



Pakistan National AIDS Consortium

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Advocacy seminar on
Communicating for HIV and AIDS Prevention
-A Development Communication Prospective-

Tuesday, March 21, 2006
At 3:00 P.M
Holiday Inn-Islamabad

Agenda

Recitation of Holy Quran

Presentation by:

Mr. Qadeer Baig (National Manager-PNAC)

Keynote:

Dr. Rukhsana Koshar
(Chairperson – Behavioral Sciences Department, F.J. Women University)

Speakers/ Panelists:

Dr. Asma Bukhari (Program Manager-NACP)
Ms. Bettina Schunter (UNICEF)
Mr. Fayaz Baqir (UNDP)
Dr. Nazir Mahmood (Capacity Dev; Specialist-DTCE)

Thanks & Closing Remarks :

Raja Khalid Mehmood (President –PNAC)

Launching of PNAC -SRH Journal By Dr. Asma Bokhari

Hi-Tea



Background:

HIV&AIDS is a relatively new sector in Pakistan. The response to the epidemic at all levels has been to slow. Though government and civil society organizations started their involvement and concern in early nineties, still the scale and quality of these interventions remained debatable. The reasons are not difficult to identify. Lack of reliable epidemiological data, lack of reliable information about the problem itself, lack of access to information, absence of technical expertise to design suitable interventions, deficient technical skills to implement the projects and above all the stigma and discrimination attached with HIV and AIDS made it almost impossible for the interventions to succeed. Practically there has no advocacy at the grass root level for the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS and especially very few have dared to speak for the rights of vulnerable and marginalized.

Right to information is one of the basic human rights and lack of access to basic knowledge and information about HIV and AIDS is one of the contributing factors for increase in high risk behaviors. Moreover easily available information helps in reduction of stigma and discrimination.

Effective prevention and control of HIV and AIDS largely depend upon effective communication of information about the epidemic but due to our cultural and social norms it is still considered as taboo in the society which result the discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS (PALWAs). For this purpose we need to communicate authentic, reliable and right based message about HIV & AIDS. For this purpose we need to device effective communication strategy. A major focus of PNAC is advocacy for policy reforms and an enabling environment regarding HIV and AIDS interventions. PNAC also advocates on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized groups, which are at greater risk of being infected with HIV and AIDS and raises their voice at all important decision making and policy forums. PNAC focuses on bringing positive changes in the behavior of masses, to promote safe behaviors and to reduce high risk behaviors through it Behavioral Change Communication Initiatives through lobbying and advocacy. Reduction of stigma and discrimination and raising the voice of the vulnerable and marginalized to all policy making forums is one of the main objectives of PNAC.

The Seminar:

Pakistan National AIDS Consortium (PNAC), organized a seminar under the title of “**Communicating for HIV & AIDS Prevention-A development communication prospective**”. The seminar was organized in local hotel which was attended by prominent experts of communication.

The purpose of seminar was to discuss and analyze the strategies and methods which have been adopted by the different organizations and national and international agencies to evaluate their communication effectiveness and bring the issue in the lime light as Developmental issue.

Proceedings of the Seminar:

The seminar started with the recitation of Holy Quran at 3:30 P.M. Moderation was given by Mr. Aftab Awan, Communication Officer PNAC.

Mr. Qadeer Baig , National Manager PNAC formally started with the introduction of PNAC and delivered presentation on Print and Electronic Media Overview over the last few years and common man's exposure to National media. He explained the communication strategies and channels/medium adopted by government and other civil society organizations to address the problem and identify the effective use of national media for awareness and prevention of HIV and AIDS in Pakistan. In his attention-grabbing presentation Mr. Baig also screen TVCs produced by MIDAS Communications for NACP under the theme of “THINK-UNDERSTAND-PREVENT” on the electronic media of Pakistan He also valued the efforts of government on raising the issue at mass level.

Dr. Rukhsana Kosar, Chairperson

Behavioral Sciences Department – Fatima Jinnah Women University delivered keynote and presentation on BCC academic aspect for HIV & AIDS awareness and prevention. She also highlighted the misconceptions about the diseases and presented the methodology to eliminate discrimination and stigma regarding HIV and AIDS through media interventions.

Ms. Bettina Schunter, Program Officer HIV & AIDS- UNICEF, explained the international communication perspective and Development Communication strategies adopted by international organizations specially UNICEF Pakistan for the control of epidemic through latest advocacy and communication methods and techniques. She also elaborated the issue as developmental concern.

Mr. Fayaz Baqir, Assistant Country Representative – UNDP, gave details of the role of bilateral and multilateral organizations in strengthening the communication part of the program. He also put in plain words the relationship of religion, communication and HIV/AIDS. He emphasis the use of communication to promote the religious ethics and moral values to address the issues at family unit level.

Dr. Nazir Mahmood ,Capacity Dev; Specialist-DTCE discussed how to build capacity of Government, CSOs, NGOs, Media for effective communication. He also share his personal experiences regarding awareness level through electronic media and effect of TV Commercials on general public life and quality and effectiveness of messages presented by our national media.

Dr. Asma Bukhari-Program Manager-NACP while talking on the occasion discussed various methods adopted by the government agencies for conveying the message and advocating the problem to the masses both through electronic and print media. She also answered general public and media people queries on the issue. This was her first ever participation in the PNAC's event which is very encouraging for CSOs and other organizations which are working in HIV and AIDS sector.

Raja Khalid Mehmood - President PNAC discussed the various initiatives of PNAC for communicating HIV & AIDS to general public. He said that our organization is committed to eliminate discrimination and stigma against PLWHAS and working in parallel to the government to prevent the disease nationally by increasing the access to the information. He also thanks media and participants to show their concern on the issue.

Launching of SRH Journal

Later President PNAC announced the launching of the first "*PNAC Sexual and Reproductive Health Journal*". He invited Dr. Asma Bukhari, Program Manager NACP to launch the journal formally. This Quarterly SRH Journal is the part of major area of action of PNAC communication and advocacy. While giving the rationale of publication he said PNAC SRH Journal in the field of sexual and reproductive health will become the mouth piece of the vulnerable and marginalized, so that their voice will also heard and noticed at the policy making forums. At the same time it will serve the advocacy and communication need to catalyze the process of awareness for general public, NGOs , Media, and other stakeholders as well as targeting to enhance awareness level of general population. It will definitely serve as a tool to decrease stigma.

Hi-tea was served after the seminar.

Media Coverage

Electronic:

ATV
PTV
Sindh TV
Rung TV
APNA TV

Print:

Daily Nawa-e- Waqt
Daily The Nation
The Daily Mail
Daily Ausaf
Daily Pakistan