

## **Project Title: Understand and Connect Them (UCT)**

### **Executive Summary:**

#### **Aim**

The project is aiming at developing an age appropriate HIV intervention for the young female sex worker (YFSW) in night club and on the internet, and at 24 years old or below).

#### **Objectives**

1. To increase the rate of adopting protected sex and motivate the young female sex worker to have Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT).
2. To reduce their risky behaviours (drug and sex) in their work environment
3. To develop a regular VCT checking habit among this population.
4. And finally to conduct an action research on the behaviour pattern and an evaluation on the current HIV prevention measures for the YFSW.

#### **Project design**

The project included four elements

1. Outreaching service to night club
2. Outreaching service for YFSW on the internet
3. Integration of HIV prevention into sexual health check-up and community based activities
4. Action research on YFSW

#### **Target population**

YFSWs who are active in night club and on the internet

#### **Main achievements**

##### **1. Outreaching Service to Night Club**

We successfully connected 15 nightclubs, which 9 of them had a solid relationship with us. 485 YFSWs had been served by our HIV prevention education and counselling service. The regular outreach service and the relationships between the YFSWs and our social workers did not only improve our service delivery, they also increased the YFSWs' awareness of sexual health problems and their motivation to seek help.

## **2. Outreaching service for YFSW on the internet**

Other than using data mining system and surfing high risk forums, we also developed our service by using Smartphone apps and Facebook to search the sex workers. With the internet network that we had built in the past years, snowball effect had been shown. More hidden YFSWs approached us on the internet and some even referred their colleagues to us. 254 YFSWs were served by our HIV prevention education and counselling service.

## **3. Highlights of Action Research**

258 YFSWs aged under 26 years old were invited to participate in the research. A number of important findings were found.

The percentage of YFSWs who consistently used condom during vaginal and anal sex with new customers was 75.4% and that with regular customers was 61.1%. Even worse, regarding their use of condoms during oral sex with new customers and regular customers, the ratio were only 18% and 24.7% respectively.

42.5% of YFSWs reported they had drug abuse problem, and 36.6% among them reported they took drug during their sex trade. This is serious issue we need to address in our future work.

YFSWs experienced a number of violent acts and threats during their work such as being physically abused and insulted. 51.7 % of YFSWs reviewed being forced to take off condoms during sex trade, 43.7% of them reported being forced to have sex trade. These showed that the work of empowerment for YFSWs is extremely important because this could increase their ability to insist protected sex in their work.

## **Conclusion**

With the work in these years, we found that HIV prevention and sexual health education are needs of YFSW. Their awareness of sexual health are relatively lower than the adult female sex workers and their needs are different. We believe that services including community based activities and multi-disciplinary approach can definitely increase their interest and awareness on HIV prevention.