

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 13, 2015

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

Introduction

A 3-hour general health and HIV awareness workshop was held with 100-plus truck drivers in Nhava Sheva, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra on March 13, 2015. 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) provide access to a free health camp and doctor health consultations.

The workshop design embraced entertainment education tools to share information about HIV, general health, and sanitation 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 105 truck drivers and labor force (from IKEA, MOL, Nitco, and Shreeji). 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, unsafe sexual practices, and the importance of personal sanitation and hygiene. 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- risks and vulnerabilities and practical strategies to mitigate them.

Box 1

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

**MARCH 13, 2015
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) SLOGAN CONTEST - 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 abuse? What are some problems that substance abuse can cause? What are some important traffic rules to keep in mind? Why is it important to maintain personal hygiene? What are some key symptoms of STIs?

The theatre performance was followed by an HIV and health quiz. Five volunteers were invited to come forward and take a quiz card each (see some quiz questions in Box 2). Volunteers that answered questions correctly were awarded 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) IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO DRINK BEFORE DRIVING. TRUE/FALSE
- 2) IF SOMEONE HURTS THEMSELVES AT WORK, WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?
- 3) IS IT IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW TRAFFIC RULES?
- 4) SHOULD AN HIV POSITIVE PERSON DONATE BLOOD?
- 5) WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF EATING FOOD WITHOUT WASHING ONE'S HANDS?
- 6) MASTURBATION IS A FORM OF SAFE SEX. TRUE/FALSE

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.



At the end of this session, a facilitator made a condom demonstration, which 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.



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 sand) without letting the bucket drop. A two 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. The winning slogan – “*Ek Ho Yah Baar-Baar, Condom Lagao Har-Baar*” -- was voted in as the winner by the audience. Prizes were awarded to all volunteers.



Closing

Following a brief vote of thanks to participants by IKEA, MOL and CHP, participants were invited to visit a free health camp. They were informed that two doctors and one counsellor (a lead facilitator of the workshop) were available for consultation. About 55 participants visited the health camp. See Box 4 for some highlights on the health camp.

Box 4

SOME HEALTH CAMP HIGHLIGHTS



- 1) APPROXIMATELY 55 PARTICIPANTS VISITED THE HEALTH CAMP.
- 2) PARTICIPANTS EXHIBITED A HUGE DEMAND FOR CONDOMS.
- 3) FIFTEEN HUNDRED CONDOMS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS.
- 4) THREE STI CASES WERE DETECTED.
- 5) SEVEN PARTICIPANTS WERE PROVIDED STI COUNSELLING.



Participants

1. Truck drivers and labor force from IKEA, MOL, Nitco, and Shreeji
2. Management from IKEA (Mr. Praveen Sharma)
3. Management from MOL (Mr. Arun Maharaja and Mr. Chandrashekhar Kotian)
4. Management from Forbes (Mr. Soumen Datta)
5. Health camp staff (Dr. Milind Naik and Dr Neelam Naik) organized by Dr. Nirmal Ahuja, United Association for Public Health and Education (UAPHE)
6. CHP (Manish Gupta, Punit Gupta, and Puneet Kumar)

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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