

UN Cares in Action

The Case of China 2013

Addressing HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination

Editor: Samantha Kozikott

Contributor: Guy Taylor

Summary

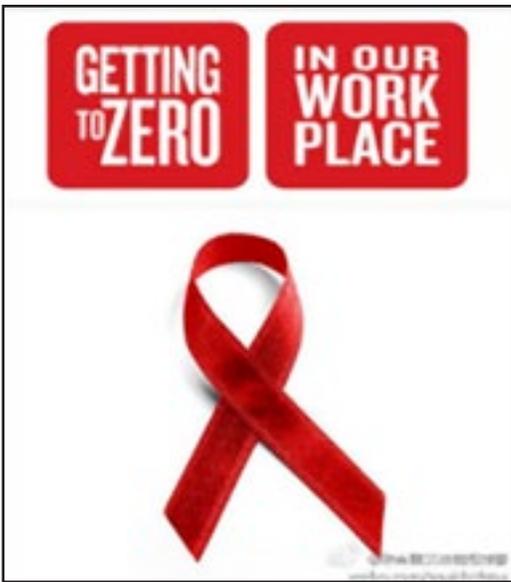
The UN Cares team in China won the 2012 UN Cares award for having addressed HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace at the highest level of excellence. The China UN Cares team together with partner organizations held two major communication campaigns to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace. The first campaign was an online UN Cares Stigma Fuels HIV Photo Campaign. UN heads of agencies, government partners, civil society organizations, international organizations and other relevant organizations were all invited to participate in this campaign. The second anti-discrimination campaign was launched in 2012. This campaign focused on discrimination in the workplace and in recruitment. Both campaigns involved the use of Sina Weibo (China’s Twitter equivalent) and Youku (YouTube equivalent) and participation by influential figures in promoting advocacy campaigns. Social media’s widespread use together with a strong focus on leveraging partnerships with the private sector was a powerful means of advocacy for greater respect for the human rights of people living with HIV and encouraged people to stand up for the rights of PLHIV to employment, healthcare and freedom from discrimination.

Background and context

China, a large developing country, has experienced a rapid increase in HIV prevalence over the years. The national prevalence remains low, but the epidemic is severe in some areas. The number of PLHIV continues to increase, but new infections have been contained at a low level. The gradual progression of HIV to AIDS has resulted in an increase of AIDS-related deaths. Sexual transmission persists as the primary mode of transmission, and continues to increase. China’s epidemics are diverse and evolving. Epidemic estimates show that at the end of 2011, the estimated number of PLHIV in China stood at 780,000 people¹. Of these, 28.6 per cent were women; there were



Heads of UN Agencies holding signs featuring anti-discrimination messages as part of the “Stigma Fuels HIV Campaign” in 2011.



Messages displayed during the 2012 “Anti-Discrimination” campaign.

154,000 cases of AIDS; overall prevalence stood at 0.058 per cent¹. The estimated number of new infections in 2011 was 48,000 and the estimated number of deaths was 28,000¹.

As the United Nations has been supporting partner organizations to address the heterogeneous and evolutionary nature of the HIV epidemic, the UN Cares team in China together with partner organizations held two major communication campaigns to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

The UN Cares team in China won the 2012 UN Cares award, which recognizes excellence in the work of the UN Cares teams at the country level. The team was awarded the 2012 UN Cares Award for having addressed HIV-related stigma and discrimination at the highest level of excellence.

UN Cares structure / Leadership of and Advocacy for UN Cares

The UN Cares team in China includes a number of UN agencies, namely FAO, UN Women, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC, UNV, WHO, Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO), and the Resident Coordinator launched the Global Stigma Fuels HIV campaign in 2011. As part of the Global Stigma Fuels HIV Campaign, the UN Cares team in China launched the UN Cares Stigma Fuels HIV Photo Campaign using Sina Weibo (China’s Twitter equivalent) and encouraged the UN staff to get involved with the new campaign to address HIV-related discrimination in the workplace.

The UN Cares team in China won the 2012 UN Cares award, which recognizes excellence in the work of the UN Cares teams at the country level. The team was awarded the 2012 UN Cares Award for having addressed HIV-related stigma and discrimination at the highest level of excellence.

UN Cares-Approaches adopted

The UN Cares team in China conducted two campaigns from 2011 to 2012 focused on raising awareness on HIV-related issues of stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

UN Cares Stigma Fuels HIV Photo Campaign-2011

As part of the Global Stigma Fuels HIV Campaign, the UN Cares team in China launched an Online UN Cares Stigma Fuels HIV Photo Campaign, which involved the use of Sina Weibo (China’s Twitter equivalent) to encourage members of the public to send in photos of themselves holding signs featuring anti-discrimination messages. Government partners, civil society organizations, international organizations and other relevant organizations were



Photos of staff from international organizations holding signs featuring anti-discrimination messages as part of the 2011 “Stigma Fuels HIV” campaign.

all invited to participate in this campaign. UN heads of agencies were contacted by e-mail and asked to mobilize staff members within their offices. An e-mail was also sent to all staff from the UN Resident Coordinator Office. A total of 400 UN staff members were reached during the reporting period. Additionally, approximately 300 additional photos were received during this campaign from UN staff members.

The campaign used photos of people holding signs displaying anti-discrimination messages to raise awareness around workplace discrimination, and encourage concrete actions to reduce discrimination in the workplace. It aimed to promote positive messages and build consensus around the harmfulness of discrimination. Photos were also displayed at an exhibition for World AIDS Day 2011.

The campaign was for greater respect for the human rights of people living with HIV, encouraging people to stand up for the rights of PLHIV to employment, healthcare and freedom from discrimination. The campaign promoted messages around these themes and encouraged members of the public to associate themselves with these themes by displaying signs carrying the messages. Messages were shaped by human rights considerations, including the need to address discrimination, rights to employment, rights to equal treatment before the law, rights to education, etc. The campaign did not incorporate any specific gender perspective.



UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador and CCTV Anchor, James Chau holding a sign displaying anti-discrimination messages.

Mobilization of social media networks was carried out using UNAIDS Weibo account. Chinese Goodwill Ambassadors were also mobilized to promote the initiatives via their own Weibo accounts, allowing the campaign to achieve very broad reach. UN Agencies were also mobilized to participate in the campaign via e-mail and messages sent to the UN communications team in China. Additional reach was achieved through profiling of the campaign in the media, leading to very high levels of participation from both the UN and society at large.

With pro bono support from Shanghai Communications Company Connected Culture and Communications Inc., a PSA was also produced using these photos, which was widely disseminated through Chinese video sharing site Youku (YouTube equivalent) and through Weibo. This was viewed thousands of times and shared widely through various social networking platforms.

Working in collaboration with Chinese CBO Yirenping, the campaign received more than 10,000 photos from the general public, including photos from major celebrities. Photos were also received from the majority of UN agency heads in China, and staff from UNAIDS headquarters, including UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé, together with several hundred UN country staff. These were used to produce photo collages distributed through Weibo and exhibition displays were shown at the China Red Ribbon Forum meeting.



Chinese Goodwill Ambassadors were also mobilized to promote the initiatives. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) calling for an end to discrimination featured basketball superstar Yao Ming, during the “Anti-Discrimination” campaign in 2012.

UN Cares Anti-Discrimination Campaign-2012

A second anti-discrimination campaign was launched by the UN Cares team in 2012. This campaign focused on discrimination in the workplace and in recruitment. Strengthening the institutional framework for implementation of UN Cares was not a primary objective of this advocacy campaign. Nevertheless, the campaign was supported by and contributed to other UN Cares partners who participated in the campaign and promoted the campaign among their partners. UNAIDS social media accounts have more than 100,000 followers who received information and messages through this campaign.

The following activities were carried out as part of this campaign:

- Communication and promotion for this campaign was shared through Weibo; PSAs calling for an end to discrimination featured basketball superstar Yao Ming.
- The UN Cares team participated in TV interviews with China Central Television, emphasizing employment discrimination.
- Relevant media reported on employment discrimination and shared government statements on ending employment discrimination.
- Weibo campaign hashtag was created to encourage followers to send messages calling for an end to employment discrimination.



Messages displayed during the 2011 “HIV Fuels Stigma” campaign.

- Web story to promote campaign against employment discrimination and shared through Weibo was published.
- Findings from Stigma Index Survey relating to employment discrimination were published.

The UN Weibo account launched a Weibo survey (open to public) asking followers what kinds of discrimination they felt were most serious. This survey was promoted by UNAIDS. Results of the survey showed that of the 5,367 people who participated in the survey, 34.7 per cent felt that discrimination against LGBT populations was the most serious form of discrimination; 27.4 per cent felt that gender based discrimination was the most serious, and 33.5 per cent felt that discrimination against migrant workers was most serious.

Sources of Funding

A small amount of funding was required for these campaign activities. Designated UN Cares funding was used, primarily for printing of photo display boards.

Monitoring and Evaluation – Strengths and Successes of the Project

The UN Cares team in China identified the following as being strengths of the project:

- Simplicity: Participation by staff and public was easy and fun, and took little time and effort. Messages displayed were simple and easy to understand.

- **Leveraging broad networks:** The mobilization of Weibo followers as well as Weibo followers of HIV goodwill ambassadors enabled the campaign to reach a very large audience as measured by the number of times advocacy messages were forwarded. The UNAIDS message to promote this campaign was forwarded more than 1,000 times and received 111 comments. The total number of forwards of the various messages posted as part of this campaign numbered several thousand.
- **Developed based on a consideration of real issues:** The campaign sought to address issues that are serious and real, and that substantially affect the lives of people living with HIV.

Barriers

Persistence of stigma and discrimination: While, on the whole, the UN is a PLHIV-friendly environment, stigma and discrimination do still persist in some cases. These campaigns helped to raise awareness around stigma and discrimination, build awareness and generate attitudinal shifts.

- **Lack of knowledge on available HIV related services for UN employees:** Many UN staff may still be unaware of options for accessing testing and prevention services. Through conducting this campaign, the UN Cares team in China was able to draw attention to the importance of HIV prevention and testing.
- **Quantitatively measuring effectiveness:** As with any social media-based campaign, effectively measuring campaign impact is a challenge.
- **Targeting policymakers and government officials:** Effectively targeting messaging and advocacy towards policymakers and government officials was also found to be challenging.

Advice to other UN Cares teams

The advice of the UN Cares' team in China to other teams would be to:

- **Fully exploit social media:** Make full use of social media and influential figures in promoting advocacy campaigns.
- **Keep messaging simple but focused:** Avoid generalities and focus on real issues.
- **Leverage partnerships:** Leverage partnerships with private sector to strengthen impact of activities.

Develop a simple, yet attractive campaign concept. The China UN Cares campaign succeeded largely because it was very simple to implement but allowed participants to make their voices heard and transmit a powerful message.

Promote UN participation: In order to ensure success for the campaign, it was important to mobilize UN heads of agencies and Core Management Team (CMT) members, who could then mobilise their own staff members to support this campaign.

Future projects/Plans

For 2013, UNAIDS will be organizing a number of advocacy activities, but these will not be UN Cares specific. UNAIDS China may conduct UN Cares-specific advocacy campaigns in 2014.

Footnotes

¹ UNGASS. 2012 China AIDS Response Progress Report. Available at:

Sources

- <http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/china/>
- Related press releases and other social media links that were created as a result of this campaign:
- <http://www.unaids.org.cn/en/index/topic.asp?id=808&classname=Photo%20Stories&class=2>
- http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMziI4MDI3NjQ0.html
- The campaign was also publicized and photos shared through the UNAIDS Sina Weibo platform: www.weibo.com/unaidschina

