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# Voices

## No time to waste in fighting Aids

**Educating teens is top priority to combat their risks of contracting HIV**

Letter from **RAY FERGUSON**  
Regional CEO, South East Asia,  
Standard Chartered Bank

I REFER to "Teens, sex and Aids: Time to face up to today's realities" (May 8) by Tan Hui Leng and "Aids can hit bottom line" by Susie Solomon (May 13).

Indeed, more can be done to raise awareness among our youths, especially as more of them are having sex at an earlier age.

The biggest challenge is to find channels and opportunities to do so, ensuring we keep talking about this issue and educating young people. Youth of today have always lived in a world where HIV/Aids existed. Millions have already died. Yet the HIV/Aids epidemic among youth is ignored by adults and young people themselves.

Young people need help to become aware of the risks of contracting HIV and how to avoid them. These infections can be prevented if they are better informed and knowledgeable about the disease. Research indicates that

HIV education programmes among youths have made a tangible difference.

In Canada and the United States, researchers found that one-third of the 28 programmes they reviewed delayed the age at sexual initiation among students participating. A more recent analysis that reviewed school-based education

**Standard Chartered's 'Be Aware, Be Safe' scheme uses a mix of media to protect youths against HIV. It also emphasises understanding and compassion for those with this disease.**

programmes in Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe found that some of the programmes helped delay sexual initiation, decreased number of partners, and increased contraceptive use.

This is why Standard Chartered has made education a priority in its campaign against the spread of HIV/Aids. The Bank

launched "Be Aware, Be Safe" in 2004 to raise awareness of HIV/Aids among youths in Singapore, specifically because the statistics were already suggesting that youths were a high-risk group.

The "Be Aware, Be Safe" programme which is designed to be fun and interactive, uses a mix of media to provide knowledge and information about HIV/Aids and how people can protect them against the disease. It also emphasises compassion and understanding for people with the disease. It is conducted by a team of 100 staff volunteers who have so far reached out to about 30,000 youths in Singapore since 2004.

We have the knowledge and skills to help not just our staff but the communities in which we operate to address this issue. We are committed to sharing our intellectual capital with any small and medium-sized enterprises, or corporations that wish to ensure the safety of their workers, and we will conduct training and information sharing sessions at no cost. This is an area we know we cannot be competitive about — our future and yours depend on it.

The time is now. We all have to take action on Aids.

## Much ado about headlights

Letter from **AMY TAN-MOREL**

Letter from **GINA TEO**

SINGAPORE roads are well-lit, so there isn't really a need for drivers to turn their cars' fog lights on.

Yet, many errant drivers do so. The blinding glare of the intense light — from both the head and fog lights — affects the vision of other drivers.

Besides, I believe there are regulations by the Land Transit Authority on the use of these lights, aren't there?

Headlights have to be switched on before 7am or after 7pm, and yet these days, it is a common sight to see cars on the road at these times without headlights on.

They seem to be prevalent on the expressways. The drivers of these cars — especially dark-coloured ones — are irresponsible, and inconsiderate.

They pose a danger to other road users.

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