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BREAKING THE BARRIERS

AN EFFORT TO DESIGN NON-MEDICAL TB INTERVENTIONS FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

‘Breaking the Barriers’ (BTB) is a four year (2020-2024) project, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which aims to develop innovative and effective behaviour change operational models that improve coverage of specific vulnerable populations including urban vulnerable groups, tribal communities, migrants, mining and industrial workers and tea garden workers, through increased case notification and improved successful treatment outcomes of both drug-sensitive (DS-TB) and drug-resistant TB (DR-TB).

This project aims to develop interventions that move away from a purely bio-medical response to TB to a social approach. The crux of this social approach is tackling the structural barriers to desired health seeking behaviours among specific vulnerable population groups that the project will engage with closely, such as urban vulnerable groups, tribal groups, migrant population, mining and industrial groups, and tea garden workers.

Guided by a core objective of the BTB project to develop behaviour change solutions that are rooted and founded in the unique socio-cultural contexts of the different vulnerable population groups, a primary behavioural study was undertaken. This study was aimed at understanding the vulnerable population groups’ enablers and barriers to health seeking and adherence at the individual, family, community and health systems levels, with a special focus on TB. Based on the study, opportunity areas were identified and innovative behaviour change solutions were developed that would “nudge” communities towards making choices and motivate actions that would positively impact their health seeking behaviour.

The following solutions that emerged from this process are being field tested, and will be rigorously evaluated and scaled. We are hopeful that the learnings from this project can bridge a critical gap in the current TB response and sufficiently contribute to the rich and focused efforts of the government and other partners in the sector working towards the ambitious goal of ending TB by 2025.

INTRODUCTION

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

TB STARTER KIT



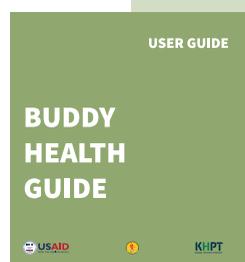
- The kit comprises of three components, a TB management guide with information on basics of TB, a calendar to record the treatment journey and a user's guide to inform users on how to use the kit. It helps newly-diagnosed persons with TB and caregivers to understand and prepare for their treatment, as well as create a sense of ownership of their treatment journey.
- The kit helps in 'calendarization of the treatment journey' and prepares those on TB treatment for the entire treatment duration.
- It addresses the barriers of ambiguity and confusion about TB treatment protocols.

PH A FRIEND HELPLINE



- Phone-a-friend is a telephonic call system for on-demand counselling and consulting, tackling emotional, social and medical issues.
- Enables persons with TB who are worried about being stigmatized to independently access counselling services.
- Addresses the barriers of accessibility of health care services, and the need for confidentiality among persons with TB.

TB BUDDY



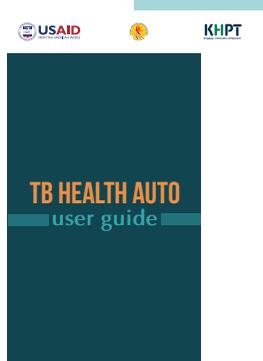
- TB buddy is a caregiver, community member or TB Champion assigned or nominated by the person with TB as a TB Buddy to provide holistic support during each stage of the treatment.
- The solution helps persons with TB to find indisputable, unquestionable support within and outside their homes on medical and non-medical issues such as emotional support while keeping TB a secret.
- It was found that lack of accountability in the treatment makes people slack in their treatment adherence.

TB JAANCH COUPON



- A physical, in-hand copy, that has value of test, validity mentioned. It triggers TB-suspected persons to visit testing facility. The validity mentioned creates a sense of urgency to visit.
- A coupon that health-workers, community coordinators and community structure members give to TB-suspected persons to nudge them for testing.
- The TB Jaanch coupon is given to persons with TB symptoms to encourage them to avail free-of-cost testing services to which they are entitled.

HEALTH AUTO



- The Health Auto offers a free, on-demand pick-up and drop-off service to healthcare facilities for persons with symptoms and persons on treatment.
- One can book a health auto through a phone call for a range of services- going to the testing centres, medicine collection, follow-up visits, and any other TB hospital visits. The auto driver is trained on basics of TB, and is sensitized on dealing with persons with TB.
- It addresses the hidden costs associated with testing, medicine collection, making healthcare easily accessible in terms of proximity, timing and affordability. The solution also makes decision making easier for persons with TB, who then do not delay in getting themselves tested.

TB MUKT CERTIFICATE



- The TB MukT Certificate is a physical certificate issued by the health facility to persons who have completed TB treatment, creating a sense of accomplishment and documenting proof of completion.
- It helps end the TB journey on a positive note and to gear up TB survivors for their life ahead with renewed vigour.
- Addresses the barriers of ambiguity of the waiting period of test results for persons with TB. Also provides clear documentation and accurate information of past treatment received and outcome.

TB AZAAN



- It is a set of TB jingles played at public places to generate awareness on TB among a large number of people at one go.
- TB Azaan is intended to encourage appropriate behaviours amongst people towards TB.
- TB Azaan helps in combating stigma around TB, making TB seem like a conquerable disease and in generating awareness around TB contagion

SHARING CIRCLES



- Meant primarily for health workers, it has a set of 10 cards, that act as triggers for the health workers to initiate discussion, and share their experiences. It creates a space for the frontline workers to bond, unwind and seek support from their colleagues.
- It creates a space for frontline health workers to share and learn from each other's experiences.
- Addresses the barriers of feeling unsupported and overburdened.

TB CHAMPION HEALTH WORKERS



- TB Champions, passionate care givers and TB survivors are on-boarded and trained on basics of TB and to provide adequate treatment support to persons with TB.
- TB Champions as health workers is an effort to leverage the lived experience of TB survivors, caregivers, TB champions to build empathy and trust in the TB treatment.
- It addresses the gap of limited human resource of NTEP who are not always able to provide treatment support to persons with TB at an individual level, despite best efforts and intentions. It is also an effort to formally engage trained TB champions.

RESPONSES FROM THE GROUND

“ When I gave the TB starter kit to a person with TB in my area, the entire course of the treatment got clear to the person. The most important thing is that going through the kit, where one can track their journey, get information on management of side effects, it kills the fear of the person who is infected - **Manu Kalita, Mahila Arogya Samiti, Santipur, Assam**

“We encourage women with TB in our area to use ph-a-friend to clarify their doubts and get support in time. This facility is really a boon for people who are in distress - **Zaheda, All India Democratic Women Association, Jangammet TU, Hyderabad.**

“I have been diagnosed with TB and under treatment now. The concept of TB buddy has been extremely useful for me. My buddy has been supporting me since day one. Whenever I feel sad or hopeless, he speaks to me, tells me not to give up. Because of his support I am confident that I will complete my TB treatment successfully - **Srikant Bandiwaddar, Belagavi, Karnataka, Person with TB**

“The health auto is extremely helpful, especially for women, elderly. They are able to travel to the facility on their own, they do not have to dependent on anyone else. People are also using the facility in our area to reach the testing center in time - **Swarnalatha, Naveena Mahila Sangham, Domalaguda, Hyderabad**

In my 17 years of service, I have not seen anything like the TB mukt certificate. The certificate when it is handed over to the person, tells them that the treatment has been completed. A TB mukt certificate gives those who complete the TB treatment a sense of achievement - **Gavi Siddavappa, TB Health Volunteer, Karnataka**



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