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Vichara

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Special Feature Page 3

Prevention of HIV/AIDS

Government is committed

Vichara

HIV & AIDS quarterly newsletter for private circulation

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Editorial

Namaskara and welcome to the January edition of Vichara. Before anything else, here's wishing all our readers a very happy new year. May 2009 be a peaceful and a productive year for all! And we remember to stand in solidarity with victims of the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai, salute those that bravely fought till the end and laud those that aided the victims in those gut wrenching moments.

Putting Vichara together has always been an effort of more than just a couple of individuals. And thanks to all for contributing their bit.

We have our community stealing the show right from the start of working on this edition. With making films, writing out scripts for plays and launching a city wide massive campaign in support of PLHIVs, the community is sure making its voice heard. And we sure congratulate them for it.

The World AIDS day saw state wide events beginning right from Bangalore city where KSAPS organized a march from Vidhana Soudha to Ambetkar Bhavan with participation of NCC and NSS, CBOs, NGOs and general public. The districts were not without activities as well. This WAD was a reflection of how far we have come and the greater lengths we need to go in future.

KHPT has also entered into partnership with K2 technological Solutions for implementing the OVC programme and we hope that more such partnerships, ensuring greater involvement of the corporate companies, will take shape in future.

Few people have also voluntarily shared some of their experiences in Vichara apart from a host of other activities that the newsletter has tried to bring to all its readers. And Once again we wish you happy reading and a great new year.

Editor

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Prevention of HIV/AIDS

Government is committed



The minister for medical education Sri. Ramachandra Gowda reiterated that the government is committed to take necessary steps to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

He was addressing the gathering jointly organized by KSAPS and the department of health and family welfare at the B.R Ambedkar Bhavan on the occasion of the World AIDS day on December 1, 2008.

Creating awareness among the general public about HIV/AIDS is inevitable to control the infection spread.

The president of the University of Manitoba, Dr. David. T. Bernard who was the chief guest said that 25000 persons get infected with HIV every year in Karnataka. The government and other agencies are actively involved in controlling the spread of this infection. The Bill and Melinda foundation has also joined hands with them and from this year onwards in association with KHPT they will roll out the second phase of the Avahan program and will make available financial, technical and medical assistance.

Speaking on the occasion the president of KNP+ Smt. Saroja said that she was happy about the free ART treatment being

given by the government and said that there is a necessity for the second phase ART treatment and the government needs to think about it.

Presiding over the function the commissioner of the health and family welfare department Sri. P. S. Sreenivas Achari said that in the future the nurses in the PHCs will play an important role to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and it will be rolled out in all the PHCs soon. 300 nurses from around the state have been short listed and will be trained for a month at NIMHANS. 27 new ART centers will be operational in Gadag, Mandya, Chitradurga, Madikeri, Ramnagar and Chikkaballapur districts

The program began with a prayer by Smt. Anita N. A, regional assistant KSAPS and the gathering was welcomed by the program Director Sri. N. Manjunath Prasad and was attended by Smt. Vandana Gurnani, Executive Director, KHPT and Project Director Sri. Stephen Moses. The additional project director KSAPS Dr. Prema proposed a vote of thanks.



World AIDS day- A united response

December 2004, when the free ART rolled out by the State, an ART Center was started at Bowring Hospital. Till mid 2008, PLHIV from various parts of the State use to visit Bowring Hospital for ARV treatment. Due to the crowd beyond its capacity to manage, Bowring Hospital was always felt by the community as a center requiring lot of infrastructural development. Repeated appeals were made by the community in this regard which yielded lot of changes at the ART Center. In the above background, BHAFF (Bangalore HIV AIDS Forum) decided to acknowledge the Bowring Hospital and to felicitate the Medical & para-medical staff at its ART Center during the World AIDS Day 2008.

World AIDS Day 2008 was observed on 1st December in collaboration with Bowring Hospital at the hospital premises itself The following were the part of the event :-

- Felicitation of medical & para-medical staff working in ART Center
- Release of a booklet on Nutrition & HIV (brought out by ActionAid) by Dr. Satishchandra, the Chairperson & Medical Superintendent of the Hospital
- Addressing of the gathering by the Medical Superintendent, the Nodal Officer, ART Doctor & the VCTC Counselor.

Medical Superintendent said, "I am very happy to be associated with BHAFF in this occasion. You will see further improvements in the infrastructure in the coming months".

Nodal Officer addressed the gathering on the importance of adherence to treatment. He also shared that they are planning to promote a mutual help system among the PLHIV visiting their ART Center to maximize their service utilization. Now there are about 7000 people availing ART at Bowring Hospital.

UoM president visits Bangalore on world AIDS day

The new President of the University of Manitoba, Dr. David T. Barnard, visited Bangalore on December 1st. He participated in various World AIDS Day and other functions during the course of the day. An evening event was organized, featuring the Bagalkot team, many of whom traveled to Bangalore that day at the Yavanika auditorium of the Dept. of Youth Services & Sports. This 3 hour program saw both program-related and cultural activities, following by dinner.



World AIDS Day observation in Nallur village of Channagiri taluk, Davangere



World AIDS Day Observed by Kannada Jagruthi Samithi, Govt. PU College NSS Unit, KHPT, DAPCU & other Associations.



The KIOSK is inaugurated by Smt. Geetha Murthy, Member, Taluk Panchayath & Dr. Prabhudev Banakar, DPM, DAPCU



The Channagiri Taluk Team imparting the information centre.



Outcome

1. Nearly 100 college Students & local people representatives & nearly 200 general public participated in "Jatha"
2. Nearly 250 adults visited the KIOSK
3. Whole program responsibility taken by village level organizations & people.

Peer convention



The peer convention declared open as community women light the lamp

A state level peer convention for 3 days was organised by KSAPS at Mysore with the main objectives of-

- Building organic linkages among the members of the community to lead ownership building process among the key populations
- Strengthening the outreach activities primarily engaging peers in self assertiveness and responsible action.
- Cross learning about the best practices, challenges and opportunities
- Strengthening the capacity and confidence level of peers in helping the HIV prevention efforts state wide.

Peers from all over Karnataka actively participated in this event. A total of 224 peers, 24 ORWs and CBOs members from FSW, MSM and TG communities were selected from each district and a total of 310 participants were seen at the convention.

“Treat sex workers with dignity and respect. Most of them are forced into the profession due to poverty and we need to treat them like any other human being,” said Sri.Ramchandra Gowda, Minister for Medical Education, after inaugurating the Convention.

In NACP III, the concept of peer rotation and peer led outreach activities are significant steps towards empowering the community in leading the intervention. In our scenario, there is a need for engaging these peers in group learning processes which has proved to enhance their opportunities for learning but also help the process of collectivization. Group learning processes and togetherness help in building organic linkages which in turn provides space for sharing emotions and feelings which is as important as sharing of experiences. With this in mind the state level peer convention was conceived.

Addressing over 300 women in sex work and members of sexuality minorities, who gathered here to attend the convention, Mr. Ramchandra Gowda added that everyone including politicians, doctors, IAS, IPS etc do their jobs to earn their livelihood and it



is no different for sex workers. “Mostly these women are forced into the profession due to their social background, family problems and poverty. So one should not discriminate them but treat them with dignity and respect like every other common man,” he added.

The convention saw facilitators from the community leading sessions on four large topics- accessing basic services, stigma and discrimination, Importance of mobilization and crisis management.

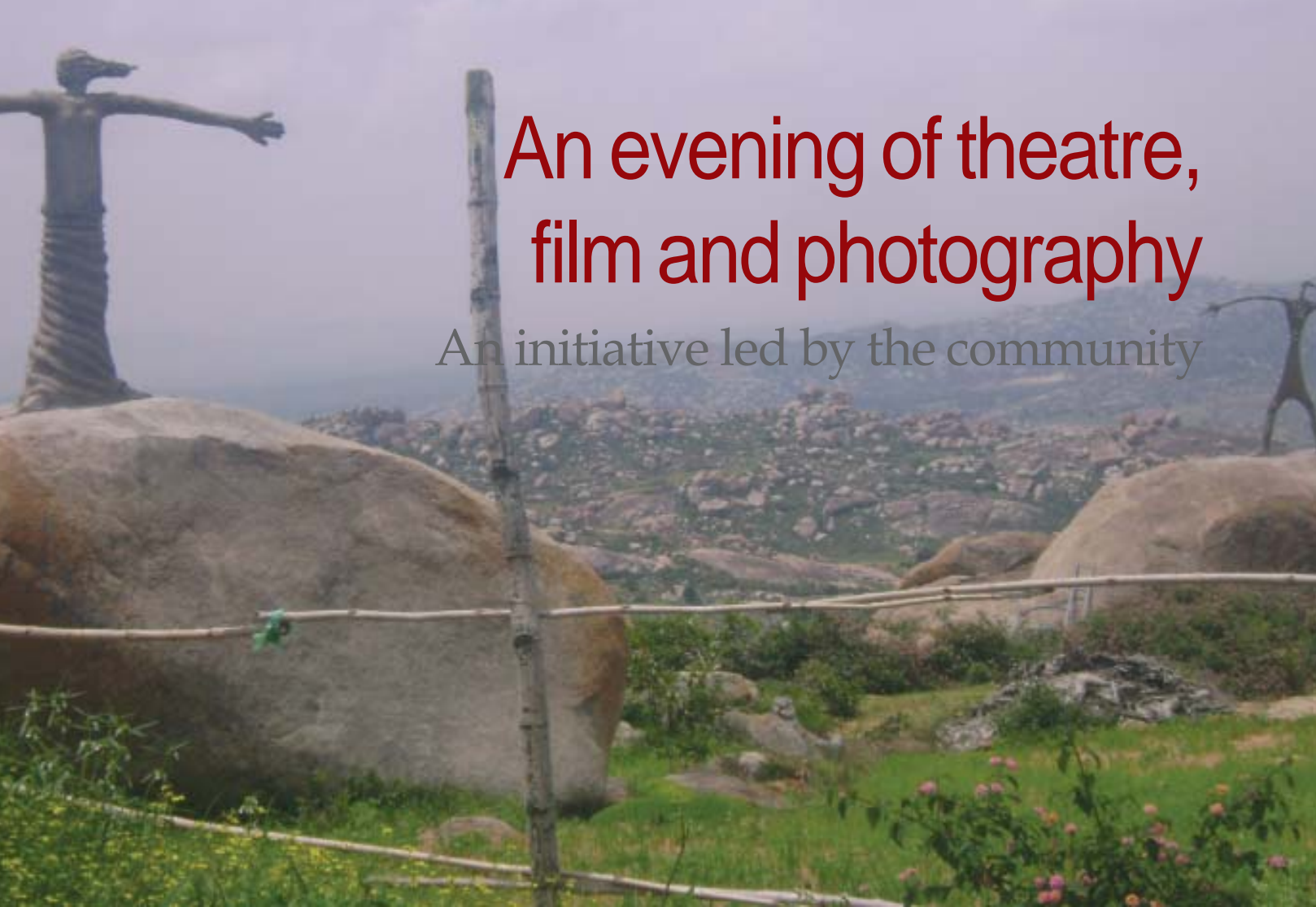
Mr. S. Parashivamurthy, Police Commissioner, Mysore, said HIV should be treated as a social issue and should not be isolated as a health problem. He appreciated the special programme about HIV/AIDS for sex workers and sexual minorities and urged the organizers to include general population on the same platform for discussion, to mainstream these marginalized communities.

Sri. Thanveer A. Satte, MLA, N.R. Mohalla, in his Presidential speech insisted that sex education should be made compulsory for the younger generation in the age group of 16 to 20. This would bring awareness to

the next generation. In Karnataka almost 26 NGOs are working in the field of HIV/AIDS, he said and urged them to “diligently fight the disease and help in prevention efforts of the government agencies like Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society.”

Sri. Madan Gopal, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department, in his introductory speech said, the objective of this program is to build the capacities of sex workers and sexual minorities, who were in the forefront of HIV prevention programmes through many community-led initiatives. These marginalized communities have formed Community-based Organisations (CBO) under KSAPS and Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) and are part and parcel of Public Health Programs in HIV prevention.

The peer convention brought peers from different districts and communities together and it was a time of reflection and renewal of commitments for moving forward in working for their respective communities.



An evening of theatre, film and photography

An initiative led by the community

The Knowledge Olympics (KO) is an effort supported by Avahan to galvanize cross-sharing of knowledge and experiences across its six high-prevalence project states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland and Tamil Nadu.

Avahan's HIV prevention efforts with vulnerable groups such as FSWs, MSMs and hijras since 2004 have been grounded in core principles of community mobilization, ownership and empowerment. The Knowledge Olympics takes these principles even further, by placing the tools of communication and technology into the hands of those who are at the very heart of the program, thus unlocking their power to dialogue, share, network and advocate.

Avahan's HIV prevention efforts with vulnerable groups such as FSWs, MSMs and hijras since 2004 have been grounded in core principles of community mobilization, ownership and empowerment



In order to initiate this process of Community Cross sharing, teams from the community were identified from the various Avahan states who are being trained on skills such as Filming, Photography, Public Speaking and Event Management. KHPT identified its Core Team consisting of the following core groups **Sangama, Samraksha, Swathi Mahila Sangha, Chaitanya.** the plays by the community were used during the satellite programs and proved to be very effective.

service sector. In each of the stations, thousands of people turned up. Coordination committees were formed and officials given specific responsibilities. Inauguration, Invitation cards & reception committees, documentation and media orientation by CFAR, street theatre teams and village visits by Nehru Yuvak Kendra, District Information officers and food officers were in charge of the publicity and food packet distribution, PSI was linked with RRE to carry out social marketing of condoms on the platform and in villages. Teams of doctors and counselors, ANMS, anganwadi teachers, volunteers from NCC. Railway and civil police and volunteers from health dept., NGOs and others stakeholders etc were involved at every halt.

At every district halt, the RRE was flagged off to a great start. Multi level publicity drive was also launched in all the nearby villages through banners, posters, cable television and cinema halls etc. At every inaugural, the health minister, panchayat and zilla/ gram panchayat leaders and other dignitaries were present.





The RRE audience covered a wide spectrum of the society-school and college students, doctors, house wives, NCC cadets, govt. employees etc. Different coaches of RRE served different purposes. The first **Exhibition coach** focused on the history of HIV AIDS in India, NACO's role in controlling the epidemic etc. **The second coach** focused on condom use, PPTCT services, ART and treatment of positive women who're pregnant. **The Third coach** focused on the larger picture on the effect of HIV AIDS on society and development of the country. Different audio-visual techniques, posters, 3-D models were used to convey the needed information. The fourth coach focused on training sessions for batches of 60 persons. The training modules were designed to go beyond the basic information to getting the people think about each of their roles in fighting HIV/AIDS.

On the spot counseling and medical advice was also available for people who had queries. Coach 5 was divided into 6 cubicles. The response to this purpose was very good at all halts.

Even on the platforms variety of programmes were designed. Like street plays, informal discussions, song and dance etc organized by NYK. Stalls at various points were the added attraction. And while the train stationed, a RRE caravan carrying two counselors, troupe of street and folk theatre etc traveled to the nearby villages carrying the messages on HIV to rural areas. Around 200 villages were chosen for the caravan visit based on survey data that revealed low condom use.



FSWs unite VIA satellite



Seen are the women from MAPS at the receiving station at the Maddur Taluk panchayat Kendra engaging in discussions after a movie screening on violence.

Never before have the voices of 1500 sex workers rung in unison across geographies for their rights. Thanks to technology it was made possible. 17th and 18th of September saw FSWs across all districts of Karnataka come together with a renewed commitment to unite against discrimination and injustice that has victimized them for ages. Echoing the sentiments of most FSWs in the state, Madhu, a community woman rightly says- ***“the need to come together setting aside all individual differences is the greatest now”***. The Satellite interactive programme aimed at propelling this thought further to move towards building a strong collective voice of this marginalized group.

Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS) & Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) have been working with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) for several years and have been closely engaged in their development. Almost all districts have CBOs supported by the NGOs with funding support from KSAPS and KHPT. It is at this juncture that a common vision building exercise among 29 CBOs in Karnataka through a satellite

based interactive program was planned with the main focus of initiating this process of CBO network building. About 1200 FSWs participated in this 2-day programme.

The main objectives of the satellite programme were-

1. To enable Female Sex workers particularly women from CBOs to understand their context and possibilities for their Community Based Organizations.
2. To provoke them to take a deeper look at their own situations and struggles in order to find answers to their problems.
3. To enable them to think constructively and collectively, in terms of small but significant actions they can take or facilitate others to take for availing social entitlements, reducing violence and their vulnerability to HIV.

After much planning and deliberation, the satellite interactive programme took shape. The effective use of satellite communication has been made possible through SATCOM centre at Mysore which was

operationalised with ISRO support in the year 2002 for one-way video and two-way audio transmission. It comprises of an earth station and studio located at SIRD, Mysore. At present, the state has set up receiving stations in all 174 taluks and district head quarters comprising District training Institutes (DTIs) and District Institutes of Education and training (DIETs).

Prior to the satellite programme, a two day workshop for southern regional resource persons was conducted at Mysore and Dharwad respectively.

During the satellite interactive programme, about 35 CBO representatives from their respective districts gathered at the district receiving station and a group of 3 Regional Resource Persons were present with them to facilitate the interactions. The sessions included the screening of films and presentations about specific issues such as Violence, Social entitlements, Stigma and discrimination etc that were transmitted via satellite from SATCOM to be viewed by the community at all 29 receiving stations simultaneously. At the end of each screening, the RRP's at each of the districts facilitated discussions revolving around the issue concerned with the CBO representatives. Following this, these community members were given a chance to put forward their queries through audio transmission to a panel of experts seated at SATCOM. The panel then responded through video transmission viewed by all the 29 CBO groups.

For most women this programme reinforced the importance of building a strong collective which would be the true community voice. The fact that many of the panelists themselves encouraged the women to collectively demand for their rights was a boost up for women. Many women felt that the AV content for each of the sessions provided good insights to base discussions on. The presence of

dignitaries such as Mr. Guruprasad from the Police dept. and Mr. Bharathlal Meena from the Social Welfare dept. and the opportunity to interact one on one with them helped the FSWs gain confidence



Seen are the panelists- ((from left to right)- Sri. Manilal (NACO), Smt. Madhu Naduvinamani (Chaitanya Sangha), Smt. Vandana Gurnani (ED, KHPT), Sri. Bharathlal Meena (Secretary, Social Welfare Dept.), Dr. Manjunath Prasad (PD, KSAPS), Dr. Stephen Moses (CD, KHPT), Mohan H. L (Director- Communications, KHPT)

and clarify concerns. The effective use of available technology is a great way to build community strength.

“Looking forward to more such programmes in the future,” says a community member.

Quoting some questions asked by the women

“Women sex workers are asked to produce documents in order to access any government scheme. We cannot give an address because we do not have a house. They ask for documents when we try to rent a house. What should we do?”

How can we stop police harassment effectively? How can you help us?

My husband is responsible for me coming into this profession. They have sent me out of the house and now I am infected with HIV. I want a share of my husband's property. Give me a legal opinion.

Terrorists and criminals are shown on TV with their faces covered. We are not such serious law offenders but the police invite the press and photograph us, video record our arrests and show it on TV. How do you justify this?

Happenings

HIV awareness for NSS youth

Following the invitation from Mr. Manjunath, Coordinator, NSS of Sri Chennappa College, Davangere Samastha team from Anagodu agreed to be a part of the seven days NSS program at Haluvarathi which is a non-Samastha village. During the week-long program the NSS team observed one of the days as an HIV/ AIDS awareness day. On that day, Mr. S. A. Ravindranath, State Agriculture & Dist. In charge Minister, Mr. Basavaraj Naik, MLA, Dr. Ramappa, ZP President & Members of gram panchayat participated in the program. The Davangere Samastha team, facilitated by K T Hanumanthappa shared key inputs related to Samastha Project, the modes of HIV transmission and prevention, the various services available in the district and the role of community in reducing stigma and discrimination. The KIOSK, inaugurated by the Minister, helped in sharing information to the community, who walked in with their queries. The district in-charge minister shared that it is important that information is about HIV/ AIDS is being shared in all the programs and it should be main-streamed, he also focused on the need for the youth to take deceive steps and contribute positively. Further, highlighted that Govt. services should be accessed and support should be given to organizations working on the issue. Around 550 members participated in the program.



The ministers inaugurate the Kiosk during the week long program.

Belaku Mahila Sangha- The light of their lives

It was hard to miss the smiles of 600 odd women from the community. The reason- They were going to witness the formal launch of their own CBO- Belaku Mahila Sangha. Belaku was formally inaugurated on 30th September at Dharwad. Mr. Vijay Kumar, Secretary, SPAD welcomed and introduced the HIV intervention programme in Dharwad district and the Sangha. Ms. Seema Masuti, MLA, inaugurated the Sangha. In her inaugural address she said "Organized effort will help the women fight injustice and stand for their rights. She appreciated the effort put in by the women in forming a collective of their own. During the course of the launch, Ms. Seema also collected information regarding the HIV intervention programme in the district especially with regard to the TIs with sex workers and promised all the help to the collective in their activities in future. She promised to call for a meeting of all the departments to discuss the issues of women in sex work. She also assured them of allotting land and help put up a building for the collective's office.

Others present at the launch were Mr. Sunil Kumar Auradhi, DHO, Dharwad, encouraged the women to avail of the various services that is available for them from the government. The President of Belaku Sangha, Shobha Talawar, Vice President, Suvarna Gaekwad and Secretary, Lakshmi Badiger addressed the gathering and they asked the support of all the community members as well as the dignitaries present in their effort to work for the upliftment of the community women. Members of collectives from other districts were also present for the programme and wished and promised their support to the Belaku collective.



Community women participate in the proceedings of the inaugural function

Training of the District HIV/AIDS prevention control unit (DAPCU)



DAPCU Officers at the Induction training at State Institute of Health and Family Welfare (13th – 25th October 2008)

India is committed to the Millennium Development Goal of halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country by 2012. The implementation of NACP-I (1992-99) and NACP-II (1999-2006) has resulted in institutionalization of efforts nationwide and there is encouraging evidence regarding its stabilization in some parts of the country.

NACO recognizes that the magnitude of the response to HIV epidemic in India under NACP-III cannot be managed centrally. During NACP-II, programme management was decentralized to State AIDS Control Societies (SACS). Under NACP-III, programme implementation will be further decentralized to District and Sub District levels. Based on the epidemiological and vulnerability criteria, 611 districts in the country have been divided into four categories viz. Category A-163 districts-High prevalence; Category B-59 Districts-concentrated epidemic; Category C-278 districts-increased presence of vulnerable population and Category D-111 districts-low/unknown vulnerability. Differential package of services have been planned for each category of districts. Every district will have District AIDS Prevention and Control Unit (DAPCU) to implement AIDS Control and Prevention strategies, synchronized with the public health infrastructure and programmes at that level.

The role of DAPCU

- Implementation of NACP strategies;
- Convergence with NRHM activities; and
- Convergence with the other related Departments in the District.

A thematic listing of functions for distinct activities will be-

I. Delivery of Services such as facilitating access to HIV prevention and treatment services, creating a supportive environment for TIs, Monitor delivery of services, ensuring safe blood storage in blood banks, Monitor availability of condoms at service provision point, Monitor children born to sero positive mothers for early signs of the need for ART, Working with district level departments for prevention

II. Monitoring and Revising awareness & impact mitigation: Provide pre departure guidance to migrants and provide linkages to organizations in destination areas and link up with existing health services for STI management and Condom promotion , Conduct district level IEC campaign, Use local channels for demand generation, Work with PRI institutions and local CSOs for social mobilization for

HIV prevention and management, Support the formation and functioning of district civil society partners forum etc.

III. Management- Set up linkages with district level organisations and departments for support to PLHA and their families, Conduct district level trainings, Maintaining the District dashboard and regular reporting to SACS on physical, financial, epidemiological progress, surveillance and capacity building etc

The functions to be implemented are expected to be through the NRHM framework and using the available infrastructure under other departments, civil society organizations and local elected bodies, village level committees, etc,

Intersectoral convergence for NACP

NACP-III envisages expansion in outreach and effectiveness of the prevention and support strategies through wider convergence with different Departments functioning at the District level. HIV/AIDS is to be seen not only as a medical issue but a manifestation of the socio-economic profile of the district. While response to the epidemic is the responsibility of the Medical & Health Department, effective strategies for Prevention and Support are possible only through the creation of a wider support system under the leadership of the District Collector.

Thirteen-day training to train DAPCU officers was conducted by KSAPS and TSU at SIHFW – Bangalore. Twenty-five DAPCU-officers (Annexure2) from various districts of Karnataka were trained in all components of HIV-AIDS Prevention programme as per NACPIII guidelines. The training was conducted as classroom sessions and field visits to Sangama, Pragathi, Snehadaan and STI/ ICTC at KIMS were organised. A Three-day exposure visit to Bagalkot district learning site identified by NACO, was also incorporated in the training to provide the DAPCU officers with hands-on experience on how to integrate prevention to care and treatment and mainstreaming the HIV control programme.

District	Name of the DAPCU Officer	District	Name of the DAPCU Officer
Bagalkot	Dr. S.H Arunachi	Gadag	Dr. Omprakash Kattimani
Bangalore (Rural)	Dr. Ganesha H	Gulbarga	Dr. Desai Venkat Rao
Bangalore (Urban)	Dr. Asha T H	Hassan	Dr. Chinna Nagappa
Belgaum	Dr. V B Kulkarni	Haveri	Dr. Venkat Naik
Bellary	Dr. Narasimha murthy	Uttara Kannada	Dr. Ganesh T H
Bidar	Dr. Rajshekhar Patil	Kodagu	Dr. Jnanamni Naniah
Bijapur	Dr. Suresh N Hadgali	Kolar	Dr. M. Jagadeesh
Chamarajnagar	Dr. Mahadev. N	Mandya	Dr. M Nagaraj
Chikmagalur	Dr. Sampath Ummaraji	Mysore	Dr. Raghu Kumar T
Dakshina Kannada	Dr. Kishore Kumar M	Raichur	Dr. Nagesh M
Davangere	Dr. Prabhudeva Banakar	Shimoga	Dr. K G Siddiah
Dharwad / Hubli	Dr. B D Kittur	Tumkur	Dr. Harishwara
Udupi	Dr. Ashoka H		

FoCD training workshop

Setting the stage for research



Mr. Reid leads the sessions on FoCD with help from Ashok shetty to translate

Reid Smith from PSI/Washington was in Bangalore in October 2008 to conduct a training session for Link Workers on FoCD, Focus on Concept Development.

FoCD, a qualitative research exercise designed by PSI, attempts an in-depth understanding of drivers of behaviour in order to design the branding or positioning of a health product, service or behaviour. The study requires members of the target audience to take photos of places, objects or people that are relevant to the behaviour in question, thereby yielding a rich and vivid portrayal of them and the circumstances of their behaviour (or non-behaviour). This is followed by one-on-one interviews with them conducted by program staff specially trained in the art of interviewing for research.

A first in India, the FoCD Workshop held between Oct 21-24 aimed at training Link Workers under Samastha on interviewing skills and basic research concepts. Apart from discussing the objective of the study and logistics, the training involved theory and practice sessions on listening skills, probing skills, the difference between open- and close-ended

questions and the importance of being neutral. It also incorporated into the research design feedback from the link workers on the target audience, their habits and attitudes. The unique feature of this type of research-photo narratives-was explained and explored in depth. It being a pilot test, a single Behaviour Objective under Samastha was chosen: adult men and consistent condom use.

Three LWs and a supervisor from each of 3 districts (Bagalkot, Davangere and Mysore) participated in the training; they were chosen based on their listening and communication skills and their ability to think on their feet. Guests who attended the training as observers included research and communication staff from PSI's Delhi and Bangalore offices and of course, the IEC team from KHPT.

The workshop was a learning experience for the observers, especially the IEC team which was impromptu asked to double up as interpreters for Reid and the link workers. The link workers, we hope, left the workshop motivated to make the pilot FoCD a success.

KSHEMA- An OVC Support program



INAUGURAL OF OVC SUPPORT PROGRAM – “KSHEMA” at Bagalkot, by Honorable MLA Sri.Veeranna Charanthimath with Mr.Anant R Koppar, Chairman & CEO Ktwo Tech.Solns. along with OVC Children. Dr.Stephen Moses, Managing Trustee, KHPT and Mr. Srivara, IAS, Deputy Commissioner are seen in the picture.

“KSHEMA”- A program to support the children infected and affected by HIV-AIDS of Bagalkot district, was inaugurated on 26th November, at Bagalkot, Karnataka. The program was organized jointly by KHPT, KTwo Technology Solutions.

KTwo Solutions is a commercial organization running a profitable software development and solution providing firm, driven by the social service commitment and has been actively involved in various social service activities in the rural areas. KTwo Solutions expressed its interest in supporting programs for Orphan and Vulnerable Children in rural districts of North Karnataka.

And as a result KHPT and KTwo solutions entered into an agreement this November to initiate KSHEMA, a program for OVC in Bagalkot with an annual support of Rs. 8.73 lakhs being routed through Utthana Trust which is KTwo Solution’s officially registered Trust.

The objectives of Kshema include:

1. To provide Psycho-social support to infected and affected children and their family
2. To provide Nutritional support to OVC
3. To provide educational support to OVC
4. To support develop foster care homes with community partnership
5. To develop linkages and referral network with other organizations and government run services to provide other related and required services to OVC

The children took the centre stage at the inaugural function. They started the program with a prayer followed by a welcome note by Mr.Gopalkrishna, Regional Manager, KHPT. The key note address by Mr.Aravind, Vice President, Ktwo and Mr.Vishwanath, Manger-OVC of KHPT, introduced the program and the organizations.

Member of legislative assembly Sri.Veeranna Charanthimath inaugurated the function by lighting the lamp. The district surgeon, health officer, T B Officer, staff of ART center, officers of DAPCU, staff of KHPT, Bagalkot/ Bangalore and about 280 OVC along with 40 parents/care takers and 5 media people were present for the program.

Dr. Stephen Moses in his speech reiterated that, though the HIV prevalence among the general adult population has been reduced over a period of last five years from 1.6% to 1.1%, the care & treatment for the infected will continue to be a challenge in the years to come. He also expressed that “the support extended by KTwo Technological Solutions through Project Utthana for the OVC, of Bagalkot Dist. is a good beginning from the Corporate Sector and looking forward to associate with many more such alliances”. Dr. Stephen said that *“K2 is deserves the appreciation for their proposed contributions for the cause of Children of Bagalkot District and he expects that let the same support be made available for neighboring districts as well”*.

In his Inaugural speech Sri.Veeranna Charanthimath, MLA, stated that shelter and education support is of tremendous importance to these children. He also ensured all support to the organizations who are working with OVC in the district”. The Deputy Commissioner also ensured that the district administration will extend its full support to the OVC program in the district and is willing to allot the required site to have its own building in the district.

Mr. Anant. Koppa of KTwo Solutions handed over a cheque of Rs. 1.5 lakhs to Mr. Stephen Moses towards the initial donation for the KSHEMA program during the inauguration function.

The program was followed by cultural programs, games and competitions for the OVC and prize distribution by Dr. Stephen Moses. Kshema is the first of, what we hope will be, many such collaborations with the corporate sector in joining hands for the societal well being.

Better liaisoning with the Media

A media consultation was conducted at Belgaum with the main objective of briefing the electronic and press media personnel about the HIV intervention project implemented by KHPT/ Corridors, BIRDS, PLWHA network, and Shakthi sex worker collective Belgaum, to create better understanding of the ITP act and context of sex work and to strengthen the relationship with the press and electronic media representatives working in Belgaum.



Gangavva during her testimonial speech

The meeting was organized in collaboration with Shakthi sangha, BIRDS, KHPT/Corridors and DAPCU. Details about the project activities and the ITPA were given by the project staff and advocacy officer Sidaruda. Apart from this, Gangavva, peer project coordinator of Shakti Sangha shared her life story with the- She shared that she entered into sex work after being cheated and sold by a known person from her hometown for Rs10000/- to a Mumbai brothel. Narrating her story she explained that in Mumbai, she was misused and ill

treated by the brothel owner and could not escape from there however hard she tried. After long, she managed to rescue herself from the brothel and came back to her hometown and joined BIRDS.

She expressed that this is the fate of most sex workers who are driven by circumstances to get into sex work. The situations, customs and traditions prevailing in the society pushes her into it. She cautioned all the community members to stand up against being manipulated by others. The press had many questions which were answered by those present there. In response to the program, the media representatives appreciated the work and promised to extend all support required to stop trafficking, reducing stigma and discrimination of PLHIVs.

Launch of Baduku



People expressing their solidarity by participating in the signature campaign

Three collectives of female sex workers in Bangalore Urban come together. Swathi, Vijaya & Jyothi Mahila Sangha organized the launch of Project Baduku which, they hope, will be a new voice of the sex workers and PLHIV to address issues of violence, stigma and discrimination. The program focuses on advocacy with police, goondas, lawyers, pimps, doctors and other service providers. It also envisages seeking the support of the media to maximize its advocacy efforts for the upliftment of the marginalized and stigmatized populations.

The goal of project BADUKU is to improve the capacities of women in sex work and PLHIV to sensitize the environment that would help in decreasing self-stigma and structural barriers to their development in the society. "Project BADUKU", was inaugurated by Mr. S. Suresh Kumar, Hon, Urban development, Law and legislative affairs Minister, Karnataka Govt

As part of the launch of Baduku, A mass campaign against Stigma & Discrimination called **Spoorti Jagruthi** was planned and executed for one month in the city.

This month long campaign consisted of the following activities-

Email campaign- An email on the issues of FSWs and the program did the rounds.

Bike campaign- Volunteers and staff who owned a bike, took a rally with pillion riders and visited 12 hospitals in the city creating awareness and distributing pamphlets.

Human Chain- two human chains were formed. One from the State youth centre on Nrupatunga road to corporation circle. General public, volunteers and community members participated in this. Dinesh Gundu Rao, MLA, Lingadevaru, Cine Director and National award winner, Bharati Shetty, MLC also were seen standing as part of the human chain. The second human chain was formed from Forum mall in Koramangla to Dairy Circle.

Signature campaign- Signatures of the supporters were taken at different points in the city over a one month period and more than 5000 signatures were collected.

Key Audience included health care providers, media, government departments, KSAPS, community based organizations, non-government organizations, network of NGOs & CBOs.

Good Practices

Building Volunteerism among the community

After the PBS report last year, it came across that many people did not know about condoms and how to use it during the intercourse. And many even faced the problem of finding condoms when they needed. Therefore, the BIRDS team decided to identify a rural condom programme volunteer (non-peer). While the peer educator always travels and cannot be at one village on all the days, the condom programme volunteers are present in the village always. These volunteers have been identified for villages where there are no residential peers. The prerequisites for any person to be a volunteers is that -

- She has to be an FSW
- More than 50% of the FSWs need to know her
- Must share good rapport with FSWs
- Home-based
- Willingness to keep the condoms with her at home
- Consent to be a volunteer

Taluk level volunteers meeting is held whenever required. Last year a sensitization programme for the volunteers was done which covered: programme component, condom distribution process,

volunteerism and their role & importance in the programme.

The impact of this initiative has been tremendous. Volunteers stock up a minimum of 500 condoms each time they meet at the taluk office and take it home. Their distribution is ensured by the volunteers as they can be approached by anyone in the village, even those from the general public who do not want to be associated with the program in any way.

Therefore, this has proved to be useful not only for the FSWs but also the non community women who can approach the volunteers when they have multiple partners. This has aided the HIV prevention efforts in the villages. Those at BIRDS feel that it is a big step towards sustainability and building ownership. Through this initiative, the community monitoring process has been strengthened to a great extent. 450 volunteers have been identified within 3-4 months and it has not been a very easy task. Bagalkot has 150, Bijapur 111 and Belgaum 451 volunteers.

Pulse Polio for all

This is to inform you all, that the Pulse Polio Programme - Round I will be conducted in Karnataka on December 21, 2008 (Sun) and Round II on February 1, 2009 (Sun). All children below the age of 5 yrs should receive these two extra doses on the dates mentioned above even if they have received their regular Polio immunisation doses from their Paediatricians. This would be made available in not only the public sector hospitals/private hospitals/clinics but also at many public institutions made into pulse polio booths. THIS IS ADMINISTERED FOR FREE.

All of us working in the Health Sector should ensure that not only our children who are eligible receive these extra doses of Oral Polio Vaccine but also that our neighbours, family and friends receive these Polio drops by which we are **contributing significantly to the cause of Polio eradication in our Country.**

. If you have any doubts or clarifications regarding the same please feel free to contact Dr. Naina on Mobile:

9845252052

Small loans for Young widows and PLHIVs - SAMASTHA AP Project

26 year old Kagitha Balusulamma, a native of Nandigama Village, Pedana, Krishna dist. was leading a comfortable life with her husband and two children till recently when her husband died of AIDS. A small hotel which used to be the only source of income was closed. When the staff first met her, she was psychologically, economically and socially devastated. Repeated counselling sessions gave her a small ray of hope but financial constraints were too strong to overcome. A small loan was then given from SAMASTHA to restart the closed hotel. Slowly and steadily her economic condition started improving. Now she is positive about her life, planning for her children education and a better future.

Kavita's is only one of the many stories of how small loans for PLHIVs and widows are helping.

How is this configured?

During the initial visits to field by the Samastha AP team, it was observed that many young widows there had no source of income and lacked skill as well as chances to do any kind of job. This was because they were home makers when their partners were with them. Their efforts to get loans under different schemes also failed as they needed to give surety but there was nobody to support them in this. Such situations saw the PLHIVs indulging in self stigmatization and as a result non-adherence to treatment. The project team efforts in bringing behaviour change among PLHIV were also not helping much.

The following statement explains the situation better. A young widow said to the staff -

"You are asking us to take timely & nutritious food, we don't have any food to eat and if you want to help us please provide us some lively hood option and later we will follow what ever you say".

To address these needs the project has proposed for the small-loan schemes and Support groups.

Who benefits from it?

- o Women infected or affected by HIV
 - should belong to BPL category
 - should be part of a support group
 - have an idea as what she wants to do

Is it used as a loan directly or is it also used to leverage other loan facilities?

- o These loans are used as platform for getting loans from other schemes. When Samastha project started its services - the IKP and other Govt schemes were also not reaching the needy PLHIV population though they are eligible.
- o To develop & demonstrate a system of micro-financing for PLHIV. And leverage other schemes for PLHIV.

Who decides on who gets a loan?

- The Project Coordinator and the Counselor

Process followed -

- o The economic status of PLHIV is assessed by the Support group members
- o Home visits made by the Support Group Members and Counselor
- o See whether they have enough experience in the similar field (proposed petty business)
- o Decision taken during the Support Group meet

What are the terms and period of repayment?



Some of the women who benefited from the loans.

The terms and conditions are -

- The beneficiaries should belong to the outreach mandal, and they have to provide one ID proof
- Surety should be either from her family or the Support group.
- The maximum loan amount given is Rs.5000/
- The repayment method is 10 EMIs

How do we see this in the long-term?

The long term plan is to leverage from the Govt schemes in helping the PLHIV. But at this point of time the banks/other organisations are not convinced with the fact that there is a future to Persons living with HIV. The project stands as an example to every one.

The team however agrees that this is not a long term/sustainable strategy to address the needs of the PLHIV. But in order to achieve the other outputs we need to immediately address the felt needs of the beneficiaries.

HIV prevention messages now on AIR

In order to create awareness on health and HIV related issues, KSAPS has used various forms of media to do many programmes through Doordharshan, radio, print media, folk media. It helps to reach people with the message of HIV prevention. KSAPS has recently begun to use radio for the purpose. *Jeevana Jopana*, the new programme on radio began to be aired from September 1st 2008 and will be on till March 2009.

Most of the people infected and affected by HIV are youth and women. Even new-borns run the high risk of HIV infection. Thus possibility of reaching these populations with prevention messages through radio was explored. And thus was birthed *Jeevana Jopana*.

The weekly programmes are as follows-

- Wednesdays- 8 to 8:30 pm- Programme for youth
- Thursdays - 8 to 8: 30 pm- Programme for women
- Fridays- 8 to 8: 30 pm- Programme for youth on FM rainbow (re-telecast)
- Fourth Thursday of every month 8- 8:30 pm live phone-in programme where government officials, doctors and specialists will be present to respond to the callers' queries.
- HIV and AIDS related messages telecast on AIR at regular intervals
- 93.5 SFM private radio channel also started transmission from Oct 1 to Bangalore, Mangalore, Mysore and Gulbarga districts.

Specific and well tailored programmes for youth and women have been designed. This is a call for everyone's cooperation to ensure that these programmes are accessed by women and youth. Please inform the women and youth in your towns and villages, schools, colleges, ART centres, ICTCs, gram panchayats, SHGs which will help publicise the programmes and gather good listenership. We hope this will touch many with the message.

Mukha-Mukhi: Ensuring direct interaction

Once in three months, the Mukha – Mukhi program is organized to provide an opportunity for the FSWs to discuss their issues directly with the Doctors. It is a platform for the community to own their programme. During Mukha - Mukhi, they ask questions and clarify doubts regarding health and other related aspects directly with the doctor. The women also put forward their complaints. This direct communication between the women and the doctor in a non-clinic setting is very useful. This serves as an ice breaker between the doctor and the community women. Mutual accountability and mutual responsibility is fostered as a result of this. It helps the doctor change his preconceived notions about the FSWs community. This program has proved to be successful and many women share that it has helped motivate the women to attend clinics regularly.



Mukha-mukhi with the doctor in progress

Your Space

My visit to Mali, West Africa



Sudha with the other awardees at the Global Health Leadership workshop

It was my first time in Africa, being invited to participate in the Taesdale-corti Global Health Leadership award Pre-conference workshop. Thirteen individuals from 12 countries had received this award from the Global Health Research Initiative and I was the sole awardee from Asia while most of them were from Africa and Latin America. This was the first time we were all meeting as a cohort to share our plan of work for the coming years with the grant we have been given. It was great to meet such varied groups of professionals working in very relevant areas of Public Health.

We then attended the Global Ministerial Forum held at the Bamako convention center. What do you get when you put over 60 ministers of health, science, technology, and education, followed by a host of distinguished ministerial representatives, together in a room for 3 days? Perhaps surprisingly to some sceptics, the answer is concern and commitment, mixed with extraordinary creativity. The theme of the conference was “Strengthening Research for Health, Development and Equity” in which ministers of health from 60 countries participated in the deliberations and a document titled “Bamako’s Call to action” was finalized which was signed by the representatives.

The conference was well organized and covered interesting topics like knowledge translation, intersectoral research, monitoring and evaluation, research priorities in the coming years. The research showcase brought together many well known organizations displaying their work and providing opportunity to interact and network. It was an interesting and a very informative experience as the sessions were interactive and were mainly group activities.

The people of Bamako were very friendly and this city is one of the safest cities in Africa but still the official conference transport buses were always accompanied by police convoy. Though I did not have much time to explore the city it was very evident that the level of poverty is quite high. The women with their children tied to their backs with huge vessels on their heads was a disturbing sight to watch. Serious efforts have been made to improve the living conditions of the people but they still have a long way to go.

Thanks for sharing this with us. We congratulate you Sudha and wish many more such laurels.

And the award goes to...

Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare bestowed the DISTINGUISHED SOCIAL WORKER AWARD to Shri. Vasudeva Tholabandhi in recognizing his commitment to social development.

Mr. Vasudeva believes that the mantra for the progress of the underprivileged is the eradication of illiteracy at the grass root level. Towards this end he has trained about 470 members of gram panchayats in Jamkhandi taluk and conducted literacy workshops for the Kuruba and Lambani communities at Dharwad. He has also worked with NGO Child Rights and You for the upliftment of 10 villages and 4 slums of Jamkhandi taluk with emphasis on rehabilitation of child labourers and literacy for women. He has averted 572 child marriages at Bijapur and Bagalkot districts since 2006 through Ujjwala Gramina Abhivrudhi Seva Samsthe, Bijapur.



Mr. vasudeva Tholabandhi being conferred the Distinguished Social Worker award

Presently a member of the child welfare committee, Mr. Vasudeva has been earlier conferred the Mayura Award in 2006 from Survey Cultural Academy. We congratulate Mr. Vasudeva on his dedication. He sure has lit up the lives of many young people.

Finding a reason to live once again

Irfan Pathan [name changed], a native of Mysore, was on his death bed, abandoned by his family due to his HIV positive status. An outreach worker of the Samastha Project received information about Irfan from a social worker of that area.

The Outreach worker community care centre (CCC) in the nearby hospital and arranged for an ambulance for Irfan. He was counseled and treated for seven days at the centre till he began to feel better. The community care center also offered him yoga and spiritual classes that helped him greatly to recuperate. After being discharged from the CCC, the project registered Irfan at the IPPC-DIC (Integrated Positive Prevention and Care drop in center) which is a service supported under Samastha and implemented in association with the local district network of positives. The IPPC

DIC provides psychosocial support, outpatient medical support, nutritional and educational support along with referral services to various other HIV services in the district.

After being counseled at the IPPC-DIC, Irfan was registered for ART. Over the next few months, he improved and was in a position to start working again. Having been refused a job by his earlier employer, Irfan enrolled himself in a driving school initiated as part of a self-employment programme by the NGO partner supported under Samastha. Today, Irfan works as a driver in a private firm and is earning Rupees 3000 per month. Irfan is also a member of a self help group started by PLHIVs in his area which is helping him save for his future. Irfan is one of the many persons whose life has been changed by Project Samastha.