



HIV AND MOBILITY IN AUSTRALIA

Mobilising African community through
the South Australian African
Communities Health Advisory
Committee



Project Summary

South Australian African Communities Health Advisory Committee (SAACHAC) was established as a response to addressing the issue of HIV among African communities.

The committee works with the PEACE (Personal Education and Community Empowerment) Multicultural Services, Relationships Australia (SA) in the planning and delivery of HIV-related programs. This includes events to improve knowledge, challenge attitudes and beliefs, reduce stigma and discrimination, and supporting individuals living with HIV. The committee also act as an advisory body to other related health services to assist them in delivering meaningful services to African communities. The committee is made of influential people from diverse African ethnicities, languages, career, gender, ages and networks.

Organisation: Relationships Australia, South Australia

Population Involved: Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa living in South Australia

Location: Adelaide, South Australia

Duration: 2013—Ongoing

Funding: South Australia Health

Partnerships

- African communities
- Agencies that provide services to African communities

Additional information

The “Left Out” short film is now available through YouTube <https://youtu.be/AhU8qXJsglw>

Project objectives

- To identify current priorities and challenges for addressing HIV transmission amongst African communities in South Australia.
- To develop, implement and evaluate culturally appropriate prevention strategies aimed at reducing HIV transmission within African communities in South Australia.
- To ensure that HIV prevention responses are based on data and evidence, and to identify where there is a lack of evidence and advocate for research to occur.
- Make recommendations about issues affecting or may affect African communities.

Road Map Action Areas

The [HIV and Mobility in Australia: Road Map for Action](#) proposes 71 strategies under five action areas to address HIV in mobile populations. This project addresses the following action area and strategies.

Action Area 3) Community mobilisation

Strategy 3.2. Develop HIV knowledge and capacity amongst migrant community, cultural and spiritual leaders.

Strategy 3.8. Further develop programs (personal perspectives etc.) which aim to reduce stigma and discrimination related to migrant and mobile populations

Contact

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Enaam Oudih at e.oudih@rasa.org.au or by phone on 08 8245 8137

Measuring Achievement

- Internal process and outcome evaluation obtained through written feedback from participants of training provided by SAACHAC to agencies and community members.
- Written and verbal feedback obtained from agencies that SAACHAC provides consultation to.
- Written and verbal feedback from PEACE Multicultural Services about the impact of the advice and contribution made by SAACHAC to their annual plan activities and resource development.
- Verbal feedback from community members.
- Record of anecdotal evidence and narratives of community members especially those who are living with HIV.

Project Successes

- Committee members are aware of the global, national and local picture of HIV. This has enabled them to participate and contribute to AFAO's National African project, the international AIDS 2014 conference, and to advocate for a change within their own communities.
- There has been an increase in demand for information sessions at a family and community levels.
- There has been a slight increase in HIV testing.
- An African woman living with HIV is currently being trained to be a public speaker following the support she received from members of the committee.

- Members of this committee provided individual support for individuals living with HIV and worked towards encouraging them to be involved in peer support program.
- Increased availability of educational resources at a community level. In addition helped to produce and promote a short film titled "Left Out".
- Research into the shame, stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV.

Project Challenges

Changing people's attitudes and behaviours is a process which requires time with continuous education, exposure and on-going conversation about 'taboo' topics such HIV. We found that misconceptions and beliefs about HIV are one of the major issues perpetuating HIV-related stigma and discrimination which is a barrier to any intervention.

Lessons Learnt

This can be summarised as 'Nothing about us, without us'. The work done by SAACHAC so far have clearly highlighted the importance of involving the people who are affected by issues in developing solutions to those issues. Involving and engaging the affected people in the process of finding solutions ensures that they take ownership of the issues and take part in doing something about it. It also ensures that the solution provided are appropriate to generate the expected outcome. Cultural awareness and understanding are crucial to success in the provision of effective services. This is a consideration in all of PEACE Multicultural Services' client and community engagement.



This document was published by the **Community of Practice for Action on HIV and Mobility (CoPAHM)**. CoPAHM was established to keep HIV and mobility issues on the national agenda, and to progress action areas highlighted within the *HIV and mobility in Australia: Road Map for Action*.

To find out more details about *The Road Map* or *CoPAHM*, please [click here](#) or email copahm@curtin.edu.au

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