REPORT

BLOW THE WHISTLE CAMPAIGN

A CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST GAY MEN IN CHENNAI

Detail of the Program- World AIDS Day 2009

Date	**:1st December 2009**
Time	**: 4.00 PM**
Venue:	**:Chennai Marina Beach, (Near Marina Swimming Pool)**
Organized by	**: Indian Community Welfare Organisation- ICWO**
Supported by	**:Tamil Nadu State AIDS Control Society- TANSACS**

We Indian Community Welfare Organisation- ICWO is a non-profitable, non-governmental social work organization, working for various developmental projects for the past 15 years in special focus with the marginalized community. ICWO works with MSM (Men having Sex with Men)/ Transgenders in Chennai for STD/HIV/AIDS prevention with the support of TANSACS.

MSM/Transgenders are among the most repressed categories, and the high prevalence of STI/HIV/AIDS among them add a significant problem which is being reduced and controlled by providing all possible services like condom promotion in the field.

Still there are several problems faced by the MSM/Transgender community in the field. These include harrassment by rowdys/gangsters, and clients. They even face violence from their own community members who harass each other for personal issues or any revenge in the field and this sometimes even goes to extreme levels.

TRIUMPH IN "BLOWING THE WHISTLE" CAMPAIGN

To address the issues of MSM and Transgender, ICWO/MSM project team has developed a rescue program for the MSM/Transgender in the field area. That is a common whistle will be distributed to the ORW (Out Reach Workers and PEER EDUCATORS. The community people will inform their peers and community about the advantage of the whistle. Whenever there is an occurrence of violence or any sort of harassment in the field the MSM/Transgender can blow the whistle, hearing the unique sound of the whistle nearby MSM/Transgender community will come for rescue immediately.

This programme was developed by ICWO/MSM team at the field level and created a good impact in the community. There was also hope that finally there was a means to be rescued from the perpetrator. Hence ICWO planned to conduct a campaign to create awareness among the community about this programme so that it helps them to react immediately at any crisis.

This activity will also help to provide excellent services to the MSM/Transgender community in the field without any barrier. Condom promotion can also be strengthened; more information about STI can be induced to the community. Thus this will serve as one of the stepping stone in controlling and preventing STI/HIV/AIDS among the MSM & TG community.

As part of this new Advocacy effort, ICWO initiated the **BLOW THE WHISTLE CAMPAIGN – A CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST GAY MEN IN CHENNAI,** on 1st December 2009.

The campaign was inaugurated by **Dr. J Revathy, Expert Advisor, TANSACS, Dr.Ravi Babu, Joint Director, Blood Safety, TANSACS, Mr. Vendar Venden, Joint Director, TI, TANSACS.**

ICWO also mobilized the support of the general public to extend their support to stop violence against gay men and transgender in Chennai. Mr. A.J.Hariharan, Founder Secretary, ICWO said that "from this day any one from general public who hear their whistles will say **"STOP NOW"** and in Tamil **"ITHU THEVAYA"** this will be the first step towards mobilizing the general public support to stop violence against gay men and transgender in Chennai". He continued that "the acceptance level of the MSM/transgender communities is much better than what it was ten years ago. This is an active step to improving their life".

The successful model will be replicated in other districts of Tamilnadu and also in other states as well.

The event was well covered in the media.

Please visit our Website **www.icwoindia.org** to know more about our organization.