

Headline **HIV/AIDS: Dr Chan laments ignorance**  
Date **11 Dec 2009**  
MediaTitle **Borneo Post**  
Section **Home**  
Journalist **N/A**  
Frequency **Daily (EM)**  
Circ / Read **57,529 / 166,173**

Language **English**  
Page No **16**  
Article Size **217 cm<sup>2</sup>**  
Color **Black/white**  
ADValue **1,249**  
PRValue **3,748**



# HIV/AIDS: Dr Chan laments ignorance

Authorities called upon to tell Malaysians disease knows no boundaries in its effect, impact

Because of its scale and scope, HIV/AIDS should be considered as one of the greatest human crises that the world has ever experienced with far-reaching social and economic implications.

Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan, Deputy Chief Minister

**Jacqueline Raphael**

**MIRI:** Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan said too many Malaysians think that the problem of HIV/AIDS is grossly exaggerated and that only drug addicts, gays and prostitutes get it.

Describing this as a "misperception born out of ignorance", Dr Chan said what clearly needed to be done is getting people to know the truth - that an estimated 33 million people are living with HIV worldwide with nearly 7,500 new infections each day, and that over the past two decades, AIDS has taken the lives of over 25 million people.

"It is ravaging the lives and livelihoods of countless millions more. It is no longer confined to gays or drug addicts," he said in a text of speech read by Pujut assemblyman Andy Chia at the launch of 'One Life Revolution Exhibition' by

World Vision Malaysia at Bintang Mega Mall here yesterday.

According to Dr Chan, it has been estimated that by 2010, there will be 15.7 million children orphaned by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and 20.2 million children globally.

"Because of its scale and scope, HIV/AIDS should be considered one of the greatest human crises that the world has ever experienced with far-reaching social and economic implications," he said.

Dr Chan called on authorities and NGOs to work at educating Malaysians on the disease, saying there must be

sufficient awareness of HIV/AIDS for the millions of people whose lives are not impacted by HIV/AIDS who feel that the disease is not real and it is someone else's problem and not theirs.

He said the public should view HIV/AIDS as a problem that must be tackled by people from all walks of life and background including those whose lives are not affected by the global disease.

He added that women and children make up the bulk of HIV/AIDS patients and that in Africa 60 per cent of people living with HIV are women while three out of four young people with HIV are female.

Meanwhile, One Life Revolution (OLR) is a unique interactive exhibition aimed at raising awareness on the effects of HIV/AIDS.

The three-day exhibition was organised by World Vision Malaysia, an international relief, development and advocacy organisation in partnership

with Malaysian Care and Malaysian AIDS Council.

A powerful exhibition based on the life stories of three children impacted by HIV/AIDS and child trafficking, yesterday's event invited visitors to step into the lives of the children through a captivating combination of audio and powerful imageries.

First conceptualised and organised by World Vision US, the OLR exhibition has since captivated the attention of people in Canada, New Zealand, Korea, Australia, Singapore. Members of the public here are invited to visit the exhibition which is being held at Bintang Megamall until this Sunday.

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**HEALTHY LIVING:** Chief executive officer of World Vision Malaysia, Liew Tong Ngan, and Chia (right) putting their thumbprints on the exhibition poster to mark the launch of 'One Life Revolution Exhibition'.