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YOUTH VISIONING FINAL REPORT
Submitted by Brain Storm Productions

PROJECT TITLE:

Project Early.

The production of "The Champs Club," a television program on HIV and AIDS Education, Prevention and Stigma reduction for children.

LEAD ORGANIZATION:

Brain Storm Productions

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

Angel Mountain Limited
The South St. George's Welfare Association
The Ministry of Health
The Ministry of Education
The St. George's University
The National AIDS Directorate
Young Leaders
Grenada Broadcasting Network, Channel 7&11

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Film, edit & produce one series of kids television programs under "**Project Early.**" The programs are on HIV/AIDS education, prevention and stigma reduction for children. The target audience, children ages 4 and up and of course adults.

A total of 13 episodes were produced with duration of about 25 minutes.

In our research work on HIV/AIDS, we found that in Grenada, the most vulnerable population on our island is the 15 to 25 year old age group but the age of sexual initiation begins from as early as 9 years.

The scary statistics encouraged us to talk about HIV/AIDS in our country in a different way, through the medium of a kids television show, which would incorporate learning about the disease through song, art & craft, puppets and games.

The messages about HIV/AIDS could be broken down into simple language that not only adults would appreciate but also that kids could understand.

It is against this background we decided to implement this project and launch the show, which we named, "The Champs Club."

We thought the name was suitable because we wanted all kids to know that they are “champs or champions” and should not be afraid to be heard or to speak up about HIV, which is still very much, a taboo topic in our society.

Our overall objectives were:

1. To use The Champs Club puppet television show to disseminate basic HIV/AIDS education to children in school, teachers, support staff and parents.
2. To provide an increased awareness of prevention and safety of HIV and AIDS.
3. To attempt to reduce the stigma of HIV and AIDS especially among school children between the ages of 6 and 21, by increasing their knowledge about the disease.

ACTIVITIES:

Our activities for this project officially began in February 2009. There were several weekly activities organized by Brain Storm Productions and Angel Mountain Limited. Therefore, below we have presented a summary of the details of our monthly activities and their outcomes.

Month	Activity	Location	General Monthly Outcomes
FEBRUARY <i>UNICID</i> <i>7/09</i>	Held production planning-meetings with primary partners Angel Mountain, volunteers, and technical production crew. Puppeteers were selected from Angel Mountain’s “Boys’ on the Block Project,” and began preparation for their segments.	St. George’s University	By the end of February, the set was complete, the logo designed and all 13 scripts written and approved by lead organizations. A working schedule was emailed to all participants.
	Began designing and painting set and acquiring props.	St. George’s University and Church of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saint	The musicians collaborated to produce the first draft theme song for the show.
	Produced logo for show and production paper work, including release forms for parents and participants to sign.	Brain Storm Productions & St. George’s University	We successfully completed the filming of the Puppets segment and KIDZ TALK segment episodes 1&2.
	Held registration with participants. They were introduced to the puppets and Dr. Marianne gave a presentation on HIV/AIDS and an overview of the objectives of the show.	St. George’s University	During this month, the participants were exposed to the basics of HIV/AIDS. The scriptwriter volunteers did extensive research on HIV/AIDS, and they indicated that they learnt many things they did not know about HIV.
	We also met with some 10 volunteer musicians.	The Paint Shop(workplace of one of the musicians)	Songs about HIV were composed and the musicians also received this information as they were sent all lyrics.

			<p>1. Unavailability of registered kids to be present because of a flu virus at the time; We had to improvise on the set.</p> <p>2. Public holidays resulted in the inability to film.</p> <p>3. We were not able to film many songs with the musicians as planned because of their unavailability.</p> <p>4. Time constraints did not permit the filming of the games and song segments during the allotted weekly hours for filming because a lot of time was spent trying to get the kids to cooperate.</p> <p>Despite the challenges we managed to film almost every weekend. We also began work on the post-production elements i.e. editing the segments.</p>
APRIL	<p>Filming of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Island Clinic – episodes 7 &9, 11 to13 2. Kidz Talk - episodes 10&12 3. Art & Craft –episodes 3 to 7, 9,12,13 4. Songs 	<p>St. George’s University & Brain Storm Productions</p>	<p>April was very productive. At the filming sessions, we touched on many topics through the various segments. For example we explored the ways HIV is transmitted and dispelled the myth about mosquitoes spreading the disease. That segment also explored the attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS and how they really should be treated. The kids also reasoned on making smart choices and the benefits that result.</p> <p>We engaged in many Art & Craft activities with the kids to reinforce the messages delivered in earlier weeks. The participation during this month was good and we got an overall sense that the kids came well prepared and eager to participate.</p> <p>One major challenge that presented itself was the lack of musicians for our song segment. We then</p>

			<p>knew that we had to improvise for the songs and do it without the backing of live musicians and instruments. Our plan B was to utilize digital instrumental tracks for the songs we needed.</p> <p>Another challenge was keeping the production diary up to date. We were so busy with the actual production work that it became difficult to maintain our paper work.</p>
MAY	<p>Filming of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Island clinic - episodes 12&13 2. Kidz Talk – episode 13 3. Art & Craft –episode 1 4. Open room HIV/AIDS Presentation to parents and children 5. Songs 	St. George's University	<p>In May we realized that our project would not meet the deadline we set because there were many outstanding segments to be filmed. Therefore we had to produce a new production schedule and timeline to get us back on track.</p> <p>During this month however, we were able to carry out a survey with participants to gage their learning experience. About 20 people filled out our questionnaire. Our assessment reflected that more than half the participants had a basic understanding of what HIV is, the difference between HIV and AIDS and how it was transmitted.</p> <p>However we found there was still a lot of work to be done regarding the stigma associated with the disease. For example many people adults and children alike, still believed that HIV/AIDS could be spread by touching and in ways other than contact with infected blood.</p> <p>Therefore, Dr. Marianne gave another lecture or presentation to parents and children about HIV/AIDS. This was fairly attended by over 15 people. We were</p>

			<p>expecting at least 30 but for various reasons, they had to cancel.</p> <p>However we were consoled knowing that some who were absent from the first lecture were present for the second and many expressed that they had a better understanding of HIV. This was important because these primary participants were being used to educate others through the national broadcast of the show and had to demonstrate clear knowledge about the disease.</p>
JUNE	<p>Filming of spotlight segments: This segment was designed to feature a different kid in each episode.</p>	Various locations	<p>During June, we focused heavily on completing the filming of spotlight segments with the kids.</p> <p>We met another challenge when the original recording for the Champs Club theme song was lost. This was heartbreaking because all the kids went to a “real” sound studio to have their voices recorded. Therefore Brain Storm Productions had to step in to facilitate the recording of a new theme song sound track.</p> <p>We also began the promotion campaign. We issued releases to the schools of participants informing them about the show and asking for their support in getting the word out to their students.</p>
JULY	<p>Filming of all outstanding Art & Craft activities, games and songs</p>	Various locations	<p>With time running out, we working swiftly to film the remaining segments and this is where we found our creativity peaked.</p> <p>Though we hoped to involve all the kids in games and art & craft activities, we remained limited in the numbers we could record at any one time due simply to the realistic management of the kids. Therefore on average,</p>

			<p>no more than 5 kids at a shoot. After all, kids will be kids.</p> <p>However, depending on the activity, (for example dodge ball) we included a larger number of kids.)</p> <p>This intervention worked as we successfully completed the filming of all segments.</p>
AUGUST	<p>Final post-production work. Promotion included Media releases to radio, TV and newspapers, radio and TV advertisements.</p> <p>TV Talk show appearances on two different channels</p> <p>Champs Club end-of-production Party and award of certificates to participants</p>	<p>Brain Storm Productions, The Grenada Broadcasting Network, GBN, Government Information Service, GIS, Media Workers Association of Grenada, MWAG</p> <p>Parent's house</p>	<p>We began the national promotion campaign for the Champs Club with a press release to all media outlets on the island including newspaper, radio and TV. We negotiated with the Grenada Broadcasting Network, who agreed to partly sponsor our airtime costs for TV and radio advertisements. Radio and TV adverts were played during prime time hours to ensure the capture of the maximum audience. We were hoping that GBN would wave the airtime cost due to the nature of the show, however we were required to pay a reduced airtime cost. Therefore, we solicited support from the National Lotteries Authority to help with associated costs of the broadcast of the show.</p>
SEPTEMBER	Began National Broadcast of Champs Club	The Grenada Broadcasting Network, GBN	<p>The 13-week series of the Champs Club premiered on GBN, channels 7&11 on Wednesday September 2nd, 2009. It is broadcast every Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. and repeated on Sunday's at 3:00 p.m. Radio & TV adverts are continuing until the final week of broadcast.</p>

RESULTS & OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT:

As a result of the activities of the Champs Club, between February to July, 2009 we engaged over 30 participants in the show. They were educated about the basics of HIV/AIDS and used in some way to disseminate information about HIV. Twenty-three (23) of that number were registered kids between the ages of 4 and 12. As indicated by the questionnaire and through discussion, we found that there was

increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The songs especially, helped them to retain basic information and the Art & Craft activities were useful in reinforcing the messages.

The National Broadcast of the Champs Club concludes on November 29th, 2009. Though we were not able to gather scientific data, we live in a relatively small community, with a population just under 100,000. The reports coming back to us have been tremendously positive and we have good reason to believe that many adults are watching the show because we receive calls and emails which tell of the people recognizing the kids and the other participants on the street. We have requested that GBN use its medium on radio and TV to facilitate a national call-in program where we could assess the viewership of the program. Talks with them are continuing and we hope to have an answer by the middle of November.

LESSONS LEARNT:

Setting realistic targets are crucial. We were quite ambitious in our schedule and as a result, there was little room for error. When delays occurred, it drastically affected the production. In the future we need to allow more room for miscellaneous occurrences.

We learnt that we should always have a plan "B." There were many people that volunteered and when needed could not deliver what we needed. This set us back greatly and we had to improvise and be creative to make it work. Without a plan "B," the production could have easily been held up.

Research is essential. Our research volunteers did well to summarize their findings into scripts easy for kids to identify with. However, lack of time did not allow us to have well-screened auditions of participants, especially the primary kids. As we progressed we discovered which kids were easier to work with than others.

Proper casting is necessary, especially when working with kids and a specific production timeline. The kids selected must carry the messages strongly. Generally, we were impressed with the performance by the kids and their overall skills and creativity.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

We hope to take The Champs Club series on HIV/AIDS awareness regional. The regional broadcaster, Caribvision has expressed interest in the series and we are currently in discussion on starting the broadcast in January 2010. Caribvision currently broadcasts on Cable and Direct TV in over 10 Caribbean countries and North America.

We discussed the possibilities of using our model to develop similar shows in other territories within our region. This interest will be determined by the feedback, when the show goes regional.

CONCLUSION:

It has been an amazingly challenging 8 months to achieve the ambitious task of producing 13 kids shows on HIV/AIDS. However it has been a most rewarding experience. Working with kids at this level and intensity was a first for our production team and it was truly heartening to see everyone pull together and make it come true.

The participants who volunteered their time and energy are priceless, and it was really pleasant to see the interest even though we were discussing something as serious as HIV/AIDS.

We hope this show or at least this initiative can live on in some form and touch the lives of us all, as we endeavour to fight this epidemic, HIV and AIDS.

On behalf of Project Early and The Champs Club kids, we wish to thank the UNESCO initiative, Youth Visioning For Island Living, for giving us the opportunity to engage in such a fulfilling production and we hope more young people would take advantage of this character building projects.