A Model for India

Description

India is a conservative country. Talking about sex is taboo, and in most areas of the country, so is talking about HIV and AIDS.

There are six states in the country that are considered high prevalence states. They account for eighty percent of all HIV infections in the country. The lack of awareness in remote areas is creating misinformation, leading to an increase in discrimination against HIV positive people. But in Kodoli, a town in the state of Maharashtra, there is hope. A young group of social work students from a local college have decided to take matters into their own hands. What started as a school project at SIBER college, turned into a full-fledged campaign in the district. They visit Kodoli twice a week. The students perform plays on street corners in the town to reach the masses. They go door to door, encouraging the town’s men and women to talk about sex and HIV, and teaching them about how important it is to be tested. They use pregnancy as a platform to talk about the issues at hand, and managed to succeed.

Local hospitals are now overflowing with patients waiting to be tested. The rural government hospital in Kodoli even has a ward dedicated to HIV testing and counseling. Specialists see up to thirty patients a day. After a year of hard work, the students have made huge strides in the world of HIV and AIDS.

Awareness and education about HIV and AIDS has spread, and discrimination has lessened drastically. But it is still unclear if the student’s work will become a model for other towns and villages in the country dealing with issues of discrimination.

Source List

1. CFAR, Centre for Advocacy and Research
2. Pankaj Bedi, Program Manager for Maharashtra (CFAR)
3. AVAHAN, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Program in India
4. WHO, World Health Organization
5. Satish Patil, Lab Technician at ICTC hospital in Kodoli
6. Professor D. M. Bhosale, senior lecturer, SIBER College in Kolhapur