



Participants at the National Review and Coordination Meeting in New Delhi, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016

## Together we win!

The third National Review and Coordination Meeting of Vihaan was organised on 16<sup>th</sup> September in New Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together key stakeholders involved in the national care, support and treatment (CST) programme and strengthen the coordination among each other and improve the quality of care.

Sri N.S. Kang, IAS and Additional Secretary, NACO, inaugurated the meeting, by emphasizing the need to focus on key populations and announcing the plans to introduce 'test and treat' in the national programme for key populations and discordant couples. He shared that issues related to ART stock-outs and shortages in CD4 facilities, will be looked into and addressed, and by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 NACO aims to put a million PLHIV on ART.

An intensive thematic group discussions followed on issues such as, tracking lost to follow-up clients (LFU), early linkages of PLHIV with treatment and care services, HIV-TB collaborations, enhancing social welfare linkages for PLHIV and linking key populations to care and support services. The discussions concluded in critical insights on each of the themes and drawing up of an action-plan. The action plan included major points such as, ensuring regular coordination meetings and data sharing, all TB positive clients to be linked with ART centres, and, linking family members who test positive with ART centres.

Among the other NACO dignitaries who attended the meeting were, Dr. C.V. Dharma Rao, Joint Secretary, Dr. R.S. Gupta, Deputy Director General, CST, Dr K. S.

Sachdeva, Deputy Director General, Basic Services, and Dr. B.B. Rewari, NPO, ART, 19 officials from CST division of SACS and NACO, 10 Project Directors from SACS, 3 Regional Coordinators, participants from Vihaan Sub Recipients partners and members of Alliance India. The NACO dignitaries acknowledged that Vihaan has demonstrated a successful partnership between governments, community based organizations (CBO) and NGOs, in providing care, support and treatment to PLHIV and highlighted the scope for improvement by strengthening HIV-TB collaboration, tracking back LFU and monitoring the trends of the same and most importantly importance of cleaning the data periodically so that there is clarity of current coverage. Vihaan team will work on all the areas and report back to NACO.

## Outreach e-Mpowered!

Vihaan is being digitized through a client management system called 'eMpower'. It is a tablet based application being developed with support from IBM and Global Fund. The application will be used by almost 2000 front line workers or out-reach workers and peer counsellors under the Vihaan program.

The first batch for the training of trainers was organised in Delhi on 9th and 10th September, 2016. Project managers and M&E officers from the sub-recipients of Vihaan from Delhi, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh, attended the training. The pilot roll-out has already started in those six states covering 102 CSCs.

In September 2016, field level training were completed for 93 CSCs and the remaining training's are scheduled for the first week of October. A series of training's will be conducted in phases and by the end of November, eMpower application will be rolled out across India.



*Participants at the eMpower training of trainers (ToT)*

## From Denial to Triumph

On 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016, the Karimnagar Aasha Jyothi HIV Positive People's Welfare Society, Telengana, filed a petition to the Collector of Karimnagar in Prajavani. The petition highlighted the plight of PLHIVs due to the existent stigma against PLHIV resulting in the denial of surgery in government hospitals across Karimnagar. In response to the petition, the Collector formed a committee to investigate the matter and issued a circular to government hospitals for providing surgery and delivery services to PLHIV's without any stigma and discrimination.

## Visions of hope

Shyam Rao is a daily wage worker in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. He was on ART when he suddenly developed side-effects that affected his vision due to which he discontinued with his medicines. He was in the Lost to Follow-Up (LFU) list for the last six months. After tracking him, the Vihaan ORW accompanied Shyam to the ART Center, where medical officers referred him to the ophthalmic department. After a thorough examination in the ophthalmic department, he was advised to visit Shankar Netralaya (eye hospital) for a surgery. Unfortunately, Shyam did not have the financial means to visit the hospital and undergo treatment. The ARTC counsellor and the Vihaan ORW locally mobilized resources and gathered Rs.4, 500/-. However, after another examination he was informed that he had to pay Rs. 70,000/- for the surgery which was extremely difficult for him as he did not have the finances or an 'Arogyasri' card (insurance, to undergo free eye surgery at the hospital). The Vihaan CSC team organized for him to visit the Chief Minister's Camp at Vijayawada where he received a letter from the Chief Minister to avail free eye surgery and an Arogyasri card. As a result of these initiatives undertaken by the CSC team, Shyam once again got back the life he hoped for. He received treatment that corrected his vision, enabling him to continue with his daily life and earn his living. He never misses ART anymore!

*(Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.)*

## Vihaan Updates

**10, 55, 233** PLHIV registered and linked with care & support services  
**3, 96, 137** PLHIV and family members linked with social protection schemes  
**2, 08, 249** Lost-to-Follow-Up PLHIV tracked and returned to ART services  
**5, 57, 852** PLHIV screened for TB

*(Through August 2016)*

