

HIV awareness interactive art installation at UJ

An innovative mobile pop-up exhibition is running across four of University of Johannesburg's campuses, namely Soweto, Kingsway, Bunting and Doornfontein, created in collaboration with UJ's Institutional Office for HIV & AIDS (IOHA) and non-profit organisation HIVSA.



The HIVSA and IOHA peer educators worked together to deliver an experiential art installation that aims to educate, empower and inspire first year students at the University of Johannesburg. Taking place over four days 21, 22, 23 and 28 January 2015, the mobile exhibition aims to incite dialogue and conversation around HIV and risky behaviour among students and provide links to information and support, using CHOMA an interactive online magazine accessible via digital and social media platforms.

The CHOMA pop-up exhibition highlights three key statistics sourced from the South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, published by Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) last year. According to the survey, 79% of people believe they are not at risk of contracting HIV. Many varsity students, particularly first year students, often engage in risky sexual behaviour, putting them at risk of contracting STI including HIV. This statistic is visually displayed with hanging mannequins reflecting the reality that the majority of young people believe they are not at risk (8 out of 10); while only a minority acknowledge that they are at risk.

A condom wall at the pop up stall features pink and blue condoms displayed in the shape of 'Be Safe'. Multicoloured condoms are being given freely to the students, as part of CHOMA's behaviour change goal to inspire positive behaviour change and to encourage safe sex behaviour. This is in order to increase the statistic stating that only 36% of people use a condom every time they have sex, according to the HSRC survey.

Thulani Machere, HIVSA mobile health community and stakeholder liaison said, "We want young people to personalise these statistics for themselves and empower them to shape attitudes that lead to a healthy lifestyle."

Students encouraged to join in

According to the survey, only 30% of people know the facts about HIV transmission. Students have the chance to join the conversation by writing on a chalkboard and making a pledge as to how they are going to keep themselves and their loved ones safe from HIV transmission. By doing so, the students get the opportunity to engage in knowledge sharing around HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Rainny Magcai, head of UJ Institutional Office for HIV and AIDS, says, "The collaborative partnership between CHOMA and UJ (IOHA & Campus Health) has lifted us to greater heights; improving our student outreach and impact. We started with the first year experience HIV awareness programme, which is already

a success at the two campuses APK & APB. Groundbreaking today was APB, where we received an amazing response, evidence that we have managed to use methods that talk to that particular student community. There is therefore clear indication that 2015 is indeed going to be a successful year in finally having campaigns addressing our student community."

CHOMA is HIVSA's interactive mobi magazine that ensures that everything from love and relationships to inspiration, health, fashion and beauty gets readers coming back on a regular basis. Its main goal is to engage with young women through Facebook, Mxit, Mobi, and Twitter in a way that inspires and empowers them to be the next HIV free generation. In just over a year CHOMA has built up an audience of over 680 000 subscribers.

For more information, go to www.choma.co.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>