

World AIDS Day

'Force for Change : World AIDS Campaign with Young People'

by Dr Shah Md Mahfuzur Rahman

Young people — the golden asset of the society — have the power to change the course of epidemic. They are not only being infected and affected by HIV/AIDS but they are as well a key resource in mobilising an expanded and effective response to HIV/AIDS

AIDS, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome — a fatal illness, a universal health and development problem — is caused by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV attacks and slowly destroys the important cells of the body's immune or defence system that protects the body from invasion of various microorganisms as well as clears away a number of cancer cells — resulting in AIDS. The period between HIV infection and development of AIDS varies from six months to 10 years or more. The period is usually shorter among the people of developing countries than those in developed countries due to poorer health and nutritional status.

HIV is transmitted in three main ways —

Sexual transmission: HIV is transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse as well as oral sex or sex involving mouth with some one who has the virus. The presence of a sexually transmitted disease or infection (STD/STI) increases the chances of transmission or infection from HIV.

Parenteral transmission: HIV can be transmitted through transfusion of blood or blood products, use of syringes, needles, surgical instruments etc. contaminated with HIV.

Mother to child transmission: HIV can be transmitted from infected mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

It may be mentioned here, HIV is not transmitted through social contacts like shaking hands, social kissing, use of the same toilets, sharing cups, cutleries, crockeries, towels, bed linens, house or flat or workplace with someone who is infected. It is not also transmitted

Renewing the Pledge on World AIDS Day

by Habiba Tasneem Chowdhury

EVERY year on 1st December the World AIDS Day is observed globally as a mark of respect and solidarity with those that fought a losing battle and eventually succumbed to it. Every year the event is charged emotionally in remembrance of those close and distant who suffered and died of AIDS while the world watched helplessly. Every year the occasion bears witness to strong and yet stronger commitment to rise up to the greatest challenge besieging humanity.

Yet HIV/AIDS persists — and spreads beyond segments, communities and territories destroying men, women, and children even babies in its wake.

But the world is gradually learning to stunt its progress. And "prevention" is universally accepted as the only way to fight HIV/AIDS till a vaccine is developed. There is strong evidence that as long as the prevalence is low among sex workers, injecting drug users, immigrant workers and transport workers, the segment that is exposed to high risk behaviour generating environment, there is a window of 2 to 3 years before it starts spreading in the general population. It was also found that this group is the most marginalized segment of the population in almost all countries of the world. This fact alone has contributed to the rapid-fire spread of HIV/AIDS. And in case of Bangladesh the marginalized group also lacks cooperation from its own community and more often than not they are victims of extreme socio-economic repression.

CARE Bangladesh partici-

pates in World AIDS Day programme on 1 December through a colourful rally by the staff and community members of the three intervention in the morning merging with the government and other rallies. The injected drug users intervention would present "Gombhira" folk song at the end of the rally. Participants in the rally would carry banners and festoons with messages on prevention. To mark the day a certificate giving ceremony for the largest batch of peers from the three intervention who have successfully completed training is organized from 10 am to 1:30 pm. A cultural programme by members of each intervention would follow the certificate ceremony and draw the curtain to the day's programme.

The feature of CARE Bangladesh's HIV/AIDS project is the concept of positive thinking and approach. The fatalistic aspect of HIV/AIDS has received more attention as a result the fact that an HIV positive person can lead a normal productive life for good many years is forgotten. SHAKTI works towards establishing that aspect. Communities are made to realize the economic and emotional loss of discriminating against an HIV positive person. Through education and establishing an enabling environment the project hopes to achieve acceptance of HIV positive people in the communities, prevent the spread of HIV and remove marginalization of some groups.

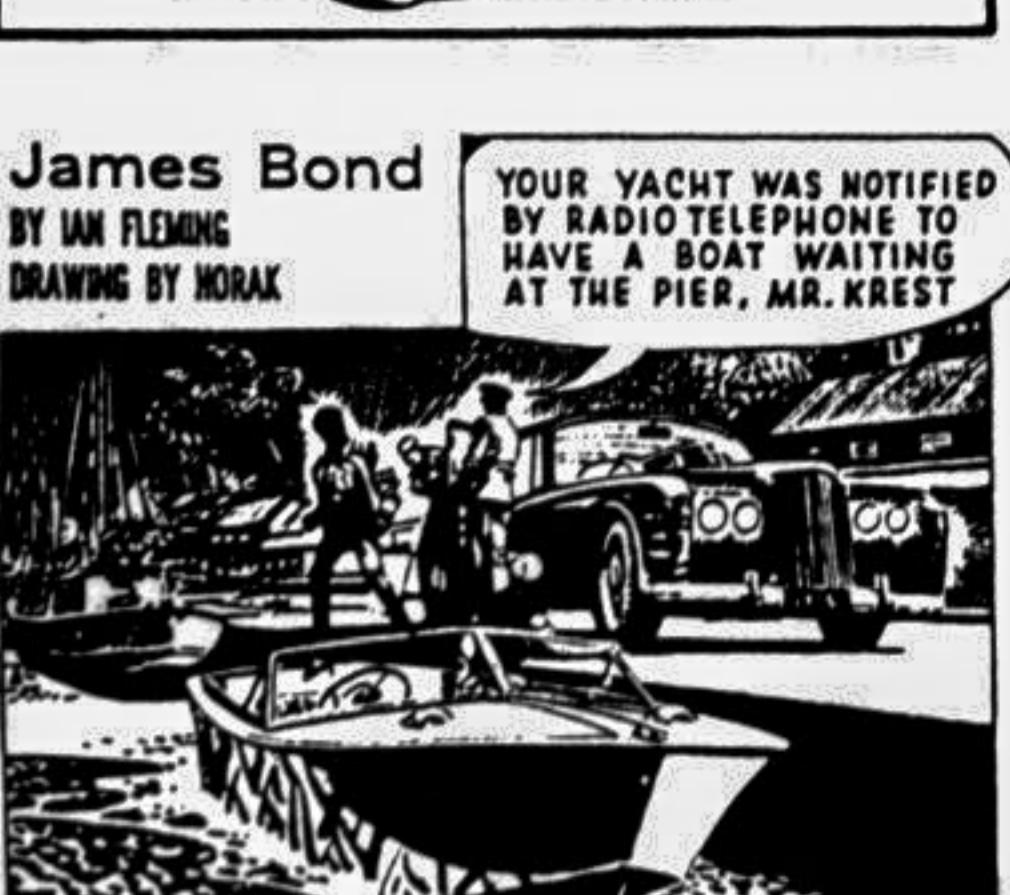
The writer is Assistant Project Coordinator, SHAKTI, CARE Bangladesh.

Ali
13 years
Domestic help
Ambition: To be a pilot
"Books, copies, going to school was my passion, but I never had the opportunity. One day my boss got me admitted to the school next door. Now I go to school everyday, for two hours. It is so much fun! I read... I can write!... My heart says that I will be someone great when I grow up."

আলি
১৩ বর্ষ
গৃহস্থিক
ইচ্ছা: পাইলট হবার

This illustration is part of a campaign by the government of Bangladesh and Unicef to promote rights of the child. The Daily Star is devoting this space to the campaign to demonstrate solidarity with the children of Bangladesh.

by Jim Davis

James Bond
BY IAN FLEMING
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