



P-ACT News

Volume 1/ Issue 3

January- March 2009

From the Desk of the Executive Director

The engagement of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) is important for a country to achieve the universal goal of access to prevention, treatment, care and support. NACP III mentions that a strong partnership with PLHIV networks need to be developed to create an enabling environment by addressing issues of stigma, discrimination, legal and ethical concerns. Keeping this in mind, the Government of India has adopted the policy of 'Greater Involvement of People living or affected by HIV/AIDS' (GIPA). It is envisaged

that by involving PLHIV in programme development, implementation and policy-making, the relevance, acceptability and effectiveness of programmes will improve. It needs to be recognized that the networks play a significant role in implementation of HIV programs, not just as beneficiaries but as proactive partners.

*A. R. Nanda
Executive Director
Population Foundation of India*

Message from the Project Director

The HIV/AIDS pandemic demands mobilization and collaboration at community, national and international levels. The involvement of PLHIV into HIV/AIDS program makes it inclusive and holistic. Peer Educators share the same life experience as that of key population group and hence act as credible sources of information for behaviour change. Peer education can take place on a street corner, at a social club, in a bar, in a bus station, in a factory or any other place where people

feel comfortable. Peer Educators play a significant role in expanding and accelerating access to care and support services for People Living with HIV/AIDS. Thus, they form a major component of HIV/AIDS program and with proper training and capacity building they become the real change agents.

*Dr Mary Verghese
Project Director
Population Foundation of India*

A vow to adhere

Akash is an eleven year old orphan on Anti-Retroviral therapy. He lives with his grandparents. He was taking ART from Satara Civil Hospital in the state of Maharashtra. Akash's grandfather was unable to take Akash to Satara for collecting his monthly ART medicines due to old age and health problems. As a result, Akash defaulted and started having health problems. His grandfather was worried. He approached the DLN at Satara. The counselor at the DLN explained to them the importance of taking ART regularly. Akash went with his grandfather to Satara to restart his ART treatment. Akash now takes his ART on time and has promised to never miss the dose. DLN also informed them about the Balsangopan Yojana, a government scheme to provide education support to children and referred him to 'Adhar Grah', a care home to take care of his needs.

A new horizon

Thirty three year old Rita Devi came to know of her status in 2001 when she was tested positive along with her husband. After knowing her status, her in-laws threw her out of the house. Her only solace was that her children were tested negative. This motivated her to start her life afresh for the sake of her children. She came in touch with Sushma Devi, an outreach worker from *Nai Asba* Community Care Center in Mokama. Sushma counseled her and guided her like an elder sister. With her support, Rita visited the *Nai Asba* and took proper treatment. Today she is keeping well and regularly follows up for care and nutrition at the Community Care Centre. She expressed her wish to work with the sisters at the centre. Sushma motivated and trained her. Initially she visited homes with Sushma during her field visits and now goes on her own to nearby villages. She feels at home at the Community Care Centre and loves all the staff as her family members. She is thankful to all the members for supporting her in her difficult times. Today, she is a successful outreach worker and takes care of her children.

Programme Updates

Awareness rally at Magh Mela

The auspicious Magh Mela is an annual religious event and it is so called as it falls in the Magh period (January-February) on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. A large number of local people and tourists participate in this mela. It starts on a full moon day and lasts for 15 days and attracts thousands of pilgrims who come for a holy dip in Sangam.

With the support of Population Foundation of India, UPSACS, UNICEF, INP+, DACC (Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh Welfare for People Living with HIV/AIDS Society (UPNP+) organized a silent rally 'Magh Mela HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign' at the Magh Mela, Allahabad. The objective of the rally was to spread awareness and information about HIV/AIDS by the positive people among the general population. The aim was to reduce stigma and discrimination and motivate PLHIV to actively participate in awareness generation. The theme of the silent rally was: "We Live a Healthier Life, We Prevent New HIV Infections". Spiritual Saint Sri Sri Murari Das Ji Maharaj (Rishikesh, Haridwar) and Dr. S.A. Mishra (AIDS Officer, Allahabad) inaugurated the rally. Mr. Merrajudin Khan, I.A.S., Chhetriya Prachar Officer, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, was the Chief Guest at the inauguration.

Around eighty positive people from different districts of Uttar Pradesh participated in the rally. They distributed IEC material, leaflets, brochures to a large number of people including pilgrims, maintenance personnel, shop keepers, police, members of National Social Service (NSS) and health department staff among others. The PLHIV who participated in the rally also discussed about HIV/AIDS with people who were unable to read the IEC material. The rally sensitized the general population about HIV/AIDS and provided an opportunity to interact with PLHIV.



Awareness rally at Magh Mela, Allahabad

International Women's Day

Women Forum at Tamilnadu Networking People with HIV/AIDS (TNNP+) in collaboration with the state unit of Population Foundation of India (PFI), Tamil Nadu, organized a special event on 20th March 2009 for Women's Day. The theme of the event focused on the contribution of women as prime caregivers. There were around sixty participants from the District Level Women Forum and the State Women Forum. The hallmark of the event was to make women realize the importance of providing care to the women living with HIV/AIDS and enable them to access services available from the government. This event provided a platform to bring women together to share achievements and highlight their current social, economical and health needs. Dr. Jegatheswari, the Medical Officer from the Department of Microbiology, Rajaji Medical College and Hospital shared that though stigma and discrimination has reduced, the reach is limited and that women living with HIV/AIDS are still highly discriminated and neglected in the society. She expressed her desire to work towards awareness generation and reduction of HIV. She emphasized that reduction of transmission among children would result in healthy future generation.

IEC Orientation Program

While interacting with the PLHIV at the grass root level, the peer educators felt the need for a communication tool to disseminate correct information about HIV/AIDS. Keeping this in mind, PFI developed an IEC kit. It



consists of a diary for peer educator, two flip books on 'Living with HIV/AIDS' and 'Managing HIV/AIDS' and four leaflets on HIV/AIDS. These materials are used in outreach, support group meetings and interaction meetings of PLHIV. These materials are in six languages English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Marathi. Members of the networks wholeheartedly appreciated the efforts of PFI in bringing this well designed informative kit to the reaches of PLHIV even at the taluka/block level.

The State and Regional units of Population Foundation of India had organized orientation workshops for IEC in their respective states and regions on the content and methodology of using the IEC kit. Participants in these workshops members include members from District Level Networks, Positive Living Centres, Treatment Counselling Centres, Comprehensive Care and Support Centers and Community Care Centres.

Exposure Visits

An exposure visit to Manipur was organized for the Round 4 ACT Program state unit offices of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh of PFI. The team visited Manipur from 27th January to 1st February, 2009. The purpose of the visit was to understand the links between the Injecting Drug Users (IDU) and HIV/AIDS, the role of District Level Networks, Positive Living Centres and other NGOs in addressing the socioeconomic and health needs of IDU- PLHIV. The team visited SASO, Kripa Foundation, Bishnupur PLC, Shalom-NGO, Manipur SLN, RIMS-TCC and Imphal East District Level Networks. The visit provided an opportunity to understand the cross cutting issues associated with IDU-PLHIV and the mechanism adopted to improve ART adherence and IDU rehabilitation.

Doctors' Training

A four day doctors' training on HIV/AIDS management was organized and conducted by Engender Health Society along with St. John's Medical College, Bengaluru, Karnataka from March 18th to 21st, 2009.



Doctors from service delivery points across the six high prevalence states participated in the training. The training was conducted as per the WHO curriculum for doctors training. To make the training more participatory and to give the participants hands-on experience, St. John's Medical College- a hospital based institution was chosen as the training site. St. John's Medical College is a NACO accredited training centre for conducting doctors training on ART as part of GFATM Round VII project. Participation of doctors was excellent in the

entire training program. They were very enthusiastic and eager to learn more. They felt that the participatory methodologies and training was more clinical and case based and addressed their current needs. They interacted with the faculty; many of whom are senior clinicians treating PLHIV. One of the doctors said *"We had the opportunity to obtain information which are very useful and relevant to our practice"*.

State Level Program Coordination Committee Meetings

The fourth State Level Program Coordination Committee meetings under the Global Fund Round 6 Program were organized with SACS in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. The progress of the program was shared and plans for the next quarter were finalized for the respective states in consultation with the SACS.

Financial Management Workshop

A Regional Workshop on Financial Management was held at Kathmandu, Nepal between 29 and 31 March, 2009 organized by The Global Fund. The participants from Principal Recipients as well as Sub-Recipients of The Global Fund HIV/AIDS programs on TB, HIV and Malaria were oriented on performance improvement, legal compliance and management of sub recipients. The workshop involved presentations, exercises and group discussions. The participants were oriented further on EFR Applications, financial reporting, budget management process, analysis and review, linkage to programmatic performances, co-financing and audit procedures. The Global Fund invited Senior Grants Manager, PFI, Mr S. Vijayakumar to make presentation on Sub- Recipient Management. The session also included a workshop on variance analysis linking both program and finance.

CMIS Trainings at Community Care Centres

Computerised Management Information Systems (CMIS) has been developed by PFI for the Community Care Centres. Trainings were conducted for the Round 4 ACT Program in Bangalore and Dimapur for the Community Care centres of Freedom Foundation, St. Joseph's HIV/AIDS Care Centre, Meetei Leimarol Sinnai Sang (MLSS), Moreh and Development Association of Nagaland on CMIS.



CCC CMIS Training Participants in Ahmedabad 27-29th Jan-2009

The PFI-PMU also organized training programs on Computerized Monitoring Information System (CMIS) for Community Care Centres under the Round 6- PACT Program during January-March 2009. Staff from 44 CCCs under CBCI and HLFPPPT was trained in CMIS. The CCCs trained include 5 in Uttar Pradesh, 4 in Madhya Pradesh, 4 in Rajasthan, 9 in Gujarat, 5 in Bihar, 5 in Orissa, 4 in Chhattisgarh and 8 in West Bengal.

Reviewing quality of care at Community Care Centres

Population Foundation of India conducted a study on the quality of care provided at the Community Care Centres (CCC) set up by its partners, CBCI and HLFPPPT under the PACT Program. The purpose of this study was to examine the quality of services provided at the CCCs, from the perspective of clients, family members, and service providers. The study was conducted at 4 CCCs in the states of Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The results of the

study were disseminated to partner organizations and PFI regional units on 20th January 2009.

The following were the recommendations of the study:

- The role of the care centres need to be redefined, so that the centres can reach out and harness their maximum potential
- Family members are a significant source of support and care for the clients, and centers have to systematically plan their involvement in care, for sustainability beyond the care centre.
- Counseling needs to go beyond the primary information giving role and to offer clients the space to articulate and ease their deeper stress and concerns. The capacity of the counselors needs to be built up accordingly.

External MIS Audit

PFI conducted external MIS Audit with the help of Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur. The audit was conducted to check the reliability of the data recorded in the reports with regard to their accuracy and consistency. The audit also checked the validity of the clients by verifying the authenticity of enrollment of PLHIV. The audit results were disseminated to partner organizations and PFI regional units, on 21st January 2009.

The following were some of the recommendations suggested for improving MIS formats

- To develop formats in Hindi as all the District level Networks visited were from the Hindi speaking states
- To institutionalize the system of providing feedback on monthly reports to improve the quality of performance

Potential for Impact Analysis of the ACT Program

To understand the potential for impact of the ACT program in the lives of the PLHIV, a study was commissioned by PFI and conducted by Catalyst Management Services. The study was conducted in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Nagaland. A strategy analysis exercise was conducted at the national level to summarise the analysis from the field and also to draw overall conclusions. Results of the study were disseminated to the partners in the Round 4 program on April 14, 2009.

The study concluded that the program is making a difference in the lives of PLHIV in terms of providing them with psycho-social support, coming to terms with their status and behavior change communication. As summed up by PLHIV participants during FGD in Andhra Pradesh (Krishna), treatment has increased life span, improved health and reduced opportunistic infections. It has given the PLHIV the courage to get on with their lives and the belief that they can also live a normal life and support their children.

Continuum of Care for Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) including IDUs Living with HIV, in Imphal City: Current Situation, Needs and Gaps

To move towards the goal of having continuum of care for IDUs (including those living with HIV) in Imphal city, a study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To assess the current situation of the various drug- and infections-related medical/non-medical services (Govt./NGOs/CBOs/PLHIV Networks/Private sector) available for IDUs, including those living with HIV, in Imphal.

- To identify gaps in existing prevention/care services and identify unmet and emerging service needs.

A mixed methods (qualitative & quantitative) study design was used for the study. A survey was conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire among 36 agencies (NGOs, CBOs, government hospitals, private clinics and laboratories) in Imphal city about the type of services they offer to IDU- PLHIV. Focus group discussions, in-depth interviews (with IDUs, targeted intervention and drug de-addiction program staff) and key informant interviews (with health care providers and NGO leaders) were conducted. The findings and recommendations of the study were shared with key stakeholders in a dissemination workshop that was held on April 16, 2009.

The key recommendations from the report include

- strengthen coordination among NACO-supported IDU prevention/treatment programs, and Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment (MSJE) supported rehabilitation/detox programs
- develop guidelines for enrolment of clients in the various treatment modalities (community-based detox, home-based detox, residential rehabilitation program)
- ensure referral to the next level of care after detoxification
- establish long-term vocational training programs that are useful to and in-demand from the clients
- ensure adequate supply of different sizes of syringes and needles to meet the needs of drug users who use different drugs (Heroin and 'SP')
- address the barriers to antiretroviral treatment (including second-line ART) and Hepatitis-C treatment (need for national action plan on Hepatitis-C diagnosis/treatment);
- ensure that specific needs of female IDUs (drop-in centres, child care services) are met in de-addiction centres

- ensure available social welfare schemes (income generation programs, microcredits and small loans) in the State Department of Social Welfare also cover IDUs and people living with HIV
- develop guidelines on when and how to refer IDUs from one service to another service
- scale-up the availability of residential detox/rehabilitation centres.

Orientation of Service Delivery Points

PFI Regional Coordination Unit - Madhya Pradesh had organized a one day orientation cum coordination meet of all the service providers at the Hotel Ashoka Lake View, Bhopal. This meeting was chaired by the Project Director MPSACS, Mr. Omesh Mundra, IAS. The basic purpose behind organizing this meet is to orient and establish effective coordination among all the different service providers and the stakeholders working in different parts of the state. The aim was to orient all the participants on the role and the objective of the Global Fund and the way it is operating at the country level and internationally. Special emphasis was given on the role of Community Care centers under the NACP-III. It was planned to establish district level coordination committee for all the districts where ART, CCC are functioning. A similar state level meeting along with the SACS, PFI and HLFPPPT was organized on 12th February 09 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. It was chaired by the Project Director, UPSACS. The SACS officials present in the meeting provided guidance and inputs in formulating strategies to smoothen coordination among the various service delivery points for better access and uptake of services by the PLHIV.

ART- CCC Coordination Meeting

Coordination meetings between the Community Care Centers and ART Centres were conducted for the PACT Program in the Round 6 states to increase the coordination between the two service delivery points. The meeting addressed the need for proper coordination so that all PLHIV initiated on ART are referred to CCC and sharing the list of Lost to Follow Up (LFU) and missed cases on ART for retrieval to the ART centre is streamlined.

With Contributions from:

Partners

Indian Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS
Chennai
Ph: 044- 22254670-74

Freedom Foundation
Bangalore
Ph: 080- 65966445

Confederation of Indian Industry
Gurgaon
Ph: 0124- 4014060-69

EngenderHealth Society
New Delhi
Ph: 011- 26851948/49/50

Hinduathan Latex Family Planning
Promotion Trust
Noida
Ph: 0120- 4673673

Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
New Delhi
011- 23344474

Population Foundation of India - Regional and State Offices

Population Foundation of India
B- 28, Qutab Institutional Area
Tara Crescent, New Delhi- 110016
Ph: 011- 43894100, Fax: 43894199
E-mail: popfound@sify.com
Website: www.popfound.org

PFI- Andhra Pradesh
Ph: 040- 65999770
E-mail: pfiapsco@yahoo.com
pfiapsco@gmail.com

PFI- Tamil Nadu
Ph: 044- 24329074
E- mail: pfi Chennai@gmail.com

PFI- Karnataka
Ph: 080-41285706
E-mail: pfi bangalore@gmail.com

PFI- Manipur
Ph: 0385-2445072
E-mail: pfimanipur@rediffmail.com

PFI- Maharashtra
Ph: 022- 65029710
E-mail: mahapfi@gmail.com

PFI- Nagaland
Ph: 03862- 234009
E-mail: popfound_nagaland@yahoo.co.in

PFI- Rajasthan
Ph: 0141- 2210680
E-mail: pfi rajasthan@gmail.com

PFI- Madhya Pradesh
Ph: 0755- 2550647
E-mail: pfi.madhyapradesh@gmail.com

PFI- Uttar Pradesh
Ph: 0522- 2353838
E- mail: pfiuttarpradesh@gmail.com