

# Promoting the Health and Welfare of Truck Drivers in India: A Workshop Report



## Red Ribbon on the Road

*Presented by*

**Center for Human Progress (CHP)**

*in collaboration with*

**IKEA & MOL**

Nhava Sheva, Navi Mumbai  
Maharashtra

March 7, 2013

*With special thanks to IKEA and MOL for giving us the opportunity to work together.*

# Promoting the Health and Welfare of Truck Drivers in India

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## Introduction

A 3-hour general health and HIV awareness workshop was held with truck drivers in Nhava Sheva, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra on March 7, 2013. The workshop was conducted by the Center for Human Progress (CHP) with the invaluable support of IKEA and MOL.

## Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were to:

1) Engage truck drivers in dialogue-based communication about general health and HIV-related risks and vulnerabilities; 2) identify practical strategies to reduce HIV risks; 3) encourage health seeking behaviors among truck drivers, and 4) seek feedback from the community regarding the workshop, its approach and perceived relevance of its contents.

The workshop design embraced entertainment education tools to share information about HIV and general health as well as to promote knowledge about practical strategies for HIV and STI prevention among truck drivers.

A 3-hour workshop agenda (see Box 1) was jointly designed by CHP and IKEA. The workshop itself was led by truck drivers and helpers from CHP. The importance of having truck drivers themselves facilitate the workshop was jointly recognised by CHP and IKEA. Participants from the truck driver community would consider their own community more credible and acceptable and would be more comfortable discussing sexual practices and sexuality with them. Facilitators from the community also understand health issues and context specific barriers to reducing HIV- and STI-related risks among truck drivers. Thus, a team of 3 truck drivers from CHP led the workshop.

## Sessions

Participants of the workshop included 68 truck drivers and labor force (from IKEA, Nitco and BLR). The workshop commenced with brief introductions, followed by a Magnet Theatre performance on the vulnerabilities and risks faced by truck drivers, including issues of police harassment, substance abuse and unsafe sexual practices. The script specifically focused on HIV vulnerabilities due to alcohol abuse and the risks of unprotected sex. The performance maintained a fine balance between humor and serious issues related to HIV- and STI- related risks and vulnerabilities and practical strategies to mitigate them.

### Box 1

#### **WORKSHOP TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF TRUCK DRIVERS IN INDIA**

**MARCH 7, 2013**

**10.30AM-1.30PM**

**1) WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS – 10:30AM-10:40AM**

**2) A MAGNET THEATRE PERFORMANCE – 10:40AM-11:00AM**

**3) HIV AND HEALTH QUIZ – 11:00AM-11:30AM**

**4) CONDOLYMPICS 11:30AM-11:50AM**

**5) HIV AND HEALTH GAMES – 11:50AM-12:05PM**

**6) SHARING KEY MESSAGES, FEEDBACK AND CLOSING – 12:05PM-12:30PM**

**7) HEALTH CAMP – 12:30PM-1:30PM**

**8) LUNCH**

**MAGNET THEATRE IS A FORM OF MID-MEDIA COMMUNICATION, WHICH UNLIKE CONVENTIONAL STAGE THEATRE AND SOME OTHER FORMS OF PARTICIPATORY**

**STREET THEATRE, INVITES THE AUDIENCE TO CREATE AND RE-CREATE SCENARIOS TO SOLVE THE DILEMMA PRESENTED IN THE PERFORMANCE. MESSAGES ARE NOT GIVEN TO THE AUDIENCE THROUGH THE PERFORMANCE RATHER DISCUSSION ENCOURAGES THE AUDIENCE TO GENERATE PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO THEIR BARRIERS (E.G., ABOUT HIV PREVENTION, CARE) AND DILEMMAS THEMSELVES.**



The Magnet Theatre performance embraced dialogue-based communication with the audience throughout. Several key questions were addressed during the discussion, including: Do truck drivers engage in substance abuse? What substances do they use? Does the police harass truck drivers? Do truck drivers engage in unsafe sexual practices? What are some practical strategies to reduce HIV and STI risks? Is it necessary to visit qualified medical doctors? Why is it important to treat STIs? Why is important to test for HIV? What is the window period?

The theatre performance was followed by an HIV and health quiz. Several quiz cards were placed in a bucket. Volunteers were invited to pull out three quiz cards at random (see some quiz questions in Box 2). Volunteers that answered the three questions correctly were awarded first prizes. All volunteers were awarded prizes for participation. Participants' myths and misconceptions about HIV transmission became apparent during this session. The facilitator debunked myths and clarified technical information regarding HIV and STI risks and modes of transmission. Several general health messages were shared.

**Box 2**

**SOME HEALTH AND HIV QUIZ QUESTIONS**



- 1) WHAT ARE SOME RISKS OF EATING FOOD WITHOUT WASHING ONE'S HANDS?
- 2) HIV CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH ORAL SEX?
- 3) USING TWO CONDOMS DOUBLES PROTECTION AGAINST HIV?
- 4) HAVING SEX WITH A DONKEY CAN CURE MY STI?
- 5) WHAT ARE THE MODES OF HIV TRANSMISSION?
- 6) IF A MAN AND A WOMAN ARE HIV-NEGATIVE THEY NEED NOT USE A CONDOM WHEN HAVING SEX WITH EACH OTHER?
- 7) A STRONG PERSON NEED NOT USE A CONDOM AS HE WILL NOT GET HIV?
- 8) HAVING AN STI INCREASES THE RISK OF GETTING HIV?
- 9) HIV AND AIDS ARE THE SAME?
- 10) THERE IS BLOOD IN A PERSON'S SALIVA. WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?

The quiz session was followed by Condolympics or condom games. Participants were asked to volunteer to participate in a condom demonstration game. They were required to put a condom on a penis model. They were also asked to correctly remove the condom and dispose it. This session was designed to underscore the significance of correct condom use for HIV risk reduction.



The condom demonstration highlighted a number of issues related to condom use, including the importance of noting the expiration date on a condom before using it; safe and correct removal and disposal of condoms; and the importance of knowledge about correct condom use for effective HIV and STI prevention.



A one minute stopwatch was used to time volunteers. Participants that were able to demonstrate correct condom use (as well as removal and disposal) were awarded first, second and third prizes. The remaining volunteers were awarded prizes for participation. Prize items were of functional use to truck drivers, e.g., soaps, file folders (to store licenses and other papers), small carry bags and condoms. Before closing this session, the facilitator made a condom demonstration to participants. The importance of correct and safe, use and disposal of condoms was highlighted.

The next Condolympics game was a balloon contest. Three participants were asked to come forward and inflate condoms by blowing into them. A stop watch was used to time them. The biggest balloon inflated in a minute would win. Prizes were distributed to all volunteers. The objective of this session was to normalise condom use and to underscore the importance of condom use during oral sex.



The Condolympics were followed by two strength endurance games, i.e., a bucket game and an arm wrestling competition. The bucket game required three volunteers to come forward. They were asked to use one hand to lift (above shoulder height) a heavy bucket (containing rocks) without letting the bucket drop. A one minute stopwatch was used to time the volunteers. First, second and third prizes were awarded to volunteers.

Similarly, the arm wrestling contest involved a show of physical strength. Two volunteers came forward to participate. A one minute stopwatch was used to time them. The winner was awarded first prize. The second volunteer was awarded a prize for participation.

The objective of the two strength endurance games was to bust a common myth among truck drivers that strong and healthy men need not worry about HIV, and therefore, condom use to prevent infection, as they are not at risk. This is a highly prevalent myth, especially among truck drivers. The facilitator debunked this myth and explained that everyone big, strong and small is equally at risk of HIV and STI infection, therefore, consistent condom use is important for all.



The final session involved a slogan contest designed to reiterate key messages shared during the workshop. This time, slogans were shared by participants themselves.



A flex canvas and markers were mounted to a wall. Participants were invited to come up and volunteer to participate in creative HIV and STI messaging using *shayari* (or poetry, prose and couplets). Humor in *shayari* was used extensively by facilitators throughout the workshop, e.g., during the Magnet Theatre performance as a tool to creatively share messages. *Shayari* is easily understood by truck drivers and is commonly used with them for entertainment education.

Several volunteers came forward to write on-the-spot slogans (see Box 3 for the winning slogans). The winners were voted in by the audience. Prizes were awarded for the winning slogans. Participants echoed these slogans in a joint pledge against HIV.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were invited to share their feedback on the workshop, its design and the perceived relevance of issues addressed. Participants shared their appreciation for the messages shared and the creative tools used to stimulate dialogue. They were also grateful for the health camp which had been integrated with the workshop design.

**Closing**

Following a brief vote of thanks to participants by IKEA, MOL and CHP, they were invited to visit a free health camp. They were informed that a doctor, two assistants and two counsellors (including the lead facilitator of the workshop) were available for consultation. About 35 participants visited the health camp. See Box 4 for some highlights on the health camp.

**Box 3**

SLOGANS

- 1) *EK, DO TEEN, CHAR, CONDOM PEHNO BAAR-BAAR*
- 2) *CONDOM JABTAK, YAUN SAMBANDH TABAK*
- 3) *CONDOM LAGANE KI POORI LO JANKARI, DOOR RAKHO AIDS KI BIMARI*

**Box 4**

SOME HEALTH CAMP HIGHLIGHTS



- 1) PARTICIPANTS EXHIBITED A HUGE DEMAND FOR CONDOMS.
- 2) ONE THOUSAND CONDOMS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS BASED ON THEIR REQUEST.
- 3) SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS REQUESTED HIV TESTS AND SEVERAL MORE REQUESTED STI TESTING. THEY WERE PROVIDED REFERRALS TO LOCAL TESTING CENTERS.
- 4) MANY PARTICIPANTS SOUGHT TREATMENT FOR BACK PAIN.
- 5) SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS REQUESTED MEDICATION FOR ACIDITY AND HEART BURN.



During the closing session special thanks was also conveyed to Jaap Doornbos, Transport Manager, South Asia for joining the workshop. All participants were awarded certificates for participation

Condoms were distributed to all participants!



### Participants

1. Truck drivers and labor force from IKEA, Nitco and BRL
2. Management from IKEA
3. Management from MOL
4. Management from Forbes
5. Management from Nitco
6. Management from Shapoorji Pallonji
7. Health camp staff from Sampada Clinic
8. CHP (Manish Gupta, Punit Gupta, Puneet Kumar, and Ash Pachauri)

## About the Center for Human Progress

The Center for Human Progress (CHP) aims to improve the quality of life of individuals and society by supporting, promoting and encouraging knowledge mobilisation for sustainable change.

As an NGO and social entrepreneurship CHP aspires to build knowledge-based leadership and create community empowerment in the process.

To achieve its goals CHP conducts various activities, including:

1. Training & capacity building
2. Education & awareness building
3. Communication & advocacy
4. Research & documentation

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