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RED RIBBON

The significance of Red Ribbon in HIV & AIDS is:

Red like Love, as a symbol of passion and tolerance for those affected.

Red like blood, representing the pain caused by many people who have died of AIDS.

Red like the anger about the helplessness about which we are facing for a disease for which there is still no cure.

Red as a sign of warning not to carelessly ignore one of the biggest problems of our time.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

RED RIBBION CLUB

A. Introduction

Mainstreaming of HIV & AIDS and ensuring safe blood are major activities to control the spread of HIV & AIDS in the country. Of the over 1 billion youth (ages 15-24) worldwide, some 10 million youth are living with HIV: .Every day, an estimated 6,000 youth are infected with the virus. Out of 2.47 million estimated population infected by HIV in India, 88.7% are in the age group of 15-49 years. In view of this, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India has proposed to establish a network with Universities and educational institutions to generate awareness regarding HIV & AIDS and to promote Voluntary Blood Donation to ensure safe blood and implement preventive programmes on HIV & AIDS.

Under the NACP III youth have been identified as a vulnerable group requiring special attention. Recognizing the heterogeneity of the youth NACP III aims to promote Red Ribbon Clubs to cover youth at risk to HIV both in campuses as well as in community.

Through RRC youth are encouraged to learn about safe and healthy lifestyles. The RRC promotes access to information on safe sexual behaviors and voluntary blood donation as well as enable them to become change agents in HIV & AIDS programme.

To create and provide opportunity to the zeal of volunteerism among youth to contribute towards the control and prevention of HIV&AIDS Red Ribbon Club in the educational institutions will be formed. The concept and design of the programme is based on the lessons and experiences of the Red Ribbon Clubs formed in the educational institutions in the States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh.

The Red Ribbon Club is a voluntary on-campus intervention program for students in educational institutions. It is initiated and supported by the State AIDS Control Society and implemented through multi-sectoral collaboration, particularly, using the services of cadre officers of the State's National Service Scheme (NSS).

The programme will address the knowledge, attitude and behavior of the youths in the interrelated areas of Voluntary Blood Donation, HIV & AIDS and sexuality, as demanded by their age, environment, and life style. The, Red Ribbon Club will serve as a complementary and comprehensive prevention intervention to support and reinforce similar youth led initiatives.

Thus Red Ribbon Club Programme (RRCP) is a comprehensive promotional and preventive intervention to enhance voluntary blood donation as well as mainstream HIV & AIDS prevention, care & support and treatment impact, mitigation, stigma reduction, among the youth in educational institutions. It will also prepare and promote youth peer educators within and outside the campuses.

B. The Need and Context

According to UNAIDS strategy paper on “Approach to Adolescents”, youth are among the most vulnerable to HIV infection, and they also account for a large proportion of infected persons. Youth are among the most vulnerable groups to HIV infection. In India people in the age group of 15-29 years account for 31% of AIDS burden.

The adolescent age with its specific psychological and social attributes is more susceptible to sexual curiosity and behavior that make them particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. In 2003, youth (15-24 years old) accounted for half of all new HIV infections worldwide. (*Source: UNAIDS / WHO AIDS epidemic update, December 2005*). This sends an alarming signal on the extraordinary crisis, which our tertiary education has to grapple with. Youth are especially vulnerable to risk of HIV infection because of limited access to correct information and lack of appropriate life skills.

Equally alarming is the fact that paid donors, which are associated with a significantly higher prevalence of transfusion-transmissible infections (TTIs) including HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Syphilis and Malaria, still provide more than 45% of the blood collected in India. The safest blood donors are voluntary, non-remunerated blood donors from low-risk populations.

In view of this, **NACO/SACS** have taken the initiative in promoting voluntary non-remunerated blood donation by establishing RRC and reaching youth to pledge to give regular blood donations till the age of 60 and to lead healthy lifestyles to protect both themselves and the recipients of their blood from HIV and other infectious agents and in addressing the knowledge, attitude and behavior of youth in the area of HIV & AIDS and sexuality by establishing RRCs.

C. Role of the Red Ribbon Club

The RRC in the educational institutions/other institutions will seek to initiate efforts to:

- Educate youth with **correct, concise and adequate information** and heighten their level of awareness about HIV/AIDS/STI/sexuality and other related issues (thus eliminate myths and misconceptions).
- Enable youth, especially the female students, to identify and understand situations of exploitation and abuse.
- Sensitize the youth regarding care and support needs of PLWHA and instill in them the spirit of helping and supporting the people living with HIV & AIDS (PLWHA) and reduce the stigma and discrimination against them.
- Increase youths' access to health care services related to STI / HIV/AIDS/drug use.
- Create linkages between youth and governmental, non-governmental agencies and community based organizations to access safer and responsible healthy behaviour.
- Organize and facilitate voluntary blood donation camps and mobilize the youth for voluntary blood donation.
- Create among the youth a cadre of peer educators for seeking and encouraging positive health behavior as well as ensuring sustainability of the club.

SECTION 2: RED RIBBON CLUB PROGRAMME

A. Aim

The RRC aims at harnessing the potential of the youth by equipping them with correct information on HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care and Support and Treatment. It also aims in building their capacities as peer educators in spreading messages on positive health behaviour in an enabling environment and increasing voluntary blood donation from among youth.

B. Objectives

1. To reduce new HIV infection among youth by raising their risk perception through awareness on Sex, Sexuality and HIV & AIDS.
2. To induce among youth the spirit to help and support people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) thereby reducing stigma and discrimination against PLHWAs.
3. To motivate youth and build their capacity as peer educators and change agents by developing their skills on leadership, negotiation, and team building.
4. To promote voluntary non-remunerated blood donation among youth.

C. Key Areas of RRC

- **Vibrancy of Youth:** Tap the vibrancy of Youth and channelizing the energy of the youth in a positive direction.
- **Sex & Sexuality, HIV/AIDS & STI:** Provide access to correct information on sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STI and other youth related issues in an enabling environment to promote healthy life styles.
- **Peer Education:** Develop a cadre of Peer Educators among youth.
- **Voluntary Blood Donation:** Promote voluntary non-remunerated blood donation.

SECTION 3: FORMATION OF RRC

FORMING A RED RIBBION CLUB IN AN EDUCATION INSTITUTION

A. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AT STATE & DISTRICT LEVEL

One operational area may comprise of 5-6 districts approximately and will be supervised by a Regional Coordinator. (**Districts to be identified and clubbed by SACS in one operational area depending upon the State's requirement.*). One such operational area will be supervised and supported by a Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will work in close co-ordination with Programme Officer of Colleges/ Institutions to facilitate the formation and functioning of RRC.

B. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

1. The State AIDS Control Society will formally inform the DMs of the districts and heads of the institutions about the national nature and concept of RRC and the process of its implementation and that the RC will be contacting them for their support. Through such letter the SACS will generate support of the DMs and heads of the educational institutions for facilitating the formation of RRC..
2. Regional Coordinator along with Programme Officer will contact the administrative head of the institution to seek permission for the formation of RRC in the institution. Once the head of the institution approves the RRC

formation, permission to meet student leaders will be sought in order to explain the concept and importance of RRC.

3. An orientation workshop at the institution will be organized whereby the head of the institution and relevant officials/teachers and student groups/leaders will be oriented on the RRC scheme. The date for the same can be decided in consultation with the head of the institutions, considering that it does not interfere with the educational schedule of the Institution. The workshop will conclude with the inauguration of RRC. The local VIPs may be invited and the inauguration will be presided over by the Head of the Institution.
4. The Field officer along with Programme Officer of the institution (an NSS Officer) and student leaders will contact and mobilize as many students as possible from all departments (not only students enrolled with NSS but also from the entire strength). Volunteers may also be selected at this stage.
5. Pamphlets, brochures and related IEC material will be distributed before and during inauguration of RRC. All IEC material will be supplied by the respective SACS in the State and Programme Officer will be responsible for its timely procurement. (*in coordination with SACS*)
6. Screening of HIV&AIDS, blood donation related films etc. should be undertaken during the orientation and inauguration on RRC. Such films could be provided by the respective SACS.
7. When the youth participating in the programme appear absorbed and motivated distribute the membership forms for voluntary enrolment in RRC. The format for the same is provided in **Annexure 1 (a)**.
8. The signed forms should be collected and the names of the youth should be entered in the Membership Register. Regional Coordinator with support of Programme Officer will be responsible for regular updating of the Register /forms.
9. The strength of the club can vary from 10 to 500 voluntary members.
10. A onetime grant of Rs. 2500/- will be provided to each institution to form RRC. (*See Annexure 3 for details*)
11. The activities of the RRC must be youth oriented, innovative and interactive that should generate active participation of youth and at the same time should provide them with healthy edutainment.

C. Formation of Advisory Committee of RRC At College Level

To ensure effective constitution and functioning of Red Ribbon Clubs it is proposed to constitute a Committee at College/Institutional level. The Committee shall include:

1. Chief Patron: Chancellor, His Excellency, Governor.
2. Patron : Vice - Chancellor, Director Higher & Technical Education
3. Chairperson: Principal/ Head of the Institute.
4. Convener: NSS Programme Officer.
5. Joint Convener: Student representatives from RRC (2)*
6. Members : Regional Coordinator, Finance officer of the RRC and two student volunteers

*The student representatives (for RRC Committee) should be elected and not nominated by the RRC students. In colleges having co-ed population one male and one female must be part of the committee. *Preferably these should be Peer Educators.*

- The Committee shall have a total of 10 (ten) members representing active members of teaching faculty and students. The Committee can also accommodate any expert(s) as per the requirement, and as deem fit for the furtherance of activities of the respective Red Ribbon Club.
- RRC tenure will follow the educational session of the institution/University.
- Ensure that the RRC's activities at Institutional or higher level do not clash with or affect the educational programme and/or schedule of the Institution.

Once the Advisory committee is constituted Annexure 1(c) will need to be filled and submitted by the Regional Coordinator/Youth Co-ordinator at SACS. The minutes of the meeting will be duly signed and approved by the committee.

D. Role of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory committee at the educational institution will:

- Meet once in every quarter to review the activities of the RRC and to plan future activity as per annual activity plan (Programmatic as well as financial).
- Take decisions on management issues related to the club.
- Explore /identify channels for resource mobilization for the smooth functioning of the club.

- Review and approve new activities proposed by the RRC members
- Review the performance and plan for the next year (Programmatic as well as financial) of RRC in the meeting held in the last quarter of the year.

iii. Role of the University/ Institution/ College Authorities

While the Institution may be persuaded to support RRC activities financially and introduce RRC and its events into the permanent entities and event calendar of the institution, the major roles of the University/College/Institution will include:

- Active participation in the advisory committee at the respective level.
- Facilitating infrastructure and other necessary support for the implementation of programme/events of RRC.
- Designate the Faculty teacher cum NSS Coordinator as Programme Officer for RRC.
- Mainstreaming of HIV & AIDS programme by including it in the University curriculum & programme.
- Advocacy at the highest level to support the programme on self sustainable basis.
- Encouraging the contribution of RRC members by highlighting it in college newsletter or other publications.

iv. Programme Officers (PO)

S/he is the teacher at the Institution designated as NSS Programme Coordinator, who should also be given their responsibility of the RRC in the capacity of Programme Officer. In the institutes where NSS is not available the head of such institution and advisory committee will be requested to designate one of the teachers as Programme Officer for RRC.

The PO will work closely with the RC to reach out to RRC members and other youth in the institution through RRC volunteers.

v. RRC Members

Youth from colleges/ institutions between the age group of 15-29 years and registered in RRC.

Role of RRC Members

- Gain in-depth knowledge about HIV/AIDS, Voluntary Blood Donation and related issues.
- Mobilizing resources for the Club's activities.
- Producing innovative BCC (BehaviorChange Communication) materials - slogans, jingles, posters, logos, handbill messages, songs and plays, etc.
- Actively participating in competitions and community outreach programs inside and outside the campus.
- Orienting the new comers about the objectives and activities of the Club and contribute to the sustainability of the Club.
- With developed life skills and leadership qualities, performing the role of peer educators to heighten the HIV/AIDS risk perception and instill negotiation skills among the youth
- Promoting VBD among the students and participate actively in blood donations.
- Sensitizing the youth regarding the rights of PLHWAs.

SECTION 10: ANNEXURES

Annexure 1(a)

Red Ribbon Membership Form

Membership Registration No. _____ Date: _____

S.No.	Particulars	
1	Name of Institute	
2	Name of Member	
3	Department/ Year or Semester	
4	Father's Name	
5	Mother's Name	
6	Age	
7	Sex	
8	Marital Status	
9	Contact Address	
10	Contact No.	
11	E-mail ID	
12	Reason for joining RRC	

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Signature of the Member

Date:
Place:

Annexure 1(b)

1. Red Ribbon Club Form

Name of the institution	
Type of the Institutions with RRC	Government / Aided / Public/ Private
Complete address	
Telephone number with STD code	
Fax Number	
E-mail id	
Date of formation of RRC	
Total students in the institution	
Total No. of Students registered in RRC	
Registered Female students	
Registered Male students	

Signature of the Principle

Signature of RC

With SEAL

Date of Submission:

