

Poster presentation

Waking Up to HIV/AIDS in War Ravaged Liberia, The Difficulties in Instituting HIV/AIDS Awareness Programs

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Background

It is extremely difficult to have a clear picture of HIV/AIDS in Liberia. Liberia has been ravaged by arm conflict for the past fourteen years. Due to this it has been very difficult to collect and analyze data in the length and breadth of this tiny West African republic. The bad roads and the constant back and forth movement of refugees and internally displaced persons from one place to another is a contributing factor.

Methods

There were wide ranging places that our assessment covered. We were in the market places, Nightclubs and bars as well as schools and the most important of all we were from door to door. This was a long a hectic process that took more than six months.

Questions were being asked in the form of conversation and at some time for the literates questionnaire were issued to be filled in. Gifts were given to people at times for encouragement. Children at various schools were allowed to have time to discuss AIDS and some causes among women and young girls.

Results

There are numerous problems that must be addressed in order to smoothly run programs related to AIDS.

Firstly, a vast majority of the people is inaccessible; lack of roads has become a barrier separating advocates from victims and vulnerable people. These people lived in isolated areas and remote areas that can only be reached by foot.

Secondly, there is a high level of illiteracy and this is due to poverty. There are very few trained personnel that are available to relate to people in the rural areas and the most vulnerable.

Conclusion

One of the simplest methods in resolving this issue is by providing means by which local trainers can be trained because they know the terrain, language, culture and tradition of the local people.

Poverty alleviation programs should be intensified through literacy programs. HIV/AIDS and other STD's awareness programs should be integrated into schools curricula as a subject and teachers as well as parents should abandoned that age-old legacy of not discussing issues relating to sexuality with adolescents and the public in general.