HIV/AIDS Prevention through Changing Attitudes about Gender Roles

HIV transmission has become a serious problem in Mexico due to a combination of poverty, lack of education, and stereotypes that reinforce attitudes about gender roles that can be dangerous in terms of STI transmission. According to Mexico’s National Center for Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS, “changing how Mexicans view gender roles and erasing widespread prejudice against gays is necessary to combat the disease effectively” (Cheng, Kotler, & Lee, 2011, p. 86).For this purpose, various Latin American NGOs, led by Instituto Promundo, created and implemented two companion campaigns, Program H for hombres (men) and Program M for mujeres (women), to persuade Mexican youth to change their attitudes about gender roles while they were young, to foster new mindsets early that would likely remain intact throughout life (Cheng, Kotler, & Lee, 2011).

Overview

Mexico is the largest Spanish speaking country in the world, both in terms of population and land area. Mexico houses approximately 110 million inhabitants in an area roughly 3 times the state of Texas. The Mexican population, despite having a large area to spread them across, tends to live in concentrated urban communities. Nearly ¾ of Mexico’s inhabitants live in urban settings, with 20 million (nearly one fifth of the country’s total population) being congregated in the capital, Mexico City (Cheng, Kotler, & Lee, 2011, p. 84).

Mexico has a large economy, although heavily dependent on the U.S. The U.S. buys roughly 80% of Mexico’s exports. It should also be noted that Mexico is a major petroleum producer as well, with petroleum representing almost 1/3 of government revenue (Cheng, Kotler, & Lee, 2011, p. 84).

Overview of health problem

Discussion of interventions and Social Marketing Strategies

Analysis of Strengths and Limitations

Recommendations for improvements

Food for thought

Although the target of Programs H and M was HIV/AIDS, they certainly did their work through eliminating the problems posed by inequitable attitudes towards gender roles, something some might consider to be a larger problem. In, fact, HIV/AIDS could be considered a relatively small problem in the world, with only about 33 million being infected (<0.006% of the world’s population), while gender inequality obviously affects many more people. This brings forth the question: Could HIV, or other health problems, be so intricately woven into other aspects of culture or society, that working to solve a problem that might seem minor be the key to addressing larger problems in a society?