

Enhancing communication strategies to promote HIV self-testing through social media: an exploratory study of the ‘A Hora é Agora’ Project in five Brazilian municipalities, 2024

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BACKGROUND

Despite Brazil’s universal access to free antiretroviral therapy since 1996, socioeconomic inequalities and cultural barriers hinder early diagnosis and treatment. Research indicates that individuals with lower educational levels are significantly more likely to start treatment late, with delays increasing by up to 89% and worsening health conditions rising by 2.5 times (Rodrigues et al., 2021). Effective educational campaigns targeting the most vulnerable populations are essential to overcoming stigma and fear of judgment.

DESCRIPTION

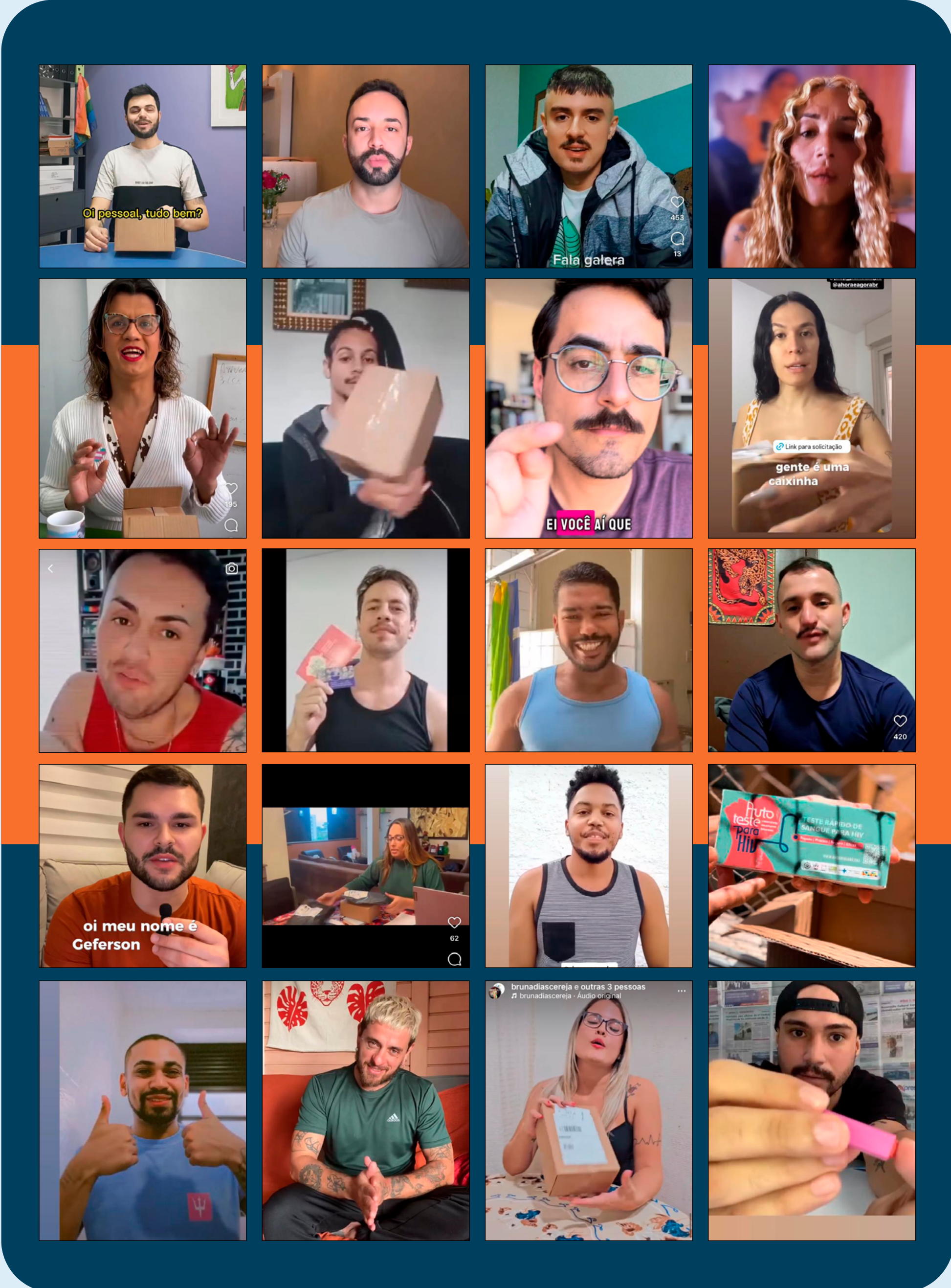
The project A Hora é Agora, implemented by Fiocruz and funded by PEPFAR, supports **Campo Grande/MS, Curitiba/PR, Florianópolis/SC, Fortaleza/CE, and Porto Alegre/RS**. It focuses on tailored communication efforts for vulnerable populations, raising awareness about their rights, and providing information on HIV testing and treatment. The initiative collaborates with local civil society organizations (CSOs) and municipal health departments to promote combined prevention and address opportunistic diseases.



LESSONS LEARNED

Partnering with CSOs enhances our connection with the most vulnerable populations due to their credibility in municipalities. We held a photoshoot with community members for print and online materials. We utilized social media to promote received actions (PR Unboxing), featuring local influencers who also represent vulnerable groups to publicize the home delivery of HIV self-tests (HIVST), reaching 161,861 people and having 1,642 shares (figure 1). Additionally, we established a partnership with Grindr, resulting in an over 60% increase in HIVST requests compared to the previous month in two municipalities participating in the campaign, along with direct outreach efforts in social venues for KPs to promote combined HIV prevention services.

figure 1: Campaign Self-tests PR Unboxing



	PERIOD
	REACH IN THE PERIOD
	SHARES
	LIKES
	COMMENTS

CONCLUSIONS/NEXT STEPS

Effective communication is vital in the response to HIV, as it promotes equitable healthcare access, reduces new acquisitions, and enhances the quality of life for vulnerable populations. Engaging the most vulnerable populations and marginalized individuals remains a challenge. Despite a decade of progress, many who need public services are still unaware of them.

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