

**Students And Youths Working on reproductive Health
Action Team**



“The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted.” – Mother Teresa

**Kicking Stigma Out of Agricultural Colleges
Games’ Report
(3rd – 5th of March 2005)**

Compiled by the National Coordinator

Introduction

The Students And Youths Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) was formed in 2003 as a result of the need for a reproductive health forum for the students and youths in Zimbabwe that will engender consciousness and active participation on reproductive health and creating a common platform for the students and youths for open discussion and lobbying collective positions on reproductive health issues at national level.

In brief, SAYWHAT was founded on the following objectives:-

- Develop and advocate collective positions on policy and other related issues with special emphasis on reproductive health.
- Promote forums for coordination and information sharing amongst students and youths
- Raise consciousness within the students and youths on current developments within the reproductive health sector through some discussion forums.
- Tap out consciousness amongst students and youths into active consciousness on reproductive health issues.
- Engage the government on positions and issues of common concern amongst the students and youths on reproductive health.
- Lobby and advocate collectively on treatment (access to drugs) and Gender issues.

These objectives resolved into one basic principle

- To develop students and youths who are healthy, socially adjusted and economically empowered.

SAYWHAT with the financial assistance from Community Working Group on Health (CWGH) participated in the Agricultural Games with aim of kicking out stigma from Agricultural Games hence the theme Kicking Stigma out of Agricultural Colleges.

Agricultural Colleges has always been left out of a number of activities and programmes that are done in other tertiary institutions. This has caused the absence of health education or peer educators in these colleges. This maybe because of the nature of their studies but if one is to look into that can come into conclusion that they really need more of health information than anything else. The nature of their studies requires a lot of strength hence the need of good health. Besides during their on-job training (industrial attachment) they interact with the farming community where the rate of sexually transmitted diseases are rampant making it necessary for the Agric College students to be prepared for that.

SAYWHAT took the opportunity to reach out to all Agricultural colleges. There were seven colleges including the hosts Kushinga Phikelela Agric Colleges. The main objective of SAYWHAT in participating in the games was to include all the Agricultural Colleges in the fight against stigma and the reproductive health activities. SAYWHAT discovered the importance of the Agric college students in the fight against HIV/AIDS in general.

The games took place in Marondera at Kushinga Phikelela Agric College in Mashonaland East Province. The teams arrived on the 2nd of March 2005 allowing the participants to rest and some actually did some final preparations on the arrival day.

The games started on the 3rd and ended on the 5th of March 2005. The colleges competed in different sports like volleyball, basketball, athletics, netball and soccer.

SAYWHAT participated strategically so that they are able to do Advocacy, Information dissemination, Peer counselling, Condom use Demonstrations and Edutainment.

Advocacy

This was the starting point for SAYWHAT to have an impact on the games. The project was supposed to be introduced to those other colleges, which were not participating. A meeting was held with the hosting matron and attended by all seven participating college represented by their students. The aims and objectives of the project in general were discussed then in particular to the games. All representatives were given a chance to make some inputs so that all the activities to be carried out can have an impact to the students. It was agreed that there should be an information desk that was to be manned by all representatives from different colleges. The challenges were later given to those students whose colleges were yet to participate in the project to make sure that something is done at their colleges in connection with their health especially on reproductive health.

Each college representative was given a t-shirt for identity when manning the information desks.

Information dissemination

SAYWHAT managed to secure some informative reading materials from SAFAIDS and Zimbabwe Aids Networks that were displayed at the information booths. The distribution of information materials to students boosted the number of people attending the SAYWHAT information desks. Students were visiting the booths, which were strategically positioned with a big Banner that drew the attention of all the students. Students were so enthusiastic with the information desks were they came with different questions concerning reproductive health. Health advice about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS prevention and other issues related to students health were shared with students attending the SAYWHAT information desks. More emphasis was for students from different colleges to actually establish some structures at their colleges for easy coordination.

Condom use demonstration

During the information dissemination at the information desks, there were some realisations that there were some students who did not know how to properly use the male and female condoms. The SAYWHAT team member Sendisa Sandura Ndlovu did the demonstrations on the proper use of condoms. This now brought some mixed reactions from different students male and female alike because a number were surprised with the demonstrations with what they were used to do. That made huge groups of students coming and requesting for the demonstrations. One wonders whether the over whelming requests out of just interests or students wanted to really learn but all the same during the process a lot of myths and misconception about condoms were corrected especially the use of two or more condoms.

Peer counselling

The team was approached by a number of students who wanted counselling. It was fortunate that some members of the team like Nengomasha, Tariro, Jimmy are trained peer educators and counsellors. The members assisted with the counselling since the cases were not that complicated, the cases only wanted basic counselling skills. Of concern was a young couple (boyfriend and girlfriend) from Mulezu Agricultural College who were having an affair and the girl friend got pregnant. It was lightening that they are both in their final year and the boy friend accepted responsibility for the pregnancy. They came to the stand seeking counselling since they are facing different pressures from different corners, family and friends. So we had an hour discussing about the issues and they were given some reading materials like Talking Times. They have promised to work hard for the establishment of a structure at their college so that awareness and consciousness is raised at the college.

Entertainment-Education Activities

SAYWHAT realised and appreciated that students in colleges are dynamic and also would want dynamic way of information dissemination. Lack of entertainment in institutions of higher learning has actually caused a lot sexual activities. Students ended up taking sex as another way of entertainment due to too much idleness. After those realisations SAYWHAT organised edutainment in the form of a disco. The disco was played during the evenings at an open space to allow interaction and information sharing. Students were being asked some questions during the disco and some winning SAYWHAT T-shirts. Some questions asked were a follow up on what was happening during the day at the different SAYWHAT information centres.

Challenges

The Kicking Stigma Out of Agric Colleges Campaign brought a number of challenges to the SAYWHAT steering Committee.

- The biggest challenge was to consolidate the advocacy that was done during the sporting gala. This can be possible if resources are made available to the project.
- Peer education and counselling - there is also a big challenge in training the agric students in peer education and counselling. There is need to introduce health education in different agric colleges and some structures be established for local coordination.
- The enrolment of agriculture colleges makes it a challenge to SAYWHAT in that there are a big number of adults and married couples hence the need to have activities, which also incorporate such generations.
- Technical expertise - SAYWHAT lacked technical expertise in a number of Counselling areas which would be easy if more students are equipped with different counselling skills.

Way forward.

The challenges have made it necessary for SAYWHAT to come up with the following as the way forward.

- Get students from Agric Colleges actively involved in identifying their risks of HIV exposure and transmission?
- Coming up with a SAYWHAT Newsletter with detailed, accurate information on HIV/AIDS/STDs and other sexual and reproductive health matters that can be distributed to different colleges.
- Develop ongoing links among sports authorities in all institutions of higher learning and with health communication and services to integrate the effort being done by SAYWHAT.
- Involve the students, target colleges being the primary audience in the design and implementation of campaign follow-up activities to assure interests, relevance, ownership, and sustainability and to encourage continued behaviour change.
- Peer Education Training – there is need for Peer Education and Counselling Training skills for SAYWHAT Team and other students in general.
- Expansion – there is need for the project to expand to all agricultural colleges and consolidate the gains done during the Kicking Stigma Out of Agric Colleges Campaign.
- Resource mobilization – there is need to source more resources so that the peer educators and counsellors can be trained.
- Discussion foras must be introduced to all Agric colleges and some exchange programmes with other colleges not necessarily Agric colleges.
- The SAYWHAT can have an adhoc committee that shall work together closely monitoring the developments in the Agric college colleges for the effective implementation of SAYWHAT activities..
- Improve on the SAYWHAT administration so that there can be efficient and effective way of implementing the activities on the ground.
- Next event to include experts in counselling and peer education to assists in the information booths.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the use football to promote Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS in general in the Colleges is an effective and timely strategy. Accomplishing the goal and objectives of the Kicking Stigma Out Of Agricultural Colleges was challenging for many reasons. Adequate structures and resources had to be put in place. This was the first time SAYWHAT has integrated reproductive health into sports tournament, which are held for different colleges. There is need for different colleges and organisations to forge partnerships. SAYWHAT must prepare in time for the forth coming sporting activities like ZUSA games (for universities), ZISTU games (for Teachers colleges).

Nonetheless, the goal and objectives were achieved despite some unforeseen shortcomings in the implementation of the campaign activities. The campaign has caused the students and college authorities from Agric Colleges to realise that it is only through the combined effort of students and college authorities that can see the reduction of stigmatisation from institutions of higher learning like agric colleges.

The effects of the campaign went beyond the students into the community. The community also thronged the SAYWHAT information desks requesting condoms and other reading materials. The campaign proved useful to the community where few sources of information exists on reproductive and sexual guidance for youths and where there is great reluctance among parents to talk with their children about reproductive health.

All having been said and done, its also more important to have Memorandum of Understanding with different stakeholders so that the games can increase the impact. The MOUs can be drawn with stake holders like the Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Health, Min Of Education, Min of Higher Education and donor agents like UNAIDS. Resources are critical on activities like these if meaningful impact is to be realised.

Last but not least SAYWHAT would like to acknowledge CWGH Executive Director for the financial assistance that they offered. The funds went a long way to assists other students in agric Colleges who benefited from the campaign and the Kushinga Phikelela Community at large. Many thanks also to the team that left Harare and stayed at Kushinga for five days participating in the games. Keep it up guys, the other key to success besides all is working together. You made this report easy to write because of the activities that you carried out since they were very clear.

Agricultural Colleges that Participated

1. Kushinga Phikelela (host)	Godfrey Mukonowatsauka
2. Rio Tinto	Sango Simbarashe
3. Mulezu	Nokuthula Ndana
4. Chibhero	Pedzisai Kufakwemba / Mutawarira
5. Gwebi	Muzenda Charity
6. Esigodhini	Thando Zulu
7. Mazowe Vet.	Ireen Chibhenda

National Executive Committee

1. Chairperson	Jimmy Wilford
2. Vice Chairperson	Spiwe Marufu
3. Secretary	Pelagia Mutunzi
4. Treasure	Tedias Mashakwe
5. Committee Member	Rumbidzai Sitotombi
6. Committee Member	Jabusile Shumba