

ZANZIBAR

Empowering Youth and Communities to Respond to HIV and AIDS

Pacific Region

FIJI

HIV & AIDS and Life Skills Training Workshops

FIJI Rotuma

HIV and AIDS Awareness

NAURU

HIV and AIDS during the AFL (Australian Football League) season

SAMOA

Talking HIV and AIDS to Youth!

TONGA

Clipping HIV and AIDS through film



© Vester Fido. Talking HIV and AIDS to Youth, Samoa.

Youth Visioning would like to thank UNESCO's Apia, Dar-es-Salaam, Havana and Kingston Offices, as well as EDUCAIDS - the UNESCO Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS for making these projects possible. And last, but not least, we thank all the young people who organized projects. Read through this newsletter to find out more about some of these great projects!

For further information please visit www.youthvisioning.org. We welcome any feedback or questions you may have. You can reach us by emailing: k.ikhlef@unesco.org.

SIDS and HIV & AIDS

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are highly vulnerable to the devastating economic and social impacts of HIV and AIDS due to the limited resources they have available to combat the pandemic. Youth, and young girls in particular, are among the most affected. 50% of new HIV infections are among persons between the ages of 15 and 25.

The behaviour of this key age group greatly influences the future of the epidemic, and for this reason, efforts are largely focused on this important demographic. Building a strong community of young champions and leaders is critical for an effective response to HIV and AIDS.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) plays a leading role in the UN system in HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention through education.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

I Take Care of My Life, I Take Care of Your Life



© ASOLSIDA

The **Alianza Solidaria Para La Lucha Contra El VIH/SIDA (ASOLSIDA)** in the Dominican Republic was formed by a group of youth leaders trained in the issues of HIV and AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, public health policies and labor. The work of the association has a special emphasis on training young people in technical theatre for the dissemination of information in a didactic, entertaining and effective manner across the country.

With the support of UNESCO, the project "I take care of my life, I take care of your life" was carried out over a period of 9 months in 2009. The goal of the project was to increase the knowledge and awareness of adolescents and young people (13-24 years of age) on HIV prevention, risk, vulnerability and sexual responsibility.

To do so, the group collectively developed theatre scripts which identified forms of stigma and discrimination on HIV and AIDS

and myths and misconceptions.

The theatrical pieces were performed in 10 schools in different neighborhoods as well as in community centers and hospices. Each show involved a survey to identify how informed the audience was on HIV and AIDS. This survey was carried out before and after each performance to evaluate their success. At the end of each performance, the audience also had the opportunity to interact with the educators in order to clarify and emphasize the themes represented in the plays.

The project was a success and proved to strengthen the knowledge and skills of young people relating to HIV and AIDS, risk and prevention. They were encouraged to discuss the issue of HIV and AIDS openly with their peers.

ASOLVIDA intends to share the results of this project with other organizations in the region in order to promote their successful model.



© ASOLSIDA

YOUTH SAID IT !

"Sex and HIV are topics that are surrounded by great taboos in our country and are rarely treated openly by parents or teachers... We wanted to break down these barriers!"

Dahina Delgado, project leader



GRENADA

Project Early - Puppet Television Show



© Amanda John (first from left). Group photo of participants working on the Champs Club TV show.

Brain Storm Productions in Grenada, Southern Caribbean obtained funding from UNESCO in order to assist them with a four month pilot project to produce a television programme called "the Champs Club" on HIV and AIDS education, prevention and stigma reduction for children and young people aged 6 to 21. The project was carried out in collaboration with Angel Mountain Limited.

During the research phase, the association found out that, in Grenada, the most vulnerable population on the island is the 15 to 25 year old age group but that the age of sexual initiation can begin as early as 9 years old. There is still, however, great taboo in talking about sex and HIV.

Thirteen 25 minute-long episodes were filmed, edited and produced, incorporating learning about the disease through song, art & craft, puppets and games. Messages about HIV and AIDS were broken down into simple language that not only adults would appreciate but also that kids could understand.

The main objectives of the project were:

- To disseminate basic HIV and AIDS education to children in school, teachers, support staff and parents;
- To provide an increased awareness of prevention and safety of HIV and AIDS;
- To attempt to reduce the stigma of HIV and AIDS especially among children and young people aged 6 to 21.

As a result of the activities of the Champs Club, between February and July 2009, the project engaged over 30 participants in the show. They were mostly children between 4 and 12 years of age who were educated on the basics of HIV and AIDS. A questionnaire for participants showed that knowledge about HIV and AIDS improved.

Reports from viewers have been tremendously positive and in the near future, Brain Storm hopes to expand the Champs Club on a regional level. The regional broadcaster Caribvision has expressed interest in the series.



© Amanda John

YOUTH SAID IT !

"It has been an amazingly challenging 8 months to achieve the ambitious task of producing 13 kids' shows on HIV and AIDS. However, it has been a most rewarding experience and it was truly heartening to see everyone pull together and make it come true."

Amanda John, project leader



HAITI

Public Awareness on HIV and AIDS through Theatre



© CASAH Performance rehearsals

The **Collectif des Artistes du Septième Art Haitien (CASAH)** is an association made up of young artists that develops cultural events aimed at youth using theatre, dance and fashion. The association works alongside production company Yara Production. Their objective is to contribute to the development of young Haitian adolescents through educational activities.

CASAH worked with UNESCO on its HIV and AIDS project in 2009.

The main objectives of the project were to raise public awareness of the fight against HIV and AIDS-related discrimination; to talk openly about HIV and AIDS; to dispel common myths and misconceptions and to empower young people through informing them about transmission and protection.

The activities were oriented towards schools, especially since there is no formal sex education in Haiti. Theatre, fashion, dance and other entertainment shows were written and performed by the "collectif" in over 30 different schools in the Carrefour area. These included people directly affected by HIV and AIDS.

In order to evaluate the success of the project, a survey was carried out both before and after each show to assess the level of improvement in the audience's knowledge on HIV and AIDS. Moreover, the audience was encouraged to create their own short theatre pieces on HIV and AIDS following each performance. This evaluation showed that awareness had improved.

At the end of the project, the "collectif" produced a DVD documentary of their productions which was distributed to other schools which had not had the chance to participate in the project.



© Ovmearthe Jean

YOUTH SAID IT !

"Our youth organisation is very active in our community and we have attended several youth meetings across the country. We began to realise the magnitude of the problem relating to HIV and AIDS in Haiti and so we decided to carry out a project to improve public awareness on this issue."

Ovmearthe Jean, project leader



MADAGASCAR

Public Awareness Campaign on HIV & AIDS through Sports



© Claudia Zamany (third from left). Association VITASOA at the launch of the project.

The **VITASOA** Association, based in Majunga, Madagascar, is a non-profit youth association with the objective of solving problems related to the lives of young people, women and children. The association, led by its president; Claudia Zamany Nirisoa, a medical student, has been running since 2006.

Thanks to funding provided by UNESCO's Youth Visioning for Island Living initiative, VITASOA undertook a project to fight against HIV and AIDS in the city of Majunga.

The project "Public Awareness Campaign on HIV and AIDS through Sports" began with a preparation phase involving a survey evaluating the level of HIV and AIDS awareness amongst young people in 10 different districts.

The implementation phase consisted of two sports tournaments: football for the males and basketball for the females.

During these sporting events, 300 books were distributed and over 1000 flyers and brochures. They were also accompanied by sound effects, posters and banners in order to promote HIV and AIDS awareness to the participants and the wider public.

After the tournaments, the final phase of the project was to evaluate the impact of the events. To do so, the association carried out the same survey as used in the preparation phase to assess levels of awareness. Results showed a 28% improvement in the HIV and AIDS awareness of young people in the 10 districts.

In the future, the association hopes to carry out similar sporting events involving all districts of the city of Majunga.



© Claudia Zamany Nirisoa

YOUTH SAID IT !

"We learnt a lot from this project because it was the first time that we had organized a public awareness campaign on HIV and AIDS through sports... We learnt different strategies in order to persuade young people to change their attitude in the face of the dangers of HIV and AIDS."

Claudia Zamany Nirisoa, chef de projet



ZANZIBAR

Empowering Youth and Communities to respond to HIV & AIDS



© YOSEFO drama show

The **Youth Self-Employment Foundation (YOSEFO)**, located in Zanzibar, launched their project aimed at empowering youth and communities to respond to HIV and AIDS in six Shehia of the Western district of Unguja island in March 2009 for a period of 9 months. The project was implemented in collaboration with Shehia AIDS Coordinating Committees and the Zanzibar Aids Commission.

The main objective of the project was to increase HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention skills. The programme targeted young fishermen and women in particular in order to reduce new cases of infection, notably during fishing camps.

After a preparation phase involving the development of drama scripts and communicative material, a variety of different activities were implemented including:

- Conducting drama shows
- Transmitting radio programmes

- Producing communicative material such as brochures, newsletters and t-shirts
- Conducting debate and dialogue sessions

The activities allowed for both youth and adults to raise their voices on the risky situation in fishing camps. The drama shows were attended by 76 youth fishermen and over 780 members of the general public. Debates involved 8 youths per Shehia and the dialogues, 20 per Shehia. Media, which included radio and newsletters, reached an estimated audience of up to 12,000 people.

As a result, the youth population in the Western district of Unguja improved their knowledge of HIV and AIDS and acquired various skills on how to protect themselves. In the future, the foundation hopes to carry out research on the factors fuelling HIV infection in Zanzibar; continue its activities promoting awareness and make testing services more available to the community.



YOUTH SAID IT !

"We are peer educators from YOSEFO. Ten of us were trained to inform other young people on HIV prevention."

"The motion in all the debates was '*dago huchangia maambukizi ya ukimwi*' (fishing camps contribute considerably to HIV infection)."



© Harith Abdulla Mohammed (left), Alama Haji Khatib (right)



FIJI

HIV & AIDS and Life Skills Training Workshops



© Organising committee members.

The **Dakuivuna Youth Group** in the Wainibuka district of Fiji decided to run a 2 day workshop for young people focusing on HIV & AIDS and life skills on the 6th and 7th March 2009, coinciding with National Youth Day. The project was a follow-up to a similar capacity building session that took place in 2008. This time, the focus of the workshop was on youth and reproductive health and it was open to Dakuivuna village as well as 4 other villages in the district.

The group decided to carry out this project due to the increasing numbers of reported HIV and AIDS cases as well as unintended teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections in Fiji and the fact that youth are the most vulnerable to these issues. They felt there was a need to take capacity building and information-sharing opportunities to the grass-roots level for young people so that they are educated and equipped with the right information about their reproductive health and issues on treatment, testing and protection.

The 2 day workshop involved group activities, presentation, the distribution of relevant material and forums to discuss openly HIV and AIDS related issues as well as to dispel common myths and misconceptions.

As a result, the young people who took part were empowered with knowledge and skills that will help them make informed decisions and choices pertaining to their reproductive health, personal development and welfare and well being.

The Dakuivuna Youth Group liaised with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in order to send some of their youth participants as volunteers to the Pacific Youth Festival that took place later in 2009 and to enroll 3 people in the "Training of Trainers" for the Life Skills and Peer Education Programme. The group is also continuing its efforts to involve young people in rural communities into youth development programmes.



© Luisa Senibulu

YOUTH SAID IT !

"For many participants it was their first experience sitting and discussing reproductive health issues with the opposite sex, something which is regarded as 'taboo' in Fijian culture."

Luisa Senibulu, project coordinator



YOUTH VISIONING for Island Living



Emily Akata Erasito is from Rotuma, one of the most remote of the Fijian islands. She is the Rotuma Youth Representative for the Provincial Youth Forum of the Fiji Islands and a member of the National Youth Advisory Board.

With UNESCO's help and financial assistance, she set up a project on HIV and AIDS awareness for the whole of Rotuma Island. There have been rumours that HIV and AIDS have reached the island in the past couple of years. However, in a place as isolated as Rotuma, sex is still a taboo subject.

The aim of Emily's project was to inform and enlighten the inhabitants of Rotuma about the facts and realities of HIV and AIDS and to dispel any common myths and misconceptions.

She hoped to increase public awareness and to improve the quality of life for people living with or affected by HIV or AIDS.

Presentations, workshops, school visits, teacher training and community outreach took place over a period of 4 months. Four primary schools, the only high school on the island as well as all of the island's communities were visited. The activities were carried out in Rotuman vernacular in order to be accessible to all.

Emily's project was successful in increasing public awareness of HIV and AIDS in Rotuma. She is now working as a peer educator for the Ministry of Health.



© Emily Erasito

YOUTH SAID IT !

"This was an opportunity to bring awareness to Rotuma, not only to youth but to everyone in the community since HIV and AIDS can affect anyone and everyone regardless of age, ethnicity, culture or status. No-one can say that HIV and AIDS are not in his or her backyard!"

Emily Erasito



NAURU

HIV & AIDS Awareness during the AFL (Australian Football League) season



© NAFL football team

The **Nauru National Youth Council (NNYC)** obtained funding from UNESCO in order to carry out its HIV and AIDS awareness project over the course of two Australian Football League (AFL) seasons.

Through football, community outreach and other youth events, the NNYC aimed to raise awareness and inform people on HIV and AIDS as well as on other STIs, teenage pregnancy, family planning and testing. They also aimed to draw attention to the realities of HIV and AIDS among the public and higher authorities as well as to promote the HIV/AIDS/STI information centre and the Reproductive Health Clinic for testing and protection. NNYC had the support of the Ministries of Sports, Health and Justice, the Nauru Australian Football League and other youth groups.

During the football seasons, the association had a tent at each match that was placed in between the players' tents creating an ideal spot to ensure that the players could get access to the material on display.

Not only did they cover all the football clubs (total of 6 with 22-25 players) but they also attended to the different crowds at each match.

Other activities outside the AFL arena included:

- The "Promoting Healthy Living and Lifestyles" campaign on National Youth Day
- Forums to discuss HIV, AIDS and STIs in relation to violence against women on White Ribbon Day
- A number of events for World AIDS Day

Altogether, the NNYC was very satisfied with the results of its project. The Reproductive Health Clinic has provided positive feedback and has noted a rise in the number of young people getting tested.

In the future, the association hopes to focus on school outreach activities to coincide with the newly introduced sex education curriculum in Nauru as well as to continue using sports as a tool to raise awareness on HIV, AIDS and STIs.



YOUTH SAID IT !

"Convincing most of the older leaders that this project was important was the most difficult out of all the project tasks. The idea of promoting HIV awareness, something Nauru cannot relate to, due to the fact that Nauru is, at present, still HIV free, was almost absurd. Why preach about something that didn't exist?"

David Dowiyogo, project leader

© David Dowiyogo (middle), Nerida-Ann Hubert (left), Horasio Cook (right).



SAMOA

Talking HIV and AIDS to Youth!



© From left to right: SAF Material dissemination; SAF outreach with students.

The **Samoa AIDS Foundation (SAF)**, in collaboration with the Samoa Family Health Association and with the funding of UNESCO, developed a project entitled "Talking HIV and AIDS to Youth" aimed at educating young people about HIV and AIDS. Samoa has one of the highest STI rates in the Pacific region as more and more young people are exposed to unprotected sexual activities without access to proper information and services.

The main objectives of this project were:

- To increase young people's knowledge on HIV/AIDS through information,
- To boost the involvement and participation of young people promoting awareness of HIV and AIDS among their peers,
- To advocate for behavior change in young people through underlining the importance of prevention against STIs and HIV,
- To increase public awareness of HIV and AIDS in order to place the issue on the national agenda.

A "peer to peer" strategy was employed to reach young people in schools as well as other youth members of the community.

SAF held monthly outreach sessions at different venues where educative material including pamphlets, brochures, banners and condoms were made available to the public. Strategic locations were also chosen in order to reach out to sex workers, street sellers and prisoners for example.

SAF carried out in-depth interviews with at least 150 young people per month at each designated venue in order to analyse their level of knowledge and their attitude towards HIV and AIDS. From these findings, peer educators were then able to make suggestions and educate based on the individual's level of knowledge and overall attitude towards HIV and AIDS. The findings of these interviews and questionnaires also showed that the level of knowledge of young people on basic information on HIV was improving. Young people were also made more aware of the services available to them at hospitals and clinics.

In the future, SAF intends to seek further funding in order to continue this programme: continuing outreach in public places and targeting specific groups as part of strategic planning in HIV prevention.



YOUTH SAID IT !

"Youth Visioning has given SAF many opportunities not only to develop the capacity of our Peer Educators but also to mobilize the young population in our community to adopt an attitude that will protect them and their loved ones from the spread of STIs and especially HIV."

SAF

© SAF Project coordinators: Vester Fido, Iosia Tiatia, Avau Memea and Ana Fepuleai



TONGA

Clipping HIV and AIDS through film



© On The Spot youth organization

The **On The Spot** youth organization launched a project to produce a series of short film clips for TV that would inform young people in Tonga about HIV and AIDS and dispel common myths, negative perceptions and discrimination relating to the issue. Using the creativity of young people and promoting a more active role for them in combating HIV and AIDS, the organization hoped to draw attention to the reality of HIV and AIDS in their society, underlining the importance of preventative action and installing more trust and confidence in the services available. The clips created were for local television as well as for distribution to other HIV and AIDS awareness promotion groups.

On The Spot first met with different stakeholders and obtained the assistance of several organizations including Netalia Productions, TMN TV2, the National Youth Congress, Tonga Family Health and the Ministry of Training, Employment, Youth and Sports. Auditions then took place followed by

drama and acting workshops to train the young people who would take part in the films. The organization also carried out a pre-film survey in order to help them choose the content for the films as well as to evaluate their success.

Script-writing and filming then took place. A series of short films entitled "Myth Buster", "Get Tested", "Heartbeat" and "Understanding HIV and AIDS" was produced. They were previewed to On The Spot workers and other youth groups and then edited according to the feedback received. The finalized versions were aired on local television twice daily.

45 days after airing had begun, a post-film survey was carried out to evaluate the success of the "Clipping HIV and AIDS through film" project. On The Spot decided to create and distribute at least 15 more DVDs for shops and other youth groups in order to better promote their message. Moreover, they intend to contact local schools in order to organize events during which the DVDs can be aired.



© Ebonie Fifita

YOUTH SAID IT !

"The short films are jam-packed full of information about HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention that the Tongan public has never been exposed to before now... They are an amazing accomplishment."

On The Spot project coordinator