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New AIDS film in Georgia circulated using mobiles



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Young actor and AIDS peer counselor shows the newly produced AIDS film on his mobile phone. He is planning to send this message out to his peers.

Innovative mobile phone technologies used to target young people about issues surrounding AIDS

Tblisi, 29 January

2008- A twenty minute long film about AIDS has been produced as part of the Save the Children and UNICEF-led educational campaign targeting young

people in Georgia. The film aims to educate young people about the disease without preaching and dictating.

The film will be split in five parts and converted into the mobile phone format. Young peer counselors will distribute one piece at a time to their clients, and will encourage them to pass it on to their friends. The distribution of the film through mobile phones is a very innovative method of reaching young people and has never been used in Georgia before.

"The film is about real lives of young people, about their daily situation and the dilemmas they face everyday," said Giovanna Barberis, UNICEF Representative in Georgia. "We want this film to make young people think and then to come to right answers. We do hope that the film will help them realize the dangers of AIDS and learn what to do to prevent the spreading of the disease."

"This is a targeted campaign for youth to try and openly discuss decisions and actions that might put them at risk," said Tom Vincent, Country Director of Save the Children. "We realised that anyone under 25 in Georgia has a cell phone, and most of them have video and Bluetooth capability. So we thought it would be good to use mobile phones for getting the message out. The film doesn't have a concrete message; it's just a story about everyday life of young people - though the parts of everyday life that might put them at risk."

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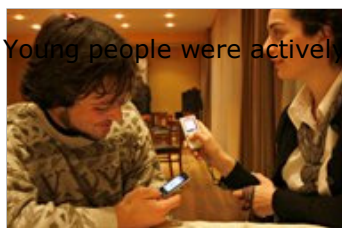


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Young peer counselors are sending the AIDS film to their friends through mobile phones at the official presentation of the film on 29 January 2008, Tbilisi, Georgia.

involved in the preparation of the film itself, especially in a scenario development process.

"The film is about us, about our daily life and about the decisions, often wrong, that we make. This will make us think more," said Paata Tvauri, a young actor and one of the main characters of the film.

"I like the film. I know that AIDS is a big problem nowadays and such films are important," said Ketik, a young peer counselor. The film will also be shown to young people in Abkhazia.

Young people represent one of the risk groups for HIV/AIDS in Georgia. The total number of HIV positive cases by the end of 2007 was 1,500, with 344 new cases registered only in 2007. Out of 1,500 cases 621 cases had AIDS and 314 of them died. From the HIV positive people are 60.2 per cent intravenous drug users.

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