



P-ACT News

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

The HIV program in India has a vertical approach. Over the years, HIV in India has percolated from high risk group to general population. To address the challenge of HIV in India we need to have an integrated reproductive health, gender, legal, social and development perspective. We need to reach out to more stakeholders and larger audience. This would help in awareness generation and also help to combat stigma and discrimination associated with HIV. Mainstreaming of HIV would not only reduce stigma,

increase access to treatment but also link People Living with HIV with relevant development programs and government schemes. Advocating with government, corporate and civil society from national to sub district level would result in better support for People Living with HIV.

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

Message from the Project Director

Peer education is one of the most widely used strategies to address the HIV pandemic. People Living with HIV understand each other better and are often best placed to counsel and support one another. Peer counselors and out reach workers act as a bridge between the People Living with HIV and service providers. To fulfill their tasks, they need to have the skills of a counselor, patience of a care taker and the knowledge of a community health worker. The role of out reach

worker is multi dimensional- from providing information, psycho-social support and building linkages with providers. Hence regular training and mentoring is vital for them. They are an essential link to reach out to those who are still living in fear to accept and disclose their status and seek help.

*Dr Mary Verghese
Project Director
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SUCCESSFUL LINKAGES WITH CENTRAL RESERVED POLICE FORCE



The Network of People Living with HIV, Manipur had submitted a proposal to Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Langing to support vocational training programs for Women Living with HIV. CRPF has supported 5 DLNs, namely, Imphal East DLN, Imphal West DLN, Thoubal DLN, Churachandpur DLN and Senapati DLN through their Civic Action Program. CRPF, Langing have provided sewing, embroidery and wool knitting machines, raw materials and other items to the DLNs. This support would empower the trained women to stand on their own feet.

Program Updates

International Women's Day Celebration

The state unit of Population Foundation of India, Tamil Nadu observed the International Women's Day on 19th March, 2010 with the theme "Equal rights, Equal



A woman living with HIV participating in the hand print campaign

opportunities: Progress for all". PFI collaborated with the ART center of Madras Medical College (MMC) to organize the event. Around 64 women and 7 men living with HIV participated. Dr. Sekar, Sr. Medical Officer, ART Centre awarded Women living with HIV who had adhered to treatment and regular health check-up. Three positive networks namely, Network for Chennai People Living with HIV/AIDS (NCP+), Positive Friend's Welfare Association (PFWA+), Thiruvallur and Positive Women Network (PWN+) were awarded for effective outreach activities. Women participated wholeheartedly in the event. The day ended with a hand print campaign. This hand printed banner would be displayed at the ART centre of Madras Medical College. A kit containing an umbrella, lunch box and biscuit packets were given to all participants.

Advocacy Meeting in Rajasthan

District level advocacy meetings are conducted by Population Foundation of India on a regular basis. The aim is to advocate and mainstream the issue of HIV with a broad range of stakeholders. The stakeholders range from Government departments, health and medical professionals, district administration, Panchayati Raj Institutions, members of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Non Governmental Organizations and civil society.

Keeping this in view, The Regional Coordination Unit of Population Foundation of India, Rajasthan organized an advocacy meeting at the Indian Medical Association (IMA) hall in Kota district of Rajasthan on March 26, 2010. The

meeting was attended by district level key government officials, Panchayati Raj Institutions, ICDS, Health department, Medical College-ICTC & PPTCT, Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promoting Trust (HLFPPT), Rajasthan Network of People Living with HIV (RNP+), District Level Networks, Community Care Centres and other stakeholders. The meeting provided a stage to explore avenues of coordination among stakeholders at the district, block and panchayati level.

Mr Vidhyasankar Nandwana, Zila Pramukh chaired the advocacy meeting. He remarked that all PRI members should play a critical role in awareness generation of HIV and create an enabling environment for People Living with HIV. He focused on encouraging volunteer testing of HIV, facilitating PLHIV towards treatment seeking behavior and also assist



Mr. Vidhyasankar Nandwana, Zila Pramukh, sharing his views in the advocacy meeting

them in livelihood options. Ms Kamala Meena, the former Zila Pramukh, mentioned the good work being done by Kota District level Network of People Living with HIV and encouraged the members in their future endeavour.

Representative of Rajasthan Network of People Living with HIV (RNP+) provided an overview of how PRIs can help in integrating the HIV/AIDS issue. They brought forward few areas of concern like livelihood, migration and stigma and discrimination. The meeting was highly appreciated by all participants. Representatives from Panchayati Raj Institutions decided to discuss the issue of HIV in Gram Sabha Meeting. They also promised their support in building strong referral linkages among ICTC, ART, CCC and DLN.

Advocacy Meeting in Chhattisgarh

The Regional Coordination Unit, Madhya Pradesh of Population Foundation of India organized an advocacy meeting in Raipur district of Chhattisgarh on March 18,



Mr. Ajay Kumar Pandey, Project Director, CGSACS, chairing the advocacy meeting

2010. The meeting was conducted in close coordination with the State Mainstreaming Unit of Chhattisgarh State AIDS Control Society (CGSACS). Government officials from Department of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Panchayati Raj Institutions participated in the event. Representatives from civil society organizations, partner organization- Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and local NGOs also took part in the event. Mr. Ajay Kumar Pandey, Project Director, CGSACS and Special Secretary Health chaired the meeting. He said, "We expect support from all the departments to reach out to PLHIV of the district as the current sentinel survey data shows high prevalence in the district."

Mr. Sarwat Hussain Naqvi, Program Officer of UNDP facilitated a session on basics of HIV. Mr. Raza Ahmed, Regional Coordinator of PFI, sensitized the participants about the need for inter sectoral coordination to minimize stigma and discrimination related to the HIV and to reach the general community. All government officials from Department of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Panchayati Raj Institutions highly appreciated the advocacy meeting. It was felt that ICTC needs to be established in all the Community Health Center. Officials from Department of Women and Child Development committed to take up the issue of HIV in Mitanin meetings and Anganwadi Workers meetings. Mitanins are volunteers who spread awareness about community healthcare needs. They also decided to include HIV in trainings of "Kishori Balika" program. The Department would also counsel the newly wed couples under the Chief Minister Kanya Dan Yojna for voluntary HIV testing. Representatives from Panchayati Raj Institutions decided to discuss the issue of HIV in Gram Sabha and Janpad (Block) Meeting.

Coordination Meeting in Ahmedabad

Regional unit of Population Foundation of India, Rajasthan conducted a coordination meeting for service delivery points on 19 – 20 March, 2010 at Ahmedabad. The participants

were from 12 Community Care Centers (CCC) operating in Gujarat, officials from Gujarat State AIDS Control Society (GSACS) and Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). The aim was to review, share and learn from each other. It also focused on establishing a mechanism to resolve grass root level coordination issues, specific to ART, CCC and District Level Networks.

Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Additional Project Director, GSACS mentioned that GSACS is taking active steps to strengthen coordination between ART and CCC. Being part of NACP III, CCC is now involved in all DAPCU meetings. Dr. Manoj Shevkani, Regional Coordinator, NACO informed about various government schemes like widow pension, nutritional support, scholarships for Children Living with HIV and special leave from school for Children living with HIV for ART and opportunistic infection treatment. GSACS, PFI and CBCI reviewed the program activities of CCCs regarding enrollment, coordination, counseling, outreach and referral linkages. The CCC representatives also shared their best practices, lessons learnt and challenges.

Some of the areas that need to be strengthened are:

- CCCs need to improve their outward referral to ICTC, PPTCT, DOTS Center, etc.
- CCCs should display government schemes available to PLHIV
- Care takers to be part of drug counseling sessions

Training of Outreach Workers

EngenderHealth Society conducted trainings for outreach workers at Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh from 9-11 March, 2010. 46 outreach workers were trained in two batches at the Kripa Training center, Ujjain.

The outreach workers act as connectors, bridging the care center and the community of people living with HIV - connecting service providers to the service users. They motivate the service users in taking care of themselves and their families. They multitask – from building rapport with



Participants at the outreach workers training in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

the client and their family members, caring for the people while they are at the center, building community linkages, reaching out to defaulters, following up with clients through home visits and telephone calls.

The training focused on - opportunistic infections, ART, nutrition, working with special populations like MSM, sex workers and Injecting Drug Users. The other topics included sexual and reproductive health of people living with HIV, PPTCT, motivating family members to care for people living with HIV, supporting people in HIV testing, positive living and team coordination.

After three days of interactive participatory sessions, the outreach workers expressed their learning in many ways –

- “First time I learnt about the female condom and also had a chance to see it”;
- “I was fortunate to be the counselor in the role play, I am more confident in supporting people with information and the support they require”;
- “Person who is reducing weight has to have body building foods – Now I can tell recipes with what is available in our place”

CMIS Training

The Program Management Unit at PFI organized a training program on Computerised Management Information System (CMIS) for District Level Networks (DLNs) under the Round 6 PACT program from March 21- 23, 2010 at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. 44 participants from the District Level Networks of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were trained in this workshop.

Data Quality Audit

Population Foundation of India conducted the External Data Quality Audit for Community Care Centers & District Level Networks under Round 6 program. Indian Institute of Health Management and Research, Jaipur was assigned to conduct this audit. Six out of 56 Community Care Centers (CCCs) and seven out of 68 District Level Networks (DLNs) from the eight highly vulnerable states were chosen for the audit through sampling.

The objectives of the Data Quality Audit were to verify the quality of data reported at selected sites and to assess the ability of data management systems to collect and report quality data.

The reliability aspect of the data is addressed by conducting desk review. The validity of data is addressed by visiting beneficiaries enrolled in the program. The assessment of data management systems is conducted at the management units of PFI, Sub Recipients and Service Delivery Points (SDP). The final results of Data Quality Audit were disseminated on 18th February, 2010.

The following were some of the recommendations:

- Coordination among staff to be emphasized (Counselor, Nurse and Out Reach Workers) at SDP level for data recording in the registers.
- Periodic refresher training for the regular staff and training for staff turnover at SDP level is required.
- Training to analyze and use data locally
- Feedback and communication to be properly documented at all levels

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