

REPORT ON HIV/AIDS SENSITIZATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE “NIKAI” DANCE OF BABUNGOH ON MARCH 19TH AND 28TH 2011 AT THE EXPLANADE OF THE BABUNGOH PALACE, PRESENTED BY CHE ANSELM SUH

TECHNICAL PREPARATION

Preparatory meetings were held at the BIHC staff where what was to be done on the days of the dance was clearly spelt out to the various members of staff involved. The dancers who were to wear the messages were contacted and provision for dancing materials, condoms flyers and billboards was made available. It was agreed that the sensitization would take place twice in order to have a wider coverage.

PEDAGOGIC PREPARATION

The different messages were put on the flip charts and on the flyers.

DEPARTURE

The BIHC caravan left the centre with the van well decorated and dancers on board. This was accompanied by the siren and sensitization vocal messages led by the programme's coordinator. The caravan first went round into the village before finally settled down at the entrance to the palace where vocal sensitization continued while the dancers were brazing up for the cue to be given by the palace drummers for the official start of the dance.

DANCE PROPER

It was about 4:00Pm that the big drum from the palace sounded for the commencement of the “Nikai” Dance. The male children started from the smaller circle inside while the youth, men and the old; notables formed the bigger circle around. The women stood all around the grand stand with the other dignitaries that were present and watched in consternation the majestic movement to the rhythm of the talking drums of the Babungo land. Standing out distinct were the dancers of BIHC who were clad with condoms all round their necks like chains and the various anti HIV/AIDS slogans carried on the bill boards stood out tall in the crowd of dancers.

The commotion and fighting to pick up a condom from the hands of the BIHC dancers added color to the event. To make things more exciting, some of the spectators outsmarted the security guards and jumped into the circle to seize condoms from the dancers.

A similar performance was repeated on Sunday the 28th of March 2011. The difference here was that the crowd was doubled and the paramount Chief of Babungo himself participated in the dancing.

LESSONS LEARNT

Among the lessons learnt were the following:

Many persons attested they saw the female condom physically for their first time

Many were interested in the condoms and even moved up to request for them

Some took appointments to come for VCT

Some requested for the test on the spot

DIFFICULTIES

The following difficulties were encountered;

Shortage of condoms

The absence of a mobile VCT van

Time constraint to really carry out sensitization

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to reach out to more people and have a greater impact, the following suggestions could be considered;

The budget for the dance should be stepped up so that more messages and condoms could be bought.

A mobile VCT van could be put in place and by so doing many people who do not have time to come to the centre could do their tests on the spot

The sensitization team should run for at least a week during the festival

CONCLUSION

The “Nikai” dance has proven to be a good avenue for VCT and advocacy for behavior change. This is due to the fact that it pulls across a cream of the population far and near and the village becomes a melting pot, which exposes so many to risky behaviour. If this event is well targeted, then it will go a long way to curb down the spread of HIV/AIDS in the community and increase responsible behavior. The “Nikai” 2011 has actually been a success for BIHC.