

Children First Agency

Narrative Report for the Period: 15 Nov 2012 to 28 Feb 2013

Vendor ID: 317725

Project Name: Youth MSM Empowerment Project

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Introduction

The Children First/UNESCO "Youth MSM Empowerment Project - YMEP" continued during the reporting period November 2012 to February 2013 with the major activities emanating from the Bashy Bus HQ's Safe Space for Vulnerable Children and Young People - in Kingston, Jamaica.

The majority of the programme activities were implemented during the first phase of the programme and there was a high level of interest and enthusiasm from the participants and the Youth MSM Community. This intervention provided an opportunity and the space for youth MSM's to express their fears and experiences in youth-friendly setting as well as provided the space for dialogue amongst various stakeholders. The following provides an update of the progress that has been achieved under each component to date.

Objective 1: To strengthen knowledge and skills of our target group (50 MSM aged 17-25 years old) on HIV/AIDS and other STI's

Activity1: Develop youth friendly drama presentation: Activity Status: Complete

Activity 2&3 Performance of drama & Audience Interaction Activity Status: Complete During the reporting period under this component, the youth friendly drama presentation that was developed under Activity 1 was performed a total of 4 times to in 2 urban (Kingston based) secondary schools as well as with stakeholders groups and MSM. From this activity over 1,000 persons (Students, adults and youth MSM's) benefitted from the presentations and the interactions that followed the drama pieces.

In relation to discussions in the schools, they were very lively as the piece highlighted the realities of same sex situations with emphasis on Youth MSM's in the context of the school setting and the challenges these youngsters often endure with the issues of sexuality. Interestingly, at the two targeted schools the Administrators were initially uncertain as to how the students would respond and in one school they even opted to have the piece undertaken for a select group of participants. None-the-less, the presentation kept the students focused and generated a lot of discussions around tolerance and discrimination and a number of the youngsters spoke of their own experiences - similar to that which the drama had initially

depicted.

On the other hand, the stakeholder and MSM groups received the presentation very well and commented that this was a very innovative and non-threatening means by which to commence the discussion around the issue of sexuality, stigma and discrimination and most importantly access to health services.

Activity 4: Empowerment Sessions with MSM: Activity Status: Complete

Activity 5: VCCT Test: Activity Status: Complete

Objective 2: To build the capacity of 20 key stakeholders to better relate to and interact with MSM, through targeted intervention

Activity 1: Focus Group Discussions with MSM Activity Status: Complete

Activity 2: 1 Workshop with Key Stakeholders

outlined in objective 1

Activity Status: Complete This activity will be undertaken in the upcoming reporting period based on the challenges

Activity Status: Complete

Activity 3: 1 Workshop with MSM & Stakeholders

This component has been scheduled for the next reporting period

Activities 2.1 and 3.1 were undertaken over a 2-day period in Kingston with a total of 25 persons comprising of youth MSM, representatives from the Office of the Children's Advocate, Children's Registry, Ministry of Health Comprehensive Clinic, Child guidance Counselling Clinic, Child Development Agency, Bureau of Women's Affairs (Men's Desk), Council of Voluntary Social Services, Dean of Disciplines and Counsellors from 4 High Schools and two representatives from the Jamaica Constabulary (Police) Force as well as Out of School Youths.

The sessions focused on understanding the target population, the existing and emerging trends relating to the population as well as sought to explore workable solutions to the challenges (including stigma and discrimination) faced by the group. The youth participants were very willing to share their experiences and make recommendations to the various organizations to how best to meet the needs of their target group. He youngsters were also very excited for the space provided for them to learn firsthand about the myriad of services available through the various stakeholders. On the other hand, the stakeholders described the sessions as very rich learning experiences which enabled them to better understand the barriers which they sometimes "unknowingly" create in serving the population.

Overall, there was a high level of commitment from the various stakeholder groups to review the recommendations and to internally explore further training for their staff and to collaborate with Children First on other similar intervention in order to keep current in their quest to meet the needs of this population.

Activity 4: Develop health care providers listing Activity Status: Complete This component is now complete and presently comprise of approximately 20 health care

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providers particularly in the Kingston and St. Andrew Region from which the project operates. Based on our ongoing partnership with these health care providers, individual contacts have been forged which makes the referral processes much easier and smoother.

Objective 3: To increase the availability of psycho-social support services for young MSM through advanced peer educators training for 10 MSM

Activity 1: Advanced Peer Education Sessions	Activity Status: Complete
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Activity 2: Conduct Pre and Post Assessment Activity Status: Complete

Activity 4: Mobilization of New MSM's Activity Status: Complete

Conclusion

Under this intervention, the activities created avenue for linkages and partnerships with other local and international partners including Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN) and UNAIDS who have so far committed support for a Social Media Training for Advocacy.

Additionally, during the period November 2012 to February 2013 the Agency also partnered with other entities and were able to secure and distribute approximately **60** lubricants and **100** condoms to the project participants

Overall, this intervention has been a very fruitful and rewarding experience for all stakeholders who have been involved in the process.

The End

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