

GOOD PRACTICE

March 2010

HIV Prevention Health Education among Migrants in the Railway System in China



Background of the Project

HIV Prevention in Railways Project (CPR6R208) aimed to increase knowledge and awareness of HIV prevention among migrants using railway system through health education in the stations and on the trains under the administration of 5 railway bureaus (e.g. Zhengzhou, Lanzhou, Liuzhou, Urumqi and Chengdu) during busy travel periods such as the Spring Festival and the Summer Harvest during 2006-2009. The project was implemented by Ministry of Railways (MOR) and supported by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Project expected output

Increased knowledge and awareness of HIV prevention among migrants using railway system.

Summary of Good Practice

Increased knowledge and awareness of HIV prevention among migrants through carrying out various health education activities in China's railway system.



Level of intervention

In the railway system – in the stations and on the trains

Targeted users of the practice

- Government officials of health sector of railway bureaus
- Technical staff of railway disease control and prevention sector
- People working in the transportation system

Problems addressed

- Lack of correct knowledge on HIV among migrants due to limited access to relevant information
- Lack of capacity to conduct effective health education among migrants in railway system

Purpose of Intervention

- To equip migrants with correct understanding of HIV, increase knowledge and awareness on HIV prevention and promote safe sexual behaviors
- To pilot model of effective and tailored health education targeting migrants in railway system

Context

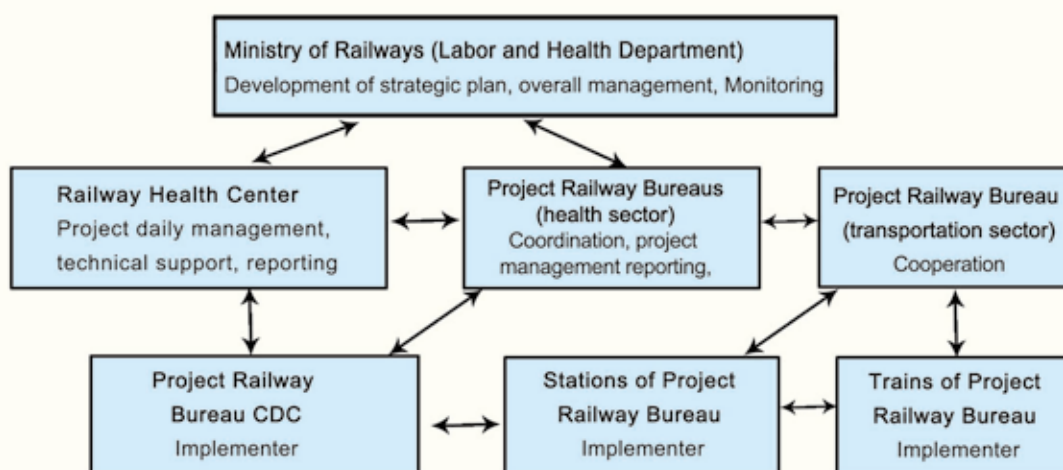
- There are currently 120 million internal migrants in China, and most of them lack HIV/AIDS information and the skills to protect themselves against HIV infection.
- Most migrants have limited access to STI/HIV prevention, treatment and care services and thus increasing the risk of HIV transmission.
- Currently there are over 5,700 railway stations and around 86,000 km of railway track covering the whole country, ranking the second longest in the world.
- Train travel is the most popular mode of long-distance transportation in China, particularly for migrants. Approximately 15 billion passengers ride China's vast railway system each year.
- As a member of the State Council AIDS Working Committee, Ministry of Railways is appointed to work on HIV prevention among train passengers.
Ministry of Railways has established the coordinating group for HIV/AIDS prevention and control and developed the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Action Plan in Railway System (2004 – 2008).
The five project railway bureaus, e.g. Zhengzhou, Lanzhou, Liuzhou, Urumqi and Chengdu are located in western and central China, which are the sources of large number of migrants for other destinations in China.

Process

- Creation of a supportive environment by undertaking advocacy among leaders and officials in railway system to increase HIV awareness and facilitate multi-sector collaboration

The project attached great importance to increasing the railway leaders' awareness on HIV through advocacy meetings, study tour and training. This resulted in the project railway bureaus' commitment on HIV prevention health education program among migrants travelling by train. The project implementation plan of the project railway bureaus were incorporated into their regular annual workplans. The project railway bureaus provided 1:1 counterpart funding. By forming the project leading group with members of relevant sectors including health, transportation, railway stations, and railway CDC, a multi-sector collaboration mechanism on HIV health education targeting migrants was set up in railway system.

Structure of the multi-sector collaboration mechanism



- Strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of the railway system on HIV prevention health education program management and implementation

The project provided training on program management, HIV prevention knowledge, and Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) to the key members of the project railway bureau's leading groups. Cascade training was conducted among railway staff (health, transportation and public security) in each project railway bureau to equip the implementers with HIV knowledge and communication skills.

• Conducting health education on HIV prevention among migrants travelling by train

Timing: During the peak times for intensive travel of migrants such as the Spring Festival (January - February) when migrants go back home for family gathering to celebrate the Chinese New Year and the Summer Harvest period (August) when migrants come back home for harvest.

Places: in the stations and on the trains

Health education activities:

The railways utilized their existing communication and other infrastructure in railway system to communicate HIV prevention through a broad range of channels.

In the stations:

- Broadcasting HIV prevention video programs on TV in the waiting room
- Setting up HIV education bulletin boards at meeting places of stations such as the entrances
- Displaying education messages on electronic screens of train timetable
- Displaying health education materials at the information counter for free distribution
- Distribution of health education materials to migrants in the waiting rooms by railway staff

On the trains:

- Broadcasting HIV prevention radio programs
- Distribution of health education materials by railway staff
- In addition to the above regular health education activities, public events on World Population Day and World AIDS Day were organized. Migrants could participate in HIV knowledge contests, dramas on HIV prevention, and face-to-face HIV counseling by railway health staff.



Health Education Materials:

The project developed two types of health education materials tailored to the needs of migrants travelling by train -

- 1) materials used by the existing railway communication infrastructure with comprehensive HIV prevention knowledge and information such as posters, bullet boards, audio and video materials.
- 2) materials for distribution to migrants with simple and clear messages on HIV prevention and safe behavior, such as pocket-size calendar, paper cups, playing cards, fans and paper towels.



Duration of UNFPA supported project

The project began in July 2006 and ended in June 2009 (3 years)

Resources required

- Finance resources: US\$ 200,000 from UNFPA and US\$ 147,000 from Ministry of Railways and five project railway bureaus' counterpart funding
- Human resources: railway health staff, railway transportation staff in the stations and on the trains
- Communication infrastructure: the existing communication infrastructure and equipments in railway system including bullet boards, TV in the stations, radio on the trains, etc.
- Health education materials tailored to migrants
- Technical support: technical assistance on IEC/BCC materials development and M&E of health education provided by UNFPA

Indicators for monitoring

Process indicators:

- Number of times health education activities held
- Number of health education materials distributed
- Number of stations and trains covered by the project
- Number of migrants reached by the health education project

Output indicators:

- Percentage of migrants using railway system who gave correct answers to selected questions on HIV.
- Percent of migrants using railway system with the intention to use male or female condoms with non-cohabiting sexual partners.

Positive impact

- The HIV knowledge has increased among migrants using railway system. The percentage of migrants with correct knowledge on HIV prevention before and after the health education are as follows:

2007	2008	2009
Pre Post	Pre Post	Pre Post
19.2 %-37.3%	32.3%-46.5%	25.1%-62.4%

- The migrants' awareness of safe behavior has been increased. The percent of migrants using railway system who responded that they would use male or female condoms with non-cohabiting sexual partners increased after the health education as follows:

2007	2008	2009
Pre Post	Pre Post	Pre Post
74.1%-83.1%	85.1%-91.7%	80.6%-88.2%

Limitation and challenges

- Due to the high mobility of migrants travelling by train, health education in railway system can increase the knowledge and awareness of HIV prevention among migrants, but it is hard to change behaviors via such one-time messages. However, it can have more impact on behavior change if supported by other long-term campaigns and behavior change interventions.
- Large-scale campaigns cannot be conducted regularly in railway system due to the requirement of a large amount of time, manpower and material resources.
- Advocacy activities to leaders of railway bureaus need to be continuous due to their regular rotation in railway system.

Facilitating factors

- Railways as a unique platform to reach large numbers of migrants.
- Successful advocacy to leaders of the railway bureaus to gain continuous support and commitment to the health education program targeting migrants in railway system.
- Establishment of multi-sector collaboration mechanism within the railway system.
- Training for railway staff (health and transportation) on HIV prevention.
- Utilization of the existing communication and other infrastructure in railway system.
- Combination of long-term regular health education activities during peak times of intensive travelling of migrants with one-time large-scale campaigns on special occasions.
- Development of user friendly health education materials for migrants traveling by train such as playing cards, paper cup, paper towel, etc.



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UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.



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