

Executive Summary

Organisation:

Action for REACH OUT (AFRO)

Programme period:

July 2013 – June 2016

Programme title:

To provide HIV education and voluntary counselling and testing service for HIV and Syphilis for hard-to-reach female sex workers who have less access to prevention activities, and to involve peer educators and the general public in the collective efforts for HIV prevention.

Aim and objectives:

- i) To further access “hard-to-reach” groups of FSWs who have less access to prevention activities as reported in CRiSP 2009, and to continue to reach out to FSWs in bars to whom AFRO is the sole service provider for HIV education and prevention activities;
- ii) To promote condom use and regular HIV screening test among FSWs, and provide HIV education and non-stigmatising outreach and centre-based VCT services for them;
- iii) To involve trained peer educators in the delivery of HIV education;
- iv) To coordinate public education workshops for interested individuals, aiming to enhance public understanding on HIV/AIDS and eliminate stigma and discrimination against high risk groups and people living with HIV.

Project design:

The programme team paid outreach visits to FSWs working in various venues and received them at AFRO's drop-in centre. 6 sets of HIV educational materials (each set with 3500 copies) were produced and delivered to FSWs together with condoms and VCT promotional items. Meanwhile, HIV education workshops and VCT testing for HIV and syphilis were performed for FSWs, at both their workplaces and AFRO's drop-in centre.

The programme team also engaged themselves in public education and delivered 6 series of workshops during the programme period.

Target population:

Female sex workers

Main achievements:

Within the 3-year programme period, the programme team had paid 3514 visits to various target venues and made contacts (with educational messages successfully delivered) with 14157 targeted FSWs. 2848 VCT for HIV and Syphilis had been performed for them. 2817 questionnaires had been collected from the post-workshop survey among FSWs. According to the survey results, 94.89% of FSWs used a condom in last vaginal sex with their clients, while 87.01% of them consistently used a condom for vaginal sex with their clients in the last three months and 64.71% of them had an HIV test in the last 12 months and knew their status.

As for public education, 6 series of workshops had been conducted. The total number of participants is 165.

Conclusions:

To conclude, this programme has met or has been very close to meet the developed indicators. It has successfully reached out to identified "hard-to-reach" FSWs at various venues, and delivered HIV education and VCT services for them. Yet, we are aware of the rapid changes in the sex industry and notice that there is an urgent need to reach out to an emerging group of private contact-based FSWs who are not attached to any specific commercial sex venues and therefore even more hidden and hard-to-reach. We believe that extra efforts have to be made to reach out to FSWs involved in "semi-street walking" (street-based FSWs who rely more on regular clients and referrals and spend less time on street walking), "call girl" service (by appointment only) and "compensated dating". And that will be one of the foci of our future work.