CHAPTER 14

REACH AND VISIBILITY: PERCEPTION AND SOCIAL MARKETING OF AIDS PATIENTS IN MALAYSIAN MEDIA

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia, as a country with open economy, strong natural resources and capable country management, manages to reduce substantial poverty, as well as increases its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capita income constantly. Since 1970, Malaysia has the potential in attaining a number of national developmental goals which cover essential elements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in terms of poverty, human rights issues, country economic growth, gender equality and empowerment of women. (See https://www.unicef.org/malaysia/overview_4143.html) However, while Malaysia is moving towards accomplishing the MDGs comprehensively, there is one overwhelming social environment issue yet to be resolved not only by Malaysia, but the world—Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Since the experience of its first case in 1986, Malaysian government realizes that HIV/AIDS epidemic is no longer treated as a problem limited to a specific field. Every day, more than 10 Malaysian are tested positive HIV (Malaysian AIDS Council). As of 2010, there were 3652 people reported as newly HIV infection. (Malaysian AIDS Council, 2010) This figure gives more challenges to the country compared to 2009. Not just that, Malaysia is labelled as a country with ‘concentrated HIV epidemic’ currently by World Health Organization (WHO) due to the rates of HIV infection in Malaysia which are attributed immensely by Injecting Drug Users (IDU) and heterosexual