

A background to using DVD-led discussion for health worker awareness of stigma and HIV/AIDS

Developing a communication campaign for the Ministry of Health and Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Kenya on TB and HIV

Project partners: media materials research, design and development: Mediae (Project Manager Katrina Phillips); awareness session facilitation: HLSP Kenya; contracted by Danya International.

The CDC/MoH project aim was to research, design and implement a communication strategy in Kenya to promote the uptake of TB and HIV cross-testing amongst those with TB or HIV and their extended families. An initial situation analysis carried out by Mediae included interviews with key informants drawn from policy makers, programme leaders working on TB or HIV/AIDS and TB/HIV, and key frontline staff carrying out current policy and practice. This research was followed by focus group discussions with the potential target groups: health workers; TB patients; rural and peri-urban community members (interviewed separately as male and female groups).

The research findings were presented at a two-day stakeholder meeting, alongside presentations from Ministerial heads of the National TB programme (NLTP) and the National HIV programme (NASCOP) on the policy on cross-testing for TB/HIV, key challenges and goals. Led by a facilitator the meeting established the key strategy elements: the primary target groups; the objectives in reaching these groups; the messages and the best channels through which to deliver the messages.

Finally participants were asked to consider the main barriers to overcome (including budgetary). The stakeholders agreed a primary target group of health workers and secondary of families of those who had tested positive for TB and/or HIV/AIDS. Two regions of Kenya were agreed as the focus of the campaign, Nairobi and Nyanza.

The research and discussion revealed two key points underlying the choice of primary target group. Firstly, there was considerable stigma around HIV/AIDS amongst health workers to the extent that many did not know their own status or even worse, if positive would not accept treatment until it was too late. Secondly, a confident health worker aware of his or her own HIV status is far more successful when counselling patients to test for HIV or TB. In the context of the need to make the most of a limited budget, health workers and by extension their families and patients, became the primary target group.

The target groups and objectives:

- health workers to reduce health worker stigma of HIV, improving their own health, their confidence at work and their ability to communicate with and understand patients when promoting cross-testing for TB and HIV.
- Families of those with TB and/or HIV to encourage awareness of the benefits of cross-testing and treatment adherence.

The channels and materials agreed included a storyline in Makutano Junction, a Kenyan weekly television drama series reaching approximately 6.5 million viewers; an SMS number promoted at the end of relevant episodes for further information; Radio call-in programmes with experts in studio to respond to listener questions and SMS's; and the focus of this presentation, DVD-led awareness training amongst health workers.

DVD-led training is an instant catalyst to deep discussion, reflection and consensus on change in complex training projects. The DVD uses clips from Makutano Junction and additional scenes scripted specifically for training. These lead into documentary interviews with professional health workers talking of their experiences of HIV stigma, discrimination, testing and disclosure. The final chapter focuses on improved communication and counselling skills.

Referring to research findings short dramatic scenarios illustrate existing attitudes and fears. At the end of a drama clip the video screen freezes on a question to start the group discussion. *Is what you have seen familiar? Has this happened to you?* The aim of each discussion break is to immediately raise self-awareness. It encourages expression of personal experience and promotes thinking towards possible solutions. *What can we do to change this?*

Documentary interviews present the realities according to colleagues and clients. These interviews are powerful – it can be the first time that fellow professionals have heard others speak so candidly and personally on a difficult theme. Their power is in enabling the training group to immediately speak deeply and honestly about their own experiences and views. The DVD also features interviews with clients, reflecting their perspectives.

As the DVD reaches a conclusion, the facilitator guides the group towards agreed changes in attitudes or practice. That the changes come from the group themselves is critical, creating a sense of change that is possible and owned rather than imposed.

The DVD-led training session includes a handbook for each participant, featuring quotes, pictures and key points made in the DVD. The handbook is designed to include any notes a participant may wish to make throughout the session and serve as a take-home reminder of the training session.

Allowing for discussion time, the training session is designed to be a minimum of four hours in length.

Feedback from the field:

“The video compels health workers to look at HIV differently, even within themselves. It will make our work a lot easier.”

Program Manager, Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program

“It’s really good. Exposing difficult issues.”

Health worker trainer, Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Programme