



Non-Government Organisations response to HIV in smaller jurisdictions: SAMESH: the benefits of cross border collaborations, to improve HIV services for gay men, MSM, and people living with HIV in South Australia.

Logue W.G. VAC, SAMESH, SHine SA

Background

SAMESH (South Australian Mobilisation + Empowerment for Sexual Health) is the creation of two leading sexual health agencies, SHine SA in South Australia and VAC in Victoria. Within the space of 16 months SAMESH has embedded a community led response to HIV, consistent in practice and implementation with other state and territory AIDS Councils. There are significant economic and community benefits gained when two agencies with unique sexual health expertise collaborate in creating a new HIV service in a jurisdiction that no longer has a functional AIDS Council.

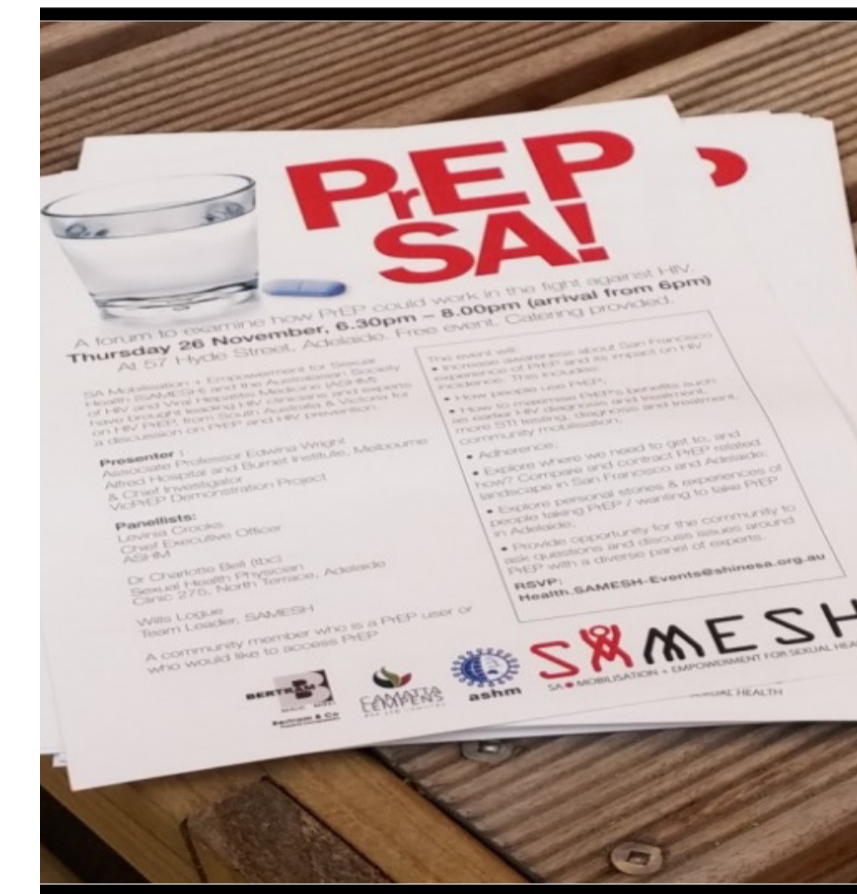
Method

SHine SA partnered with Australia's oldest AIDS Council, VAC, to create SAMESH a program staffed by community members. SHine SA has contracted VAC to deliver the annual work plan, which guarantees a community led HIV response to the HIV prevention and support program for people living with HIV in South Australia.

VAC has a thirty year history of effectively working with gay men, their policy, advocacy, health promotion and community engagement is recognised nationally for its community led response. SHine SA is the lead sexual health non-government organisation (NGO) in South Australia; the service has a reputation for its professional delivery of services across metropolitan Adelaide. This consortium has enabled SAMESH to establish a strong identity and reputation within the targeted communities of interest. SHine SA's leasing of 57 Hyde Street in the Adelaide CBD has enabled accessibility for the community. VAC has facilitated access to health promotion campaigns, marketing strategies and policy work that would otherwise be beyond the financial capabilities of the program.



Community mobilisation around sexual health is supported by campaign implementation.



Community forums have proven popular at our Hyde Street base.



Campaign implementation has included sexual health with the Drama Downunder, PEP awareness and syphilis testing and treatment.

Results

SAMESH has engaged community members, delivered multiple health promotion campaigns, and effectively utilises the consortium to achieve its key performance indicators. In sixteen months the program has been guided by a community advisory group that has overseen workplan development and program delivery that includes:

- Counselling;
- The provision of sexual health information;
- Campaign implementation;
- Peer led rapid HIV testing;
- Community development;
- Peer education;
- Community forums;
- Outreach;
- Social research;
- Community sponsorship;
- Volunteer recruitment & training;
- Community engagement.

Conclusion

SAMESH demonstrates cross border consortiums can and do work. Both community and sector benefit from such partnerships.

Aligning principles and goals enables the partners to work collaboratively to establish services and programs that are responsive to the needs of the community. Both parties expertise have shown that despite limited funding for HIV and STI programs, that collaborative planning, programming and implementation can result in services that are responsive, adaptive and effective.

PHOENIX

Peer Education Workshops

Have you been recently diagnosed HIV+?

Phoenix is a weekend peer led workshop for people who have been recently diagnosed with HIV.

Phoenix aims to provide you with practical help, knowledge and support to manage your HIV diagnosis in a safe and confidential environment.

Phoenix can help you with issues such as:

- I want to meet other people living with HIV
- What happens when I first get HIV?
- Am I the only one who feels like this?
- Who should I tell?
- What about sex?
- What are my rights?
- How do I maintain my sexual health?
- What services are available to me?
- What are the latest treatment options?

For more information or to register contact SAMESH HIV + Peer Support Officer
Phone: 08 7099 5312

The SAMESH workplan includes a comprehensive program of events designed for community engagement.

HIV-positive peer support is an important component of the SAMESH offer to community.



A partnership of SHine SA and VAC