

Formation and operationalisation of Red Ribbon Clubs

Operational Guidelines

2015

**Karnataka State AIDS Prevention society
Bangalore.**

Background:

In the context HIV prevention program in the country, mobilizing and organizing youth focused to prevent them from HIV infection is the need for the hour. While looking at the statistics pertaining to HIV infection among youth in the country, it estimated to be 35% of reported total HIV infected population in the country.¹ However, limited data regarding female adolescent and HIV infection is available, it is reported in several studies that female adolescent are more vulnerable to HIV then their counter part. Thus it is imperative to organize this group including their counter part male adolescent to increase their knowledge on HIV prevention so that the HIV burden on the state could be reduced. Here are few statistics pertaining to HIV and youth.

The Need to work with youth:-

The youth are growing up in a rapidly changing environment with different beliefs and value about morality and sex from those of the earlier generation and that has created conflicting demands and a teetering lifestyle for them. In addition there are several factors that make the youth vulnerable. Some of these are mentioned below:

- Growing sexual developments and maturity among youth leads to increased curiosity among youth makes them more vulnerable to different forms of risks and hazards. This is supported with lack of correct, relevant and adequate information.
- The education offered in tertiary institutions is inadequate information on psychological, physical and sexual growth which leads to mystification and secrecy around human sexuality. In some occasion, youth are misleading by the messages carried in media.
- There is rich evidence across the world supporting the fact that a large proportion of drug users started drug use during their youth. Often it starts as experimentation under peer pressure leading to dependency of the drug. The increasing use of addictive substances (injecting drug use and alcoholism) among youth affects their ability to make decisions about behavior in general and sexual behavior in particular.

¹ *BSS report 2006*

- Although youth suffer most from HIV&AIDS, the epidemic among youth remains largely invisible, both to themselves and to society as a whole. Youth often carry HIV for years without knowing that they are infected. As a consequence, the epidemic is spreading beyond high-risk groups to the general population of youth, making it even harder to control. The youth are economically dependent and socially inexperienced, and generally have less access to health care than adults.
- Many youth are socially inexperienced and easy to be influenced. They are left to the risk of HIV infection without the knowledge and understanding of the consequences of risk exposure and protection modalities. Societies, with its traditional norms and values often compound the risk by making it difficult for youth to learn about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.
- In a cultural setting as that of India, marriage is highly valued and a woman's status depends on finding a husband and having children. Unassertive women though educated, happen to run into risky sexual behavior resulting in being affected by STIs and HIV/AIDS.
- Peer pressures easily influence the youth - often in ways that can increase their risk.
- The youth are the potential change agents who can protect themselves from the health and other types of hazards including HIV and AIDS. Well-trained and sensitized youth from RRCs can serve as peer educators and bring about the desired behavioral change among their peers within and outside educational institutions.

Red Ribbon Clubs- a concept -

Across India, youth studying in colleges and professional Institutions are mobilized and formed a group that is termed as

Red Ribbon Club is a platform where skill and knowledge building session are conducted for the youth population. Through RRC youth are encouraged to learn about safe and healthy lifestyles. The strategy is to promote health seeking behavior and voluntary blood donation as well as enable them to become change agents in HIV & AIDS prevention programs in the state.

The Red Ribbon Club is a voluntary program for students in educational institutions. It is initiated and supported by the Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS), a brief profile of the activities that are conducted and supported by KSAPS are as under.

- Supporting development initiatives that are implementing HIV prevention programs for the high-risk population (Women in sex work, MSM, IDU, Migrant, truckers,) and general population under link work scheme.
- Under services programs such as ICTC, PPTCT, ART, HIV/TB and Blood safety are the ones that are made available to the people at district and taluka levels.
- Besides, KSAPS has IEC section that works on conducts awareness enhancement programs through mass media, mid-media, inter-sectoral collaborations, etc.,

Goal and Objectives:

The RRC aims at harnessing the potential of youth by equipping them with correct Information on HIV/AIDS Prevention. Care and Support and Treatment. It also aims to build their capacities as peer educators to spread right messages on health seeking behaviour and healthy living. They will also be motivated to create enabling environment and increasing voluntary blood donations from among youth.

Goal:

Equipping youth with correct information on HIV/AIDS Prevention, treatment, Care and Supporting

Objectives:

1. To reduce new occurrences of HIV infection among youth by raising their risk perception through awareness on HIV prevention methods.
2. To induce the spirit among youth to help and support people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) thereby reducing stigma and discrimination against PLHWAs.
3. To motivate youth and build their capacity as peer educators and change agents by developing their skills on leadership, negotiation, and team building.
4. To promote voluntary blood donation among youth.

The key focus areas:-

Following are the key focus areas that will be part of activities conducted by RRCs:

- Correct, concise and adequate Information to youth on HIV and AIDS in order to increase level of awareness, thus eliminate myths and misconceptions).
- Educate youth on situations of exploitation and abuse that lead to increase their vulnerability.
- Sensitize care and support needs of PLWHA and instill the spirit of helping and supporting the people living with HIV & AIDS (PLWHA).
- Increase awareness on different services available such ICTC, PPTCT, ART, etc.. so that accessibility of these services could made easier for self and for the community members.
- Create linkages between youth and governmental, non-governmental and community based organizations to access safer and responsible healthy behaviour.
- Organize and facilitate voluntary blood donation camps and mobilize & motivate the youth to part in such program.
- Create a cadre of peer educators among youth to seek and encourage positive health seeking behavior as well as ensuring sustainability of the club.

Roles and Responsibilities key stakeholder:-

KSAPS:

- Ensuring funds are allocated and disbursed to all red ribbon clubs for the activities carried out at their level.
- Maintain MIS and progress of all RRCs in the state and monitoring the progress of RRCs.
- Facilitating communication with all levels regarding formation and functioning of RRCs in the Karnataka.
- Providing technical inputs to all RRCs in the areas of formation, management monitoring and evaluation process as case to case basis.
- Develop and provide youth friendly IEC/BCC material to RRCs.
- Including RRC activities in IEC and annual work plan of the State
- Orient RRCs to work towards the sustenance of the clubs and its activities.

DAPCU Officers:

- Timely fund release to Program Officers of NSS Unit to carry out Red Ribbon Activities.
- Supervise and monitor RRC activities as per the action plan submitted by the respective NSS program officers / RRC In-charge.

- Collect SoE of individual activities carried out by the RRC and send consolidated SoE with supporting documents to PD, KSAPS.
- Provide guidance and hand holding support to RRC if and where required. But not mandatory.

State Liaison Officer - Department of Youth Services

- Send internal circular to all NSS officers to form RRCs as per the set guidelines.
- Share orientation program schedule with KSAPS so that a representative from KSAPS take a session on RRC in orientation program for NSS officers.
- Take part in periodic RRC progress review meetings held at KSAPS.
- Intimation to the concerned NSS officer (District Coordinator / Program Officer) to adhere to the expenditure heads and submit the SoE as stated in the guideline.

NSS Officers (Dist. Coordinator/Program Officer)

- Form Red Ribbon Club consist minimum of 100 members in their respective college. The registration forms to be filled and the copies of the same to be forwarded to KSAPS.
- Facilitate plan of action (activities) to be implemented during the financial year.
- Submit the copy of the plan to SLO, Department Youth Services, Ministry of Youth Services, NSS regional Center and KSAPS for their record and reference purpose.
- Prepare a requisition note to receive funds from DAPCU, and submit the same to DAPCU and collect funds for the activity.
- Submit statement of expenses in the KSAPS format along with appropriate supporting documents (cash memos/receipts/bills).
- Submit consolidated report with the photographs of the programs/activities undertaken during the set time frame.
- Conduct monthly review meeting of RRC and planned sessions/activities.

Institutions/Colleges:

- Conduct periodic advisory committee meetings to review the program of activities of the RRC.
- Introduce designated time slot for the awareness and skill building session for the youth so that RRC planned activities could accomplished in a stipulated time frame.
- Ensure documentation and highlight in college newsletter or other publications at different forums

RRC Members

- Participate in all most all activities planned by the RRC.

- Take part in voluntary resource mobilizing activities for the RRC to ensure its sustenance.
- Contribute innovative learning and experiences that could be shared among all RRCs at the state level. For example, slogans, stories related to vulnerable youth, street plays, etc.
- Actively participating in competitions and community outreach programs inside and outside the campus.
- Orienting the new comers about the objectives and activities of the Club and contribute to the sustainability of the Club.
- With developed life skills and leadership qualities, performing the role of peer educators to heighten the HIV/AIDS risk perception and instill negotiation skills among the youth
- Promoting VBD among the students and participate actively in blood donations.
- Sensitizing the youth regarding the rights of PLHWAs.

Activities of the RRC:-

Following are suggested activities that the NSS Program Officer could consider

| Sl. No. | Activity | Time Line | Role of stakeholders |
|----------------|---|------------------|--|
| 01 | Training programme for the students on basics of HIV/AIDS. | AUG | KSAPS/DAPCU extend support to NSS as required by the respective Units. |
| 02 | Competitions in colleges like essay, poster making, slogan writing. | Nov | Copy of the plan to be shared with KSAPS . |
| 03 | Conducting the World AIDS Day in colleges | Dec | Respective College NSS Officer should conduct the programme. |

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|----|--|---------------|---|
| 04 | Conducting the Blood donation camps in colleges (not in PU Colleges). PU Colleges should Conduct the rural camps by the RRC members create awareness on HIV/AIDS to the rural community | January & feb | NSS Officers should coordinate with the blood bank medical officers & DAPCUS must the send the resource persons / Counsellors |
|----|--|---------------|---|

Following documents/sheets will have to be maintained at RRC level:

The following documents and Formats will be provided by KSAPS for a systematic documenting and monitoring of Red Ribbon Clubs activities.

| SL. NO | NAME OF THE REGISTER | DESCRIPTION |
|--------|---|--|
| 1 | I.RRC Membership Form. | Forms to be distributed and collected by volunteers and kept by PO, NSS. These individual filled in sheets will have to be filed for future reference. |
| 2 | RRC Advisory Committee Form | Once the committee is constituted, filled form of committee has to be filed. [<i>The form will be provided by KSAPS once the Committee is formed at RRC level</i>] |
| 3 | Activity documentation | PO with the assistance of the RRC member/s will record all the activities in a activity file. For example activities such as awareness camps, skill building sessions, trainings, etc. |
| 4 | Meeting Minutes Register (Advisory Committee) | To be maintained by FO and he have to record meeting minutes which has to be forwarded to YC |
| 5 | Financial Records | All the supporting documents must be maintained |