

Using the Media Social Facebook to Increase the Community Voluntarism and Engagement to Monitoring ARV in Indonesia

Irwandy Widjaja (widjaja@iac.or.id), Indonesia AIDS Coalition, Jakarta - Indonesia



BACKGROUND:

Recurrent issues related to Antiretroviral (ARV) provision in Indonesia centred around its untimely distribution to districts, causing stock outage and buffers approaching expiry dates. The geographical sprawl of the country, with over 14,000 islands in total (see, Map), presents the main challenge to timely distribution. Furthermore, there are constraints in human resource pertaining to the distribution both quantitatively and qualitatively. This combination is the underlying cause of late reporting and stock replenishment which fall under the purview of the central Health Ministry based on data reported by decentralized districts. Responding to this challenge, Indonesia AIDS Coalition (IAC) embarked on a community ARV monitoring project in 2011, utilizing social media platform (Facebook®) to better reach the people living with HIV (PLHIV) on ARVs. Indonesia ranks fourth in the number of Facebook users worldwide and with the price of smart phones increasingly becoming affordable, this opens up an opportunity for our social media intervention. We set up and maintain Facebook group “Monitoring ARV”. Current membership stands at 384 users representing five major islands of the nation where more than half of PLHIV on ARV reside. Membership comprises PLHIV, medical professionals, and HIV nongovernmental organizations that report stock disruptions almost in a real-time manner.

METHOD:

We initiated a Facebook group “Monitoring ARV” and sent invites to more than 1,000 potential members from the administrators' friend lists. HIV mailing lists were another source of user recruitment whereby we sent invitations to the members. Members have to be individuals with valid email address and phone numbers. This has been a voluntary effort with IAC participating in selection of potential strategic users and no control over user posts. Spams are actively monitored and irrelevant posts withdrawn with first notifying the user of their impact on the group. We divide work among the administrators and highlight stock-outs, based on which we will conduct an assessment of its credibility by double checking with the user, provider, and the Health Office. After confirming the case we draft an official report and email it to the Ministry of Health, HIV/AIDS and STD sub-directorate, screenshot from the page attached. We follow up the case and divide it into 'resolved' and 'unresolved' cases on a regular basis.

RESULTS:

After screening of prospective members, at present we maintain 384 active users. We managed to improve time to replenishment in stock-out districts and minimize stock-outs in some cases. The average time to replenishment due to delayed logistics was between 15-25 working days, which has been reduced to 7 working days. We feel that our initiative broadens the scope of participation of the PLHIV community in programme monitoring. Voluntarism has been the main strength of this endeavour and we demonstrate how effective the community can be empowered with only a simple yet coordinating mode of communication such as Facebook group.

Discussion/Conclusion:

We demonstrate a cost-effective, simple way of monitoring ARV stock-outs using a social media platform. While bureaucracy often hinders swift reporting, the lead time to replenishment was reduced by half. Engagement with the community is the key to a successful social media intervention. And where such official forums to facilitate communications directly between decision makers and PLHIV community are scarce, this Facebook group proves that such virtual forums can have a great potential for practical problem solving, which in this case is ARV stock-outs.

Lessons Learned:

Community engagement and participation guarantees programme success. We demonstrate that the communication between decision makers and community end-users can be facilitated on a cost-effective, voluntary social media initiatives such as this one. We plan to expand our range of interventions to cover other social media platforms.



info@iac.or.id



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