

Medicine

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Posted on : 2009/3/17 12:30:00

In the framework of 'Love and Relationships' film festival, UNESCO, in cooperation with the French Cultural Centre (CCF), is screening this month in selected Cambodian provinces the Khmer movie Palace of Dreams. This drama, produced in 2008 by BBC World Service Trust, aims at reducing the risk of HIV infection among young people.

Palace of Dreams is a powerful 90 min. feature film about young people and their relationships. It aims to entertain and encourage the target audience to adopt behaviours that will reduce their risk of HIV infection and transmission. The film has already been screened in five Cambodian provinces and will be projected in 6 more until the end of March.

Although HIV rates are on the decline in Cambodia, there is no room for complacency, especially for young people, as infection rates are highest among under 24-year-olds. Some specific groups are especially in need in terms of HIV prevention and are a particular focus within the film:

out-of-school youth, including the 47% that work for a living, often far from home;

sweethearts, who say they trust their partner and do not use condoms;

female entertainment workers;

men who have sex with men, who have an HIV prevalence of 5.1%, over 5 times higher than the national average.

Since March 2008 'The cinema road' project (La route du cinema), organized by the French Cultural Centre, has been showing, free of charge, several movies in 15 different provinces of Cambodia and has reached more than 30,000 viewers.

In November 2008 UNESCO's Office in Phnom Penh joined CCF in a common project, 'Love and Relationships', which aims to reach the maximum of people in Cambodia highlighting challenges that young people face in intimate relationships. The project particularly focuses on HIV prevention, sexuality and discrimination based on gender and/or sexual orientation, topics that formal education has been reluctant to explicitly address.

For this joint programme, CCF selects French movies translated into Khmer while UNESCO selects movies related to the above-mentioned subjects. Each month one movie from CCF and one from UNESCO are screened in a selected province. A long movie and a short movie are usually combined.

The CCF projectionist arrives to the province at noon and makes a tour around the town announcing

the event and inviting people to attend the screening in the evening. A local NGO, responsible for distribution, organizes a prior sensitisation of the public. Technical arrangements are done with the help of local people.

Entire families and groups of friends attend the open-air screening, which is taking place in a workshop environment, accompanied by a facilitated discussion. After the end of the movie the projectionist takes his camera and interviews young people from the audience, asking them questions related to the film. The public has always welcomed the project. The two movies that have been especially appreciated are *In the Dark* that was screened in November 2008 and *Palace of Dreams* that is being screened in March 2009.