

ISSUES: Karnataka has 170095 people living with HIV (PLHIV) are in active care, of which 17005 young adult are between 18-25 years are on antiretroviral treatment. Young adult living with HIV are faced with a number of questions and challenges. It is important to collectively understand and address these questions and challenges from a young adult perspective.

PROJECT/ACTIVITIES

KHPT VIHAAN team with the help of district level networks (DLNs) mobilized young adult living with HIV, between the ages of 18-25 for Annual 'Me a Champion' events, with the objective of building their capacity.

The 'Me a Champion' used participatory game-based methods to help young adult learn from peer experiences and life skills training. The 'Me a Champion' were organised in 30 districts and 1060 young adults every year participated in the camps. Most of the sessions were facilitated by adolescent leaders. It is created platform children came with their own talent by the identified the talent and skills, it is an ARTS and SPORTS event. They kept connected our team at the district and supported on education, health and life skill training. In the 6 years of the changes we see youths are representative of youth and engage with DLN Board as board member.



The activities helped young adult to be conscious of self-perceived HIV stigma, increased their awareness about HIV and treatment adherence, role of young adult in DLN and taught them how to avail and access protection of their rights as young adult.

Government representatives from the department of Women and Child Development, ART centre officers, community leaders and volunteers were invited to witness the events. The camp expenses are mobilised through the involvement of local donors.

RESULTS

1060 young adults regularly received treatment adherence counselling through these events. 427 young adults received career counselling support. 427 young adults identified skills training "online Skill building training for adult" as their interest, 120 joined DDU-GKY course, 110 adults joined various skill building training. All the children who received counselling on treatment adherence 99% are retained on treatment till date. The young adult left the camp feeling happy and more confident that they would be able to deal with their day-to-day life challenges. 24 young adult engage with DLN as board member. In COVID-19 time the young adults leaders come forward voluntarily provided to 112 clients through home delivery and supported to 475 clients to collect the medicine from ARTC, and LAC. All the DLNs agreed to take the lead to conduct this event next year onwards.

Lessons Learned: Involving stakeholders from the local community, helps to address stigma and discrimination as well as to create opportunities for children to develop resilience to HIV stigma. This invariably increases their treatment adherence, and discovers leadership qualities and hidden talent. Once young adult are engaged in productive activities, it tends to reduce dependency on others to sustain their life.

¹State ART report of January 2021.