

PEER EDUCATORS' TRAINING REPORT



WOMEN'S FORUM FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING (WFRT)

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Prepared by:
Kasozi Silvester
HIV and AIDS Trainer

PROGRESSIO

بروجرسيو

A) PRE-AMBLE

The Peer Educators' Training is another of Progressio and WFRT's mechanisms of trying to scale up their intervention in relation to HIV and AIDS prevention in Yemen.

Peer education is deemed an effective mechanism of reaching as many people as possible especially with regard to HIV and AIDS awareness because it is an approach that involves sharing information amongst 'peers'- people of equal standing in society; belonging to the same societal group based on age, grade or status.

Workshop Facilitators

These included:

1. Kasozi Silvester - HIV and AIDS Trainer
2. Rasha Abdulwahab - Local Counterpart
3. Dr Saeed Sufian - NAP Co-ordinator

Participants

The participants in this workshop were drawn from seven districts of Taiz namely; Al Shamaitien, Al Klayba, AlGebzia, Al Nashama, Al Ma'afer, Al Mesrakh and Al Wafa'a city.

They were 20 in all and represented different clusters of the population to include teachers, health workers, some religious leaders and others from the marginalized groups of people. The participants were drawn from a group of up to 30 who were given forms to fill upon which the final 20 were chosen as the most suitable to attend. Factors of choice included proof and basic knowledge of community work as a whole and HIV and AIDS in particular.

B) THE TRAINING

Welcome Remarks

Dr Suad, the Director of WFRT welcomed and thanked all participants making it to the workshop. She urged them to actively participate in the proceedings but also reminded them they were to be relied upon to spread as much information about HIV and AIDS to as many people as they could reach for only then would the levels of knowledge about the pandemic be increased and as result avert hitherto ignorance and problems associated with it such as stigma and discrimination.



Ground rules

Participants raised what they felt should be the guiding principles of the workshop in order to main order such that all would go well. These among others included;

- ☞ Avoiding unnecessary interruptions
- ☞ Respecting each other's points of view
- ☞ Ensuring that time is kept
- ☞ Switching off/silencing phones
- ☞ Avoid murmuring unnecessarily

- ☞ Avoid deviating from issues being discussed
- ☞ Avoid moving out of the training room without permission

Facilitation Methodologies

The following methods were used in facilitating the workshop;

- Audio visuals (power point and videos)
- Visual aids (posters)
- Group discussions
- Skits
- Mini Lectures

Participants' expectations

Participants echoed what they viewed as their expected key learning points by the time the workshop would come to a close. These were

- ✚ Knowing all about HIV and AIDS
- ✚ Getting as much information (data) that can be used in helping people protect themselves from HIV
- ✚ Acquiring Skills of how to create awareness about HIV and AIDS
- ✚ Getting more experiences about training
- ✚ Knowing more about how HIV is and not transmit

The goal of the training

To empower peer educators with knowledge on HIV and AIDS, communication and counseling skills so as to educate amongst their peers and vulnerable groups

Training Objectives

The training objectives were drawn from the broad goal of the training. It was envisaged that by the end of the training participants should be able to;

1. Explain what HIV and AIDS is, how its spread and prevented.
2. Explore the role and importance of communication skills to a peer educator.
3. Identify the different types of counseling and to relevance to people living with HIV and AIDS
4. Develop plans to share their experiences with various communities

Sessions

The training was divided into several sessions each with its own objectives. These were as follows

Day 1

On day our focus was mainly focused on the epidemiology of HIV and AIDS as an issue. Different sub topics were covered in the day's sessions. These were;

- Assessment of the level of knowledge of participants about HIV and AIDS

- The meaning of HIV and AIDS
- The difference between HIV and AIDS
- Misconceptions about the origin of HIV
- The different stages of HIV progression
- Diagnosis of HIV in the body and its implication
- Explain the effects of HIV on the human body (video clip)
- Statistical information about the HIV and AIDS situation in Yemen

Major observation:

Right from the very start there was an immense inquiry as to which age group is most affected by HIV and AIDS in Yemen. This did not seem to be an indication of participants' need to solicit solutions rather to play what was eminently a blame game.

Lesson learned:

Although we later presented statistical information about the prevalence of HIV and AIDS amongst the in the country we that the pandemic is those age groups to show us where as to devise effective



different age groups had to emphasise not restricted to rather information the biggest risk is so appropriate and interventions.

Day 2

On Day 2 covered of Day 1 focussing on and went on to look between HIV and well as the levels of sphere of life. The following issues were covered

part of what was left transmission of HIV at the relationship other infections as vulnerability in the

Modes of transmission

Objectives

- Modes of HIV transmission
- Prevention of HIV and AIDS
- Factors that make women more vulnerable to HIV infection
- STD/STIs and their relationship with HIV and AIDS (PowerPoint by Dr Saeed)

Major observations:

Transmission of HIV and AIDS through blood in various ways was very clear to participants as many of them knew what factors put them at risk. What was not clear however was maternal transmission-how a mother passes on HIV to her child in the womb at birth and after birth.

When it came to discussing the varying levels of men and women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS a blame game of sorts erupted. This we clamed down by explaining that the information we had was simply to show who is at more risk and why they are so that we could devise means of reducing that risk rather not to point fingers at one ender and for the other to feel that they are far from risk.

Lesson learned:

Having invited Dr Saeed, the NAP Co-ordinator to present about STD/STIs it created an air of openness. Not only did he have and give out as much information as possible, he also tailored it well to meet the needs of participants in the Yemen context. It is hoped from this and more the local counterpart will be able to draw lessons with regard to how to facilitate such sensitive and similar sessions in future.

Day 3

This Day's focus was on how to offset the effects of HIV and AIDS on People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV) both from the bio-medical point of view to the Psychosocial. Sessions included;

- Nutrition of PLHIV
- Opportunistic infections management among PLHIV (skit)
- Post Exposure Prophylaxis
- HIV and AIDS Counselling - what it is
- The different types of HIV and AIDS Counselling
- Qualities of a good counselor
- Explore the benefits of HIV and AIDS Counselling
- HIV and AIDS counselling process (Role Play)



Major observations:

Since in discussing modes of transmission examples of occupational exposure came up, we found it fitting to briefly talk about Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) as a means preventing progression of HIV infection. Nonetheless this seemed a far fetched concept and it ofcourse solicited questions such as “if there is such medicine, why is there no cure” to which we had explain the painstaking circumstances under which it is administered.

Counselling was on the whole a new concept as well that we could not exhaust both with regard to sharing information and participants getting a chance to practice to see it in practice or practice it themselves.

Lesson learned:

It may be important to re-orient the peer educators once again on the concept of counseling in their quarterly meeting as an area that is increasingly becoming relevant going by the steadily increasing number of cases of HIV and AIDS reported in Yemen.

Day 4

Much attention was paid to behavioral aspects of individuals which are likely to be encountered by peer educators in their work with communities. These included

- Stigma and discrimination (what is stigma and discrimination, the difference, the types, how we stigmatise, causes and effects of stigma)- Video clip
- The Behaviour change process (Formation of behaviour, barriers to behaviour change, changing behaviour)
- The Peer education concept (what it is, why peer education, qualities of a good Peer Educator)

Major observations:

It is just as well that there was a session on Stigma and discrimination as this is an issue that kept on cropping up all through the workshop even before we would come to it. Even some of those participants who had evidently been trained before expressed the need to isolate those found to be having HIV. One particular participant a Sheikh was fast to say that once he knew he was positive he wouldn't talk about it with his family, rather take treatment alone. According to him only then could he deal with stigma. We had to go through the importance of involving family in such situation as it could instead put the whole family at risk in the long run. We also highlighted the different kinds of stigma noting that its not always about how others makes one feel about their status (felt or enacted stigma) rather also how they (victims) feel about themselves (self stigma) in the circumstances.

Lesson learned:

A lot more work needs to be done with regard to changing people's attitudes towards PLHIV. Despite the numerous trainings held on HIV and AIDS it is still clear that Stigma and discrimination is largely overlooked yet it is evidently a big problem. It is no wonder then that even for some participants who were proudly trained trainers prior to this workshop; they still exhuded an aura of stigma suggesting that PLHIV should be isolated from mainstream society.

Day 5

This being the last day of the training, we concentrated on communication skills as a vital asset in passing on information to peers. It was also a day for planning on how participants were going to create awareness amongst peers after the training. The following issues were discussed



- What is communication? (skit)
- Features of effective communication
- Blocks to effective communication
- Developing personal work plans

Major observations:

There was vigour amongst participants who were vowing and pledging to go out and spread word about HIV and AIDS to as many people as possible. Each participant made their plan of how they were going to talk to peers about the pandemic using a plan we all greed to and shared it with every

participant present then. They each submitted a copy and retained one for themselves for future reference.

Lesson learned:

To ensure that participants adhere to and see their plans through we appointed a co-ordinator whose role is to ensure that he monitors the work each of the peer educator does on a monthly basis and produces a report that covers each of their performance within that given period. It's upon this and occasional visits to the field that we shall assess the impact of their work on the ground- whether they do anything or if they do whether it has any impact.

D) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- The Local counterpart is amazingly becoming very comfortable with training in such a short time. She has begun to take a more leading role courtesy more confidence and knowledge developed over time especially when addressing and dealing with participants' questions and concerns. The participants' evaluation remarks speak for themselves about her performance.

E) OVERALL CHALLENGES

Although the training was largely a success, there were a few notable challenges that included;

- The set up of the room initially posed a challenge in terms of enabling participants to be as participatory as possible. Nonetheless after a few changes deliberations and making a few changes the room, not only did the environment become more conducive but also the level of participation improved. There are plans to even change the set up further in future for better results

F) CONCLUSION

The turn up of participants was as expected and remained consistent all through. They exhibited a high level of enthusiasm to learn and exuded a lot of energy to go out and spread word about the pandemic. It remains to be seen what their impact will be over time especially as we go ahead to monitor their work over the next months.