

MEDIA SENSITISED!

Workshop to Enhance Capacity of Media Practitioners in Fair and Just HIV/AIDS Reporting



The mass media response to HIV and AIDS in Malaysia has been notably encouraging of late, with more and more media entities providing extensive coverage on issues surrounding the epidemic. However, the language and tone in which the reporting is delivered are crucial in eliminating stigma and prejudices against people living with HIV (PLHIV). As such, MAC organised an exclusive Media Retreat & Sensitisation Workshop in collaboration with government agencies, Ministry of Health (MOH) and Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), and corporate partner, YTL Hotels & Resorts from 11 to 13 July 2011. Senior representatives of print and electronic media from Bernama Wires

Agency, The Star, Mstar (The Star), Harakah, New Straits Times, *The Breakfast Club* (Bernama TV) and ILUVISLAM (Karangkraf Group) took part.

The aim of the workshop was to familiarise media practitioners with issues that negatively impact on PLHIV and other key affected populations; to highlight the importance of fair and responsible journalism to reduce HIV-associated stigma and discrimination; and to introduce Harm Reduction programmes and other public health approaches to curb HIV transmission among injecting drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender persons. Emphasis was also placed on the vital role that the Media plays in disseminating accurate information to reduce biased and unjust reporting.

Highlighting MAC's achievements, Director of Advocacy and Communications, Mr Jasmin Jalil said the advocacy programmes for HIV and AIDS have become successful over the years due to the direct involvement of the local and regional media in providing extensive coverage on the HIV epidemic in Malaysia, which has in turn brought about a positive change of attitude towards HIV issues.



During this exclusive workshop, participants were trained in efficient, impartial, and facts-based reporting, with a focus on considered use of sensitive language. MOH officials educated the workshop participants on prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS. JAKIM, on the other hand shared their experiences implementing the HIV & Islam programme to mitigate the negative impact of HIV in the Muslim population. Both MOH and JAKIM urged the Media participants to advocate for the benefits of early diagnosis and treatment of HIV through voluntary counselling and testing, in line with MAC's yearlong campaign *Get Tested, Get Treated*.

At the end of the training, participants were taken to the Marang Prison, Terengganu whereby the group, led by Tan Sri Zaman Khan, visited a craft centre for songket-weaving by incarcerated persons. MAC also organised visits to a vegetable farm run by PLHIV, and Baitul CAKNA, a shelter home dedicated for single mothers and children in Kuala Terengganu. It is hoped that these visits would foster further collaboration between media, MAC, stakeholders and other partners.



EVENTS OF THE MONTH

Cheque Presentation Ceremony
Provision of Shelter Homes for
Communities Affected by
HIV/AIDS, launched by YB
Senator Dato' Sri Shahrizat
Abdul Jalil on 5 August 2011 at
Rumah Pengasih – Kuala Lumpur

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Majlis Iftar Ramadhan bersama
Komuniti Disayangi pada 12
Ogos 2011 diRadius International
Hotel Kuala Lumpur. Anjuran
Majlis AIDS Malaysia dengan
kerjasama Radius International
Hotel & Dagang Halal, Kuala
Lumpur.

Untuk maklumat lanjut sila
hubungi Zul @ +603 40451033

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Did you know you that if you
donate RM50.00 and above to
Malaysian AIDS Foundation
(MAF) you are entitled to tax
exemption?

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