

**BUSINESS
AGAINST HIV/AIDS
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
BUSINESS COALITION ON HIV/AIDS**

The National Stamp Competition

In 2008 the Business Coalition against HIV & AIDS (BAHA) initiated a Stamp competition working in close collaboration with POST PNG and the National AIDS Council. The aim of this competition is to encourage sections of the community to think and express their views on HIV & AIDS through an art competition with nine finalists having their art works portrayed on national stamps with international exposure.

The Stamp competition has one primary consideration – “Positive Living.” It is about bringing out the best in people in how they meet the challenge of HIV. This could be in the areas of health & nutrition, care and support within families or friends, working with colleagues who may have the virus and what we increasingly need to see more of – building leadership. Thus expression through art can often convey warm, positive and yet strong messages about dealing with HIV within a community.

The two groups identified for the competition are students from high schools and from the recognised artistic community within PNG, which will lead to four winners from each group.

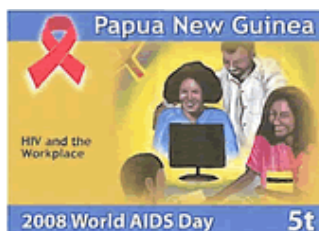
Students are an important group to reach due to the fact that they are more likely to absorb information and act as educators to their parents - many who have not had the educational opportunities afforded to their children. In the absence of a cure for HIV in the medium term, it is imperative that we accelerate vital HIV information through schools and an art competition is a broad brush way of building discussion among students and their teachers on prevention, care and community understanding.

The competition covered nine positive aspects in meeting the HIV & AIDS challenge.

Introduction

The collaboration of the PNG Business Coalition against HIV & AIDS, POST PNG and National AIDS Council in the HIV & AIDS stamp competition is a first for PNG and demonstrates our growing commitment in the fight against HIV. As part of on going community awareness on HIV, students and professional artists were asked to develop art work around various facets of HIV. This holistic outcome combined with a kaleidoscope of warm talent depicting HIV in a very human context suggests that Papua New Guinea will meet the HIV challenge over the years to come.

HIV and the Workplace



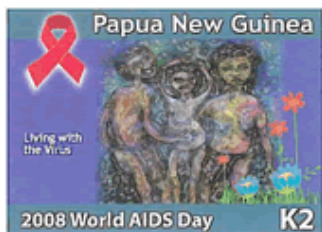
When the private sector gets involved in the response to HIV and AIDS, the effect is immediate with greater understanding, whether it is through workplace training and policies, reducing risk, discrimination and stigmatisation, access to Anti Retroviral drugs and or general awareness. Responding to HIV in the workplace not only helps protect your community, but your business as well.

Care support and the role of family



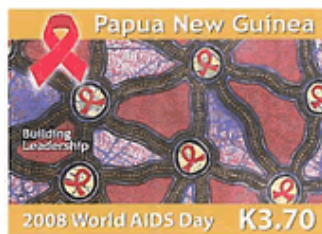
Whether health services are good or non-existent, the support of family and friends is pivotal in the care and support of those with HIV. Families have the ability to transcend fear and prejudice and build environments of love and understanding. Loving families are the cornerstone to people living with the virus.

Living with the HIV & AIDS



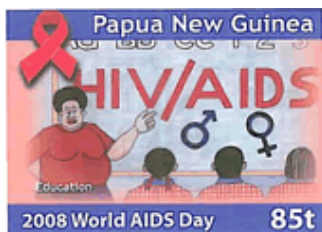
Living with the virus should not be seen as a death sentence. Care, treatment and support are available and assist people living with HIV to continue to live quality lives. Living with HIV is about attitude, acceptance and positive prevention.

Building Leadership



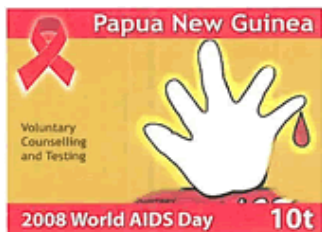
We can have the best advisers, health workers and access to medicines but without proper coordination and leadership, we cannot achieve a successful response to HIV. Leadership is about politicians, people in business, community and religious leaders acting as one to confront the threat of HIV. Leadership is also about acknowledging and encouraging positive change in people's lives to continually reinforce behaviour change.

Education



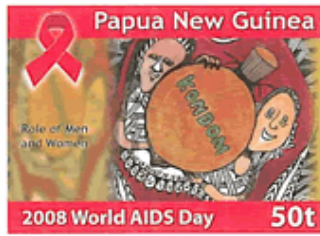
Understanding the virus is about education and reinforcement of HIV messages whether it is in the village or in the schools, whether young or old. Young people properly educated on HIV & AIDS through school can help teach their parents how to remain free of HIV. Education is a vital component to any HIV response.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing



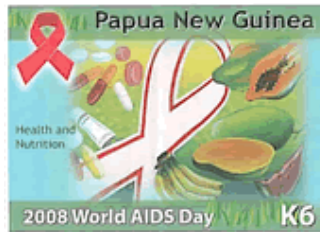
Knowing your HIV status is the start of behaviour change. If you find you are HIV positive, you can seek treatment. If you are not HIV positive, it is a start for learning how to stay free of the virus. Voluntary Counselling and Testing is free and available.

Role of Men and Women



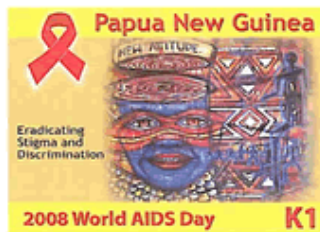
Both men and women have a role to play based on mutual respect and honesty. HIV does not discriminate between the sexes; it just makes it worse if we treat each other badly. Eradicating violence in the family and violence against women contributes to reduction in HIV.

Health & Nutrition



Living with or without the virus means working to stay healthy. A balanced diet of fruit, vegetables and protein will help in keeping strong immune systems. Reducing substance abuse means not only healthier living but better conscious decision making.

Eradicating Stigma & Discrimination



Only when we consciously decide to replace ignorance with knowledge, tolerance and understanding, that we begin to build a community which can properly care and assist people living with the virus. People living with the virus have enough to deal with without the burden of ignorance and discrimination.

In Conclusion

The final chapter to the global response to HIV & AIDS is still waiting to be written. In the meantime, what has become clear is that the better responses to effective management of containment of the virus involve leadership. Without leadership, the HIV response becomes fragmented and ineffective. What makes this interesting is that while often we seek leadership from those in authority, we can all make a difference by showing leadership in our workplaces, our families, with friends or in our village. It's really a matter of all of us linking hands and working together.

For more information regarding the “HIV & PNG Stamps”, please contact Post PNG:

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Post PNG Limited

Frangipani Stamp Issue - April 2005

