

A PINK LIFE

August 2011. Volume 1, Issue 1
A TLF Share Collective Newsletter

An Overview: What is TLF Share Collective

Nowadays, more people are being aware about the issues in our society that need to be resolved. They try to find ways on how they can help in resolving these issues. Most of them help by being a volunteer in non-government organizations (NGOs). So how do these NGOs work for the society? Most of the time, they facilitate programs or projects that specifically want to work on a certain issue. They look for sponsors, who can provide financial support and recognition.

TLF Share Collective is one of the non-government organizations that aims to help one of the controversial issues that the whole world is actually facing. What I'm talking about is finding ways to stop gender bias and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. They say that one of the causes of HIV/AIDS is having sexual intercourse with some of the same sex. And because of this, TLF tries to let the society become aware of ways to prevent this from happening to more people. They are not preventing people of the same sex to have an intimate relationship. They even accept these people and support them with their preferences that most of the people from the society do not support.

***"finding ways to stop gender bias
and the prevention of HIV/AIDS"***

This non-profit and non-government organization is not like the usual NGOs who are fighting against HIV/AIDS. They focus more on men having relationship with other men, which usually experience controversies. Because most people think that higher rate of HIV/AIDS cases came from men having sexual relationships.



See TLF, page 3

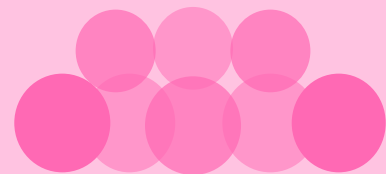


TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Overview: What is TLF?
page 1

We Don't Just Hang Around...
page 2

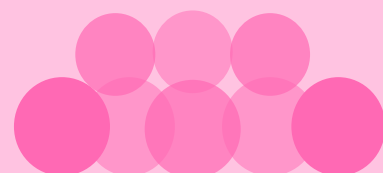
Presenting! TLF projects
page 3

Sex Education: How does it help?
page 4

Focusing More on MSM infections...
page 6

Condom 101
page 6

Feature: An Interview...
page 7



We Don't Just Hang Around, We Prevent HIV!

TLF Shared Collective has taught of ways on how they can apply the mission of their organization. They have conducted different activities that could help the Filipinos become more aware of issues about HIV and how it can be prevented.

Prevention is better than cure! The following are the different ways in which TLF is promoting the prevention of HIV.



Preventing men from having HIV

H.I.V. Workshop or Healthy Interaction and Values

The Healthy Interaction and Values (H.I.V.) Workshop's goal is to develop gay, MSM, and bisexual males' knowledge regarding STI, HIV, and AIDS, and their skills for safer sex.

Peer ETA Training (Peer Educators, Trainers, and Advocates)

Participants of the H.I.V. Workshop led by TLF SHARE are encouraged to be peer educators, trainers, and advocates in outreach programs and community activities. Similar to the H.I.V. Workshop, Peer ETA, aims to share awareness of HIV, STI, and AIDS. It also concentrates on building social and group communication skills and improving critical thinking about one's gender and sexuality.

Outreach Education Activities

In this program, Outreach volunteers and workers lecture on STI, HIV, and AIDS, safer sex, sexuality in different communities, events, and establishment. They also give out flyers, brochures, and aim at creating a network with MSM and transgender who are willing to socialization, peer or sexual networking.

We Don't Just Hang Around, We Want Safe Communities!

Aside from preventing HIV, TLF Share Collective also advocate having safer communities in the Philippines, in terms

of stopping the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and providing the needs of the LGBT. Here are some of the programs done by TLF Share Collective for the past few years since it was established:

The Community Centers

The company's offices and community centers located in Metro Manila and in Batangas City withhold various activities and gatherings to cater the needs of the LGBT community and the H.I.V. participants of the said workshops and said activities conducted by The Library Foundation. These location grounds where activities are held contributes to a more interpersonal relationship, digging within one individual's needs through providing them good facilities wherein they can talk comfortably and share stories—giving them a council that is worthwhile. Through these, the LGBT community is strengthened.

Coordination and Partnerships

Since their main goal is to advocate and spread H.I.V. information, advocating reproductive health, and emphasizing rights of everyone, especially the LGBT, TLF Share needs to collaborate with different sponsors to heighten people's awareness with proper advertising and public-awareness. Through this partnership, sponsors and stakeholders will help them in raising their advocacy campaigns. They now aim to gain more networks and partnerships to potential stakeholders who can implement said advocacy implementation projects.

Participatory Governance

Their mai goal is to spread the knowledge on H.I.V., people's rights, and what their organization do for the. Through reaching out to local barangays with constant tie up with the government to allow them in conducting informal and formal groups. This will, in turn, help them extend their assistance to every one who is in need to participate in what the TLF will further offer them.

Presenting! TLF's Projects All For YOU!

CURRENT PROJECT

Recently, The Library Foundation has launched the UNDP-HAIN-TLF Project. This program aims to provide essential information and leadership training to Men who have sex with men (MSM) and Transgender (TG). The goal of this project is to establish a community that is actively involved in solving problems regarding HIV and AIDS. It also wants to build an environment that accepts and supports our gay community. To respond to this project, they organized a program called TLF SHARE COLLECTIVES. This is a print advertisement promotion that encourages people to be more open-minded and unbiased when it comes to dealing with homosexuals. This project does not only promote an equal treatment between heterosexuals and homosexuals but at the same time, it also acts as a fundraising activity. The Library Foundation wants to generate funds so that the organization could expand and reach a larger scope of audience.

PAST PROJECTS

For the past few years, The Library Foundation has been active in fighting for its advocacy, which is to share their knowledge to the public about the misconceptions about AIDS and HIV. Through providing these information to the public, they are able to shape a community that is aware when it comes to dealing with issues concerning the LGBT community.

The Library Foundation has branches in Makati, Marikina, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Southern Tagalog Region and The Albay province. This project focuses on three different populations: (1) Men who have sex with men, (2) People in prostitution and Migrant workers.



TLF: For fun, safe, and sexy living!



"be more open-minded and unbiased when it comes to dealing with homosexuals"

Another one of their programs is the AMFAR TLF SHARE PROJECT: Forging stronger leadership in HIV/AIDS Prevention and care among MSM. Through the use of this, the organization can promote its advocacy to a more specific target audience. As a result, the public could have a deeper understanding of what the organization is trying to promote. Furthermore, the AMFAR TLF SHARE PROJECT gives the gay community a chance to have a representative from their area that could greatly speak and fight for the rights of all the gay people of this country. Possible Representatives would come from the province of Bulacan and Albay where The Library Foundation has established their regional beneficiaries.

See TLF projects, page 5

TLF Share...

from page 1

They accept these men with their preference, and teach them the risks of having HIV, through their different programs. They conduct peer counselling and interview with these people. Anonymous phone calls are also done to inform people about the facts of HIV and how TLF can help them.

TLF's aim is to have a healthy and safe community that would stop discrimination among transgenders, bisexual males, and males who have sex with other males, or homosexuals. To sum it all up, TLF's goal is to work collaboratively with Filipino communities to fight for human rights despite other people's preferences.

TLF can only accomplish their goals only if people would give support. Also, they are seeking for sponsors who can provide for their activities.



TLF is trying to help these men with their experiences in the society

Sex Education: How does it help?

based from <http://www.avert.org/sex-education.htm>

What is Sex Education?

Sex education is a way of giving out facts or information and developing perspectives and notion about "sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy". It also aims to develop the youth's thinking in order for them to create "informed choices about their behaviour, and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices." In different countries, it is accepted and believed that the youth should experience sex education. The reason for this is because most people think that through sex education, they can be able "to protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and AIDS". Sex education can also help in providing rights for the youth to be informed on the things that has a great impact on their lives, rights for them to meet their needs and rights to let them "enjoy their sexuality and relationships" among other people.

"to protect themselves against abuse, exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases..."

How do they form the youth's notion on sex education?

Most of the notions being told to the youth about sex and sexuality may be "confusing and contradictory".

Let me share this example from the website, www.avert.org:

"Some health messages emphasise the risks and dangers associated with sexual activity and some media coverage

promotes the idea that being sexually active makes a person more attractive and mature. Because sex and sexuality are sensitive subjects, young people and sex educators can have strong views on what attitudes people should hold, and what moral framework should govern people's behaviour - these too can sometimes seem to be at odds. Young people are very interested in the moral and cultural frameworks that binds sex and sexuality. They often welcome opportunities to talk about issues where people have strong views, like abortion, sex before marriage, lesbian and gay issues and contraception and birth control. It is important to remember that talking in a balanced way about differences in opinion does not promote one set of views over another, or mean that one agrees with a particular view. Part of exploring and understanding cultural, religious and moral views is finding out that you can agree to disagree."

It is natural for us, people to have different beliefs on certain topics. But we should be concerned that those people who are trying to teach sex education should not be influenced negatively in terms of their own belief regarding sex and sexuality.

Here's another example from www.avert.org for this situation:

"Even if a person believes that young people should not have sex until they are married, this does not imply withholding important information about safer sex and contraception. Attempts to impose narrow moralistic views about sex and sexuality on young people through sex education have failed. Rather than trying to deter or frighten young people away from having sex, effective sex education includes work on attitudes and beliefs, coupled with skills development, that enables young people to choose whether or not to have a sexual relationship taking into account the potential risks of any sexual activity."

See Sex Education, page 5

TLF Projects...

from page 3

The Global Fund HIV/AIDS Projects

TLF share has been able to continue its HIV/AIDS campaign for the third and fifth time. Through the continuous support from Philippine HIV/AIDS, they have been granted by the global fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

In working with the campaign, TLF share promotes awareness among the vulnerable population on STI management. The project aspires to communicate effectively among individuals whom are potential candidates of STI disease such as MSM, prostitutes, migrant workers. Moreover, it seeks to change the behaviour of these individuals for health care concerns.

amFAR MSM Initiative Community Awards

Through participatory governance among community organizations, "Forging Stronger Leadership in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care among MSM" aspires to help on the development of institutionalizing management systems for HIV/AIDS

From Bulacan and Albay provinces emerged a number of MSM and transgender groups beneficiaries of TLF shares. These community groups are now cooperating with the campaign project

UNDP Component IV

"Promoting Leadership and Mitigating the Negative Impacts of HIV and AIDS on Human Development" or "Strategic Information and Community Leadership Among MSM and Transgenders" crafts the possibility for community organizations to actively support the HIV/AIDS campaign projects. It helps the community organization members to utilize their strategies in supporting the campaign.

TLF together with UNDP and HAIN collaborating for work progress in engaging MSM and TG organizations in policy and program betterment in at least four local government units in the country.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

- * Accenture Delivery Center in the Philippines
- * Philippine National AIDS Council
- * Philippine NGO Council for Population, Health and Welfare



Youth learning from sex education know how to prevent HIV

Sex education...

from page 4

There are many different sources that the youth can access that would serve as a teaching and a guiding tool about sex and sexuality. Different communication tools like leaflets, brochures, print ads, television and radio commercials, websites, newspaper, books, ect, somehow be accurate or inaccurate in giving out information about sex. The aim of sex education is to lead the youth to right path and right information, which can help them in dealing with it.

The youth should have information on all the following topics because it would serve as the basis on how they could develop their "understanding about sex and sexuality" (based on avert.org):

- * Sexual development & reproduction
 - this is about the sexual development and cahnges in a human's body and how they should deal with it, having a good hygiene. Also, it is about the sexual reproduction, as well as sexually transmitted infections.
- * Contraception & birth control
 - this is about the contraceptives available and how they function. Information on why people should use it or not should be provided, as well as how to use these contraceptives.
- * Relationships
 - this is about the different types of relationship that an individual may experience. It is all about love, commitment and marriage, and how people should handle and maintain it. This is importaant because it is actually connected with sex and sexuality.

Youth should also be informed about abortion and its impact on the society. Also, they should know about who to confine with when seeking for advice or counselling about sex and sexuality.

Focusing More on MSM Infections: This is What the Philippines Need

based from <http://www.dragoncastle.net/community/2011/07/>

Luckily, we were able to find an article about how our country should focus more on sexual infections brought by men having sex with other men. They say that it is one of the biggest sources why our country is already experiencing higher rates of HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted infections. This article is titled Philippines Must Focus On MSM Infections... So let me what is it all about:

A representative from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) affirmed that the Philippine government must take time in exploring the community of men having sex with men (MSM) mainly to focus on how to prevent exposure of these individuals to Human Immunodeficiency Virus ... (HIV) which now cases of it is very evident in the country.

UNFPA country representative Ugochi Daniels said the government and private health units must act swiftly to help HIV patients from the MSM sector.

The Department of Health (DOH) release a data in 2011 that shows the transmission of HIV commonly occurs among men having sex with men. The data illustrate that there was an increase of percentage HIV cases among MSM in the month of May 2011.

The effective way of preventing MSM from HIV exposure is awareness campaigns. Through HIV awareness campaigns, it will surely reduce HIV cases in the Philippines. The DOH claimed that by the end of 2011 there will be roughly 2,000 more HIV affected individuals in the Philippines.



"HIV awareness campaigns will surely reduce HIV cases in the Philippines"

Condom 101: How Does it Help?

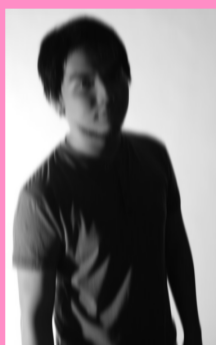
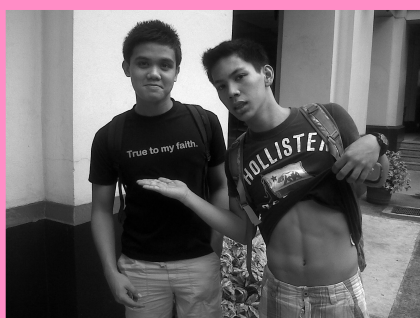
One of the aims of TLF Share Collective is opening the mind of the people about sex and sexuality. And if you look at their website, you'll see their a link of a video on how to use a condom. So let's see what it is all about...

Based on www.avert.org, condom is the only material that can prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy, only if it is used properly and correctly.

There are actually two kinds of condoms, One is for the male, which is used by fitting in to the male's penis and covering it, so that sperms coming from the male would not be able to get in to the female's reproductive system. Because of this, reproduction will be prevented, as well as the sexual infection (if there is any) that he has. Next is the condom for female. However, only the FC2 female condom is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. And I don't think that female condom is being sold here in the Philippines.

Condoms have different kinds of shapes or forms. "Most have a reservoir tip although some have a plain tip. Condoms may be regular shaped (with straight sides), form fit (indented below the head of the penis), or they may be flared (wider over the head of the penis).

See Condom 101, page 7



More attention on men-to-men relationship, so that we can stop the spread of HIV

Feature: "An Interview with an HIV Positive Person"

Let us read on this interview conducted with an HIV positive person- how he dealt with the treatment of the society, what are his experiences, what are the things in his life that got affected because of his sickness, and how the society should deal with people who are HIV positive. This is not actually an original interview done by our group, this interview was found in the website of "The Viewspaper", which represent the voices of the youth. This interview was chosen to be featured because it speaks of the actual feeling and experiences of a man that is at the same situation with the people that TLF is trying to help.

Not Anil Ambani or LN Mittal, not Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji or Amir Khan, neither any person holding a government stature nor a person that would hold any significance in your life. This time in the limelight we bring to you someone you might click the home option seemingly uninterested to hear about, or perhaps scared that some virus through the PC might just make you a victim of the Invincible. It sounds incongruous presently but we are sure people like us would and blatantly do it. This time it is a person long forgotten, whose emotions have been completely neglected and discarded by our society just because they say it isn't the right way. He is (name undisclosed) an HIV carrier and has discussed the discrimination, stigmatization and denial that he has been put through. He story has touched me. He was simple, down to earth, jolly hearted and unfathomably touching in whatever he said.

VP: Hello sir, we have heard a great deal about people with this infection, but to meet somebody like you is a completely different and empathetic moment. Sir, for how long have you been in this NGO?

XYZ: It feels great that somebody came up to me and to be precise enough, not scared to come up to me. (A smile)



An interview with an HIV positive person

Having an HIV virus in me, is something that has been terrible for me and has changed my life all through. It's been 4 and a half years since I have been carrying this HIV status and it's been terrible. I was shifted to this NGO some two years back when things weren't going right.

VP: Sir, what are the reasons that brought you to this NGO? I mean from what I know, HIV is not contagious through saliva, water and food sharing and touch. And you have your family as well. Was there any sort of discrimination that came upon you and perhaps that's why you are here?

XYZ: No, no that is not true. My family had been completely supportive. Initially, there were a lot of problems because we weren't really aware. I myself did not allow my children and wife to share water and food with me though it was perfectly ok and safe if they did. But, somewhere down the line, differences had to come majorly because of the society. I had deep grudges against the society and I still do have in plenty. Initially, my family had to hide my HIV status in the fear of isolation and ostracism because of which there was a lot of stress and depression in my family. But it couldn't be hidden for long from my relatives and I was not allowed to attend parties and functions at home and religious ceremonies. They would say to themselves, I got this because I was sinful. I hated it. My wife and children hated it. But things sometimes don't really work the way they are wanted. Slowly, my neighbors and the whole colony got to know about it and they stopped visiting our house only to play safe. It is natural here,

See An Interview, page 8

Condom 101...

from page 6

Ribbed condoms are textured with ribs or bumps, which can increase sensation for both partners."

The shape of the condom that an individual would choose depends on his/her preference. All of the differences in shape are designed to suit different personal preferences and enhance pleasure. It is important to communicate with your partner to be sure that you are using condoms that satisfy both of you."

"Condoms also come in a variety of colours. Some are flavoured to make oral sex more enjoyable. They are also safe to use for penetrative sex as long as they have been tested and approved."



An Interview...

from page 7

'coz people do not know much about the virus. They just presume it is sinful. Our family was completely ostracized for days. It was a big struggle for my wife, especially. Later, our colony president decided that I should be shifted to some NGO because my presence in the areas was looked as a source as infection to others. They gave me and my family brusque looks as though I had done some evil and was not supposed to be in that GODLY atmosphere. GODLY indeed! But my family had been a great support for me. My wife still comes often to visit me and I feel complete.

VP: Sir, did you face any problem in your job after you got this infection?

XYZ: Yes! Yes! I suffered terribly in my job. At first, there was emotional isolation and I felt helpless. My friend with whom I would chat about every damn thing in the world did not come to my office and ignored me. My colleagues would call me by name and even though I deserved at times, I was not given projects by my boss. It felt strange and awkward. Later on, I resigned from my job when it became intolerable. My boss would immediately sack me but there wasn't any ground on which he could justify it. So it was more of my dignity abuse that made me resign from my job and made his task simpler.

VP: Sir, after all this discrimination suffered by you, do you have anything to say about the society and its people, any message to convey?

XYZ: I feel the society should be more broad minded and aware. HIV virus cannot be transferred so easily. It's transferred only when any secretion is exchanged with a victim. So one can easily and safely converse and even have a physical contact with an HIV carrier. I and many others like me have suffered tantrums of the society. My situation is much better. There have been so many poor families where an HIV person is completely ostracized by his/her own family members. I have heard of suicide cases of HIV carrying persons. And I feel I am one of the few lucky ones. You need a lot of support from your dear ones when you are given this HIV status and completely neglected by the rest of them. At first, I had a lot of ill feelings for this society but when I heard of cases like forcefully injecting HIV carrying blood onto normal people by HIV people, I was taken aback. It is because of a few elements like them that I and many others like me feel pathetic. Doctors, nurses and hospital workers have denied treating us and it feels pathetic. Who should I go to? I feel I am just so non-required, waiting to die. It's only because of my wife I have been able to survive. There are so many merely existing with no one by their side. I would just want to convey a message on behalf of all of us: Please accept us and do not treat us so inhumanly. We are not lesser human beings and would do no harm. Just treat us with dignity and that's all we need. Please do not discriminate. That's all!

VP: Sir, it's been a pleasure to meet you and I hope this interview conveys the message that people like you want to be heard. I am so touched and delighted to have met you. Thank you so much sir for giving me your time.

XYZ: I am delighted too. Rather, I should be grateful to you for coming up to me and hearing me. I hope our voice reaches out to the people through you. Thank you. It was pleasure meeting you.

Compiled by: Silky Agarwal

Source:

<http://theviewspaper.net/an-interview-with-an-hiv-positive-person/>



THE PINK LIFE

Donna Nacario
Editor-in-Chief

Diane Mapili
Photo Officer-in-Charge

Claire Ordonez
Arts and Graphics Editor

Maysie Co
Office Manager

Camille Francisco
Circulations Manager