

Moving together is progress

The fourth National Review and Coordination Meeting of Vihaan was organized on 30th March in New Delhi, with the objective of bringing together key stakeholders involved in the national care, support and treatment (CST) programme, to strengthen the coordination among each other and improve the quality of care. The meeting was attended by 130 delegates representing NACO, CTD, State AIDS Control Societies and Vihaan Sub-Recipient organizations, development partners such as UNAIDS, WHO, CDC and community representatives. Dr R S Gupta, DDG (CST), NACO emphasized on the importance of renewing the commitment to improve the quality of care being provided to PLHIV through Care and Support Centres under Vihaan. This has great significant as the programme has greater results to deliver with limited resources. In addition to the discussions on the progress of Vihaan, the deliberations during the day were focused mainly on the ongoing drive to firm up the traceable Lost to follow up (LFU) PLHIVs and escalate the tracking activities aiming to achieve the optimal result of bringing them back to treatment. The deliberations were also focused on measures to be taken up jointly by all stakeholders to prevent PLHIVs from becoming LFU and improve retention in HIV care. Ways to improve the reach



of Vihaan programme in the geographies where new ART centres are being set up, strategies needed to improve the efficiency of outreach in metro cities, community-based HIV testing, and the need for differential care in HIV were other important areas discussed.

The stakeholders, while appreciating the progress made by the programme so far, acknowledged that the programme needs to prioritize areas of focus so that it complements the National priority of 90:90:90 strategy.

“United to End TB”



Pledging commitment to fight against TB at the event in Bihar

With over 1300 deaths per day, TB continues to be a major health crisis in India and a serious concern for people living with HIV. Vihaan SR and SSR partners observed World TB Day on 24th March in collaboration with the state/district TB programme and other civil society organizations working in TB. Out of various activities that took place at the state level, events to be highlighted

include a high-profile gathering of elected representatives, public health officials, TB and HIV affected communities and representatives of civil society organizations in Patna to pledge their commitment to the fight against TB in Bihar. This was organized by the State TB Cell, Government of Bihar, in partnership with National Coalition of People living with HIV (NCPI+)

and REACH. The ceremony was led by Shri Krishna Nandan Prasad Verma, Honourable Minister, Public Health Engineering and Law, Govt. of Bihar. In his address, he stressed the need for reaching out to rural areas focusing on poor, homeless and other vulnerable population. NCPI+ Delhi unit conducted ICF among 1300 female sex workers in the city, referred 51 for testing and three positive cases were found. NMP+, Maharashtra & Goa thanked TB team with trophies and certificates of appreciation for their services while sensitizing them on the needs of HIV-TB positive clients. GSNP+, Gujarat team developed a poster with the message of a PLHIV cured of TB. This poster was released by State Health Minister. Across all the states, the TB programme appreciated the contribution of Vihaan towards addressing HIV-TB co-infection.



Civil Society interaction with global fund delegates



A community gathering at Ratnagiri CSC

Real work needs investment

“The power to influence national level policies is in the hands of the Civil Society Organizations and you. Data and voices have the power to influence policy decisions. So continue to commit on strengthening your voices;” These powerful words came from Mr. Mark Edington, Grants Management Head, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, when he along with a number of other Global Fund delegates came to address a civil society interaction hosted by India HIV/AIDS Alliance on 3rd March 2017 in New Delhi. The interaction, which saw participation of more than sixty members from civil society organisations helped in creating an understanding on the Global Fund’s future strategies to strengthen investment in the community. Representatives of PLHIV community present in the meeting strongly voiced the need to increase investment in HIV programme and scale up the care and support programme which is currently being supported by the Global Fund in the country. We look forward to more such interactions to promote better healthcare for the people in India.

That they have life in abundance

Here is a CSC which proves that a lot more can be done for the community if organizations are willing to go the extra mile. The CSC run by Guruprasad, an organization founded by 11 individuals living with HIV, in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra managed to bring down the number LFU among those on ART to just eight cases. This is a remarkable achievement in a hilly terrain like Ratnagiri where transportation is also a challenge. A good number of effective strategies have been put in place by the CSC to reduce the LFU rate and move towards zero LFU in the ART centre. As and when the outreach worker meets an LFU client in the field, a telephonic counselling session is given by the professional/peer counsellor. Still, a major reason for LFU is lack of financial resources for travel between their residence and the ART centre. Guruprasad takes care of their travel expenses at least for a period of six months through locally mobilized resources. In addition, nutritional support is also provided to such clients for a period of six months. At times, some clients misplace their treatment related documents and thereafter stop visiting ART centre due to fear. The CSC makes sure that such clients are accompanied to the ART centre to complete the documentation before availing the services again. The CSC receives commendable support from the ART centre for all their efforts and initiatives. During the period of ARV shortage in the ART centre, CSC team with the strong support of the Senior Medical Officer of the ART Centre managed to mobilize drugs to ensure that no PLHIV is turned back from the ART centre due to shortage. This CSC works tirelessly with a strong commitment to the cause and willingness to provide selfless services so the community. Kudos to the entire team!

Vihaan Updates

- 11,32,013** PLHIV received care & support services
- 4,98,018** PLHIV and family members linked with social protection schemes
- 1,10,759** Family members and partners of registered clients linked to ICTC
- 2,96,061** Lost-to-Follow-Up PLHIV tracked and returned to ART services
- 8,62,055** PLHIV screened for TB

(Through March 2017)

