

# ZIMBABWE

## VALENTINE'S DAY CAMPAIGN

**Starting Year:** 2006

**Main Topic Area:** Prevention /

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**Implementers:**

The Valentines' Day was implemented by the National AIDS Council in Mashonaland East and Masvingo Provinces with support from respective provincial Zimbabwe Republic Police traffic section, and representatives of some implementers.

**Funding:**

The National AIDS Council provided funding for the intervention

**Objectives**

The Valentines' Day Campaign intervention intended to engender sexual behaviour change in the motoring public through dissemination of information and IEC material on prevention of HIV infection.

**Background**

The 14<sup>th</sup> of February, which is Valentines' Day is viewed and regarded as a day to celebrate love by many people. It is a day on which people express love to their loved ones through buying and presentation of gifts. Although it is a major possibility on that day and yet not openly talked about, many people end up having sex after the presentation of the gifts.

Realising the importance people attach to this day and the possibility envisaged above, the NAC Provincial AIDS Coordinators for Mashonaland East and Masvingo Provinces decided to mount roadblocks on major roads leading into and out of the respective provincial cities to disseminate information on prevention of HIV to motorists passing through these towns. The central theme animating this intervention was "Love with Responsibility". To achieve this, the coordinators approached the traffic sections of the local Zimbabwe Republic Police for assistance. The Zimbabwe Republic Police welcomed the idea and agreed to assist with the mounting of the roadblock and the stopping of traffic. In Mashonaland East province, assistance was sought and received from the Provincial General Hospital who provided 3 nurses. Masvingo Province received support from Red Cross, VCT Centre and representatives of AIDS Action Clubs from all the Masvingo based tertiary colleges.

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The intervention was targeted at motorists to enable the message to reach many parts of country since the motorists were passing through the respective cities.

## Main Activities

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2006, with the help of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, the respective provincial and district staff mounted roadblocks on the major roads leading into and out of the respective towns. Police also assisted with stopping the vehicles. The NAC staff as well nurses in Marondera and ... in Masvingo would then approach the drivers and passengers of the vehicles to explain the theme of the World AIDS Day Campaign 2005 and beyond. They explained what the drivers and passengers could do to STOP AIDS and Keep the Promise.

In discussing with the motorists, the NAC teams would ask the motorists what importance they attached to the Valentine's Day. Most motorists and passengers responses centred on sex as central to celebrating Valentines' Day. Their responses on safer sex practices differed, with some expressing knowledge and others ignorance on how to protect HIV transmission.

Various IEC materials including pamphlets, magazines, calenders and posters were distributed. In Masvingo Province, NAC staff proceeded to the local long distance bus terminus where they distributed the IEC materials. intervention was animated by

## Outcomes

In both towns, a total of 700 vehicles were stopped and the passengers reached with prevention messages.

## Evaluation

Many motorists expressed appreciation for the efforts by the National AIDS Council teams in both towns to promote prevention of HIV transimission on this day. They also promised that they would take the message to their friends and relatives at their destinations. Unfortunately the teams did not distribute condoms, yet most drivers of cross border trucks were requesting for the condoms. Condoms will in future be distributed to the motoring public to satisfy the need expressed.

## Lessons Learned

- People need constant reminding on prevention
- Partnerships and collaboration from stakeholders can be enhanced by implementing joint interventions
- Disseminating the information to motorists enables the same message to reach a wider spectrum of society because the motorists were going to various parts of the country
- Motorists represented all classes and races of society enabling the wider dissemination of HIV prevention messages. cross section .
- It was very clear from has been learned that good systems and packages strengthen accountability, by creating platforms for planning and budgeting, implementation, acquittals and record keeping.