

# KOSHISH

Working towards better sexual and reproductive health and rights of PLHIV in Andhra Pradesh

Volume : I  
Issue : I  
March 2012

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### View from the President

*Vasavya Mahila Mandali is working with communities to empower them and to own the initiatives taken up by VMM. We have seen the success of community ownership since 1969 and Home and Community Based HIV/AIDS programme strengthened our belief in partnering with the communities. We all together succeeded in reducing the incidence of HIV and it is time now to initiate Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) project for PLHIV community with the financial support of European Commission and technical support by India HIV/AIDS Alliance. The objective of the project is to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of people living with HIV in India. VMM took initiative to launch this project in five districts of Andhra Pradesh - East Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Anantapur and Ranga Reddy. In each district VMM has partnered with District level HIV Positive network and one Key population CBO. I congratulate all the partners for working hard to do advocacy initiatives in accessing the rights of sexual reproductive health of PLHIV community and reducing the vulnerability. It is a pleasure to present the first issue of news letter 'Koshish'.*

*I salute the people working to reduce the vulnerability.*

**Mrs. Ch. Vidya**



European Commission



Telugu Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS  
Andhra Pradesh

## VMM AT A GLANCE

**VASAVYA MAHILA MANDALI (VMM)** established forty years ago (1969) as a not for profit, secular, voluntary organization, based on Gandhian ideology, founded by Mrs. Chennupati Vidya former Member of Indian Parliament, working for the development of the women, children and youth in the rural as well as urban areas of Andhra Pradesh, with a **vision** to promote comprehensive social, economic and political development for women and children in vulnerable situations, there by empowering communities in A.P to improve their quality of life, and build a better civil society in India.

### MISSION STATEMENT

VMM follows certain principles to achieve its vision of empowering communities in AP. It focuses to increase community awareness on the value of education; to promote the physical and psychosocial health of communities by building knowledge on prevention/care/treatment and thereby increasing demand for services; to build capacity of government services; and to deliver quality outreach services, to ensure the rights of women and children by promoting their community-based care and protection and to facilitate the implementation of progressive government policies, and to build the capacity of women and children to meaningfully participate in multi-level political processes and to advocate for changes in regressive policies. VMM delivers messages through locally-accepted cultural activities; executes rights-based, participatory approaches; and engages hundreds of civil societies, government, funding agencies, and corporate stakeholders to maximize impact to achieve these objectives.

VMM is facilitating the programmes in six thematic areas:

**Health:** Sanitation, hygiene, eye care through Swetcha Gora Eye Bank, promotion of small family norm, child sex ratio through awareness and Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act implementation, health education in schools and communities, Home/Community Based prevention linked care, support and treatment Programmes for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, Sexual reproductive health among adolescents, women and People Living with HIV and High risk groups; **Nutrition:** Nutrition education, provision of supplementary nutrition, reducing food insecurity through improved food production and linkages; **Livelihood:** Micro credit and thrift through social enterprise promotion, livelihood generation; **Education:** education sponsorship and skill development, knowledge management; **Human rights:** Violence / torture against women and girls, encouraging and enabling children to make their views known on the issues that affect them and engaging children in dialogue and exchange allows them to learn constructive ways of influencing the world around them. **Environment:** Climate change initiatives and disaster management.

VMM at present works with 156 paid staff full time besides part time and in addition to 15 honorary advisors and 3560 unpaid community volunteers.

**Strategies:** Capacity building to communities for community-driven sustainable initiatives, Research, Documentation, Publications and advocacy with policy initiatives.

## KOSHISH PROJECT

Vasavya Mahila Mandali (VMM) has initiated from 1st April 2011, PLHIV and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) project with the financial support from European Commission and technical support by India HIV/AIDS Alliance. The objective of the project is to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of people living with HIV in India.



VMM initiated this project in Andhra Pradesh in five districts: East Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Anantapur and Ranga Reddy. In each district VMM has partnered with District level HIV Positive Network and one Key Population CBO. In East Godavari CNP+ (DLN) and Vrmss (KP sex workers); Krishna: CHES+ (DLN) and Ankita (KP - sex workers) ; Guntur: SHIP (DLN) and Sneha Siri (KP -MSM); Anantapur: ANP+ (DLN) and Sneham CBO (KP - MSM); Ranga Reddy: NHP+ (DLN) and Darpan Foundation (KP MSM) are the key partners.

VMM is a State Level Partner (SLP) and TNP+ is State Level Network (SLN) for duration of the project implementation is from 01 April 2011 to March 2014.

With increasing access to antiretroviral (ART) Treatment and subsequently increased longevity, people living with HIV (PLHIV) have regained the opportunity to live longer, fulfilling lives and to plan for the future, including decisions about sex, sexuality and the possibility of starting/ expanding families. Evidence from India suggests that a comprehensive approach to SRHR has been lacking and that current responses are not sufficiently decreasing vulnerability and ill-health. Vulnerability to poor SRH is further exacerbated for those whose rights are violated due to stigma, discrimination and marginalization. Studies among people living with HIV show high rates of unmet contraceptive need, untreated STIs and lack of knowledge and skills on safer sex and broader positive prevention. Among PLHIV from marginalized groups these health indicators show even higher rates of unmet sexual and reproductive health needs and violations of related human rights.

This project will strengthen civil society organizations and networks, specifically those representing and working with PLHIV and other key populations( men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers( SW), transgender (T G) and people who use drugs),to effectively advocate for the development and implementation of SRHR policies and programmes for PLHIV in India. This will enable them to engage with key decision makers, such as government institutions generally and state/national level parliamentarians to ensure that the SRH needs and rights of PLHIV are supported through an enabling policy environment and subsequent implementation of these policies. This project will address the barriers to meet the SRHR needs of PLHIV at the level of national and state-level policy and its implementation. In order to achieve this, the Action will specifically fill gaps at the level of target groups and beneficiaries.

### CSOs Capacity assessment Workshop



The India HIV/AIDS Alliance conducted CSO capacity assessment workshop on July 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> with partner NGOs at Vasavya Mahila Mandali. Alliance India team members and representatives of Koshish partners and CSOs attended the workshop. Mr. Joydeep Sen, Manager, Alliance Regional Technical Support Hub (South Asia), Mr. Amit Kumar Pandey, Technical Officer, Alliance Regional Technical Support Hub (South Asia), Ms. Kumkum, PO Alliance and Mrs. Nandini, consultant facilitated this workshop. The main objective of the workshop is to assess the individual capacities of partner NGOs and how to improve their capacities. Mrs. Nandini explained the importance of organizational capacities regarding SRHR and Coalition activities. She explained participants how to assess the organization capacity through a group activity.

Participants understood to assess the group capacities through this workshop and to improve their organizational capacities. Mrs. Nandini told that organizations must have minimum standards to work with SRHR project because they will conduct many advocacy initiatives to bring the change. All the partners learnt to form a coalition and to frame a goal, objectives and values for the coalition.

### Base line

Sigma Research and Consulting agency team conducted Baseline study in the last week of July 2011 and collected sample data from VMM partners - five District Level Networks and five Key Population Organizations. SLP submitted total data of 1351 people living with HIV which was registered in Networks and KP organizations including Male, Female, FSW, MSM, TG and HIZRA communities

Objective of the study: The broad objective of the baseline study is to strengthen the evidence base and understanding of SRHR needs of PLHIV in Andhra Pradesh specifically to understand SRH knowledge, service availability, accessibility among PLHIV, to understand PLHIV awareness

on SRH rights and experienced rights violation, to understand the unmet contraceptive needs of PLHIV, and to understand treatment facilities, availability and accessibility. Sample Size was 200 (85 male+100 Female+15 TG/Hijra), Respondents were selected using systematic random sampling.

### World AIDS Day



On 1st December 2011, VMM and its KOSHISH partner NGOs observed the World AIDS Day event in Five districts. The project is doing advocacy to safeguard the rights of PLHIV community especially in SRHR. The main objective of the World AIDS day programme is to create awareness on HIV/AIDS and to reduce the stigma and discrimination. Every year United Nations Organization (UNO) give a theme to fight against HIV/AIDS. In 2011 the theme is 'Zero' new infections and 'Zero' stigma and discrimination, means in next year no body infected with HIV and nobody face stigma and discrimination in community.

Observation of these World AIDS day events had created a good platform to our partners. During the time of Rally and open dais meetings our partners utilized the opportunity to explain the need of sexual reproductive health rights of PLHIV community to District level officers and other NGO representatives.

### Community consultation meetings



In December, 2011 SLP and SLN staff facilitated the Community Consultation Meetings in all the five districts at DLN offices. The objective of the meeting is to collect the issues from the PLHIV community relating to SRHR. Based on the issues, the most important issue was prioritized in the meeting for advocacy.

### Coalition to advocate SRH and rights of PLHIV

The SLP, SLN, Five DLNs, five KP organizations, eight Civil Society Organizations in all twenty members formed a coalition. The objective of the coalition is to improve and advocate for the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights of PLHIV in Andhra Pradesh. Coalition members meet once in three months and they discuss, review and finalize the advocacy action plans on the District and State level issues. First coalition meeting was conducted in the month of November 2011 at VMM.

# EC-KOSHISH COALITION MEMBERS

## **VASAVYA MAHILA MANDALI (VMM)**

D.No. 40-9/1-16, Vasavya Nagar, Benzcircle, VIJAYAWADA - 10  
Krishna District, ANDHRA PRADESH  
Ph : +91 866-2470966/2473056 Mobile:+91 98490 81733  
E-mail: vasavyamm@sify.com, vmmsrhr@gmail.com

## **ANKITHA WOMEN DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION**

D.No. 13-283-a, Patimeeda, Near Club Road  
GUDIWADA, Krishna District  
Ph : 08676-249622  
E-mail: ankithacbo.2009@gmail.com

## **SNEHASIRI SADIKARIKA WELFARE SOCIETY**

D. No. 11-4-147, Opp. TTD Kalyanamandapam  
Near Gandhipark, Rajagari Thotamain Road, GUNTUR  
Mobile: 9502455630 E-mail : snehasiriguntur@gmail.com

## **VELUGU REKHA MAHILA SADHIKARITA SOCIETY**

D. No. 5-122/G1, Near AU MSN PG Centre, ADB Road  
Atchampeta Cross Road  
Thimmapuram, KAKINADA-533 005, East Godavari District  
Ph: 0884-2369989, E-mail : changes.vrness@gmail.com

## **SNEHAM CBO**

D. No. 5/161, 5th Road, Near Saibaba Temple, Anantapur District  
Mobile: 9133306454 / 9160590069  
E-mail : snehamcboatp@gmail.com

## **DARPAN FOUNDATION**

H. No. 10-3-3/8, Raman's Corner, Near Shenoy Nursing Home  
East Maredpally, SECUNDERABAD- 500026  
Phone: 040-65812284/40165114  
E-mail: darpanfoundationhyd@rediffmail.com

## **THARUNI**

D.No. 306, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Neelam Enclave, Kanakadurga Colony  
Hanamkonda-506001, Warangal District  
Tele No.: 0870-2554454 Mobile 0-98494-18592  
E-mail:amamatha06@yahoo.co.in

## **PEACE EDUCATIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENTS**

D.No. 9-40-5, Pithapuram Colony  
VISAKHAPATNAM – 3  
Mobile: 9963332391  
E-mail: peacevsp1995@gmail.com

## **DEVELOPMENT ACTION FOR RURAL ENVIRONMENT (DARE)**

D.No. 1-1-770/5, Gandhi nagar  
Hyderabad - 500 080. Ph : 040 - 3062 8199, Mob: 9912103172  
E-mail: dare\_1985@yahoo.co.in

## **RURAL ENVIRONMENT AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (INDIA)**

D.No. 11-446, NCC Road, Mangalagiri – 522 503  
Guntur Dist.Ph: 08645 – 231500  
E-mail: reeds\_india1995@yahoo.com

## **TELUGU NETWORK OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV / AIDS (TNP+)**

Amravati Road, Behind Hosanna Mandir, Gorantla, GUNTUR  
Ph: 0863-2218228, Mobile : 9618205520  
E-mail: tnp58ap@gmail.com

## **CHEYUTHA HIV INFECTED PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT SOCIETY (CHES+)**

H.No. 43-107-4, Opp Sai Baba Temple, Ajith Singh Nagar  
VIJAYAWADA. Krishna District, Phone : 0866-2401419/  
9866028986, E-mail: cheyuthahivnetwork@rediffmail.com

## **SOCIETY FOR WELFARE HIV INFECTED PEOPLE (SHIP+)**

Amravati Road, Behind Hosanna Mandir, Gorantla, GUNTUR  
Ph: 0863-2218228, Mobile : 9989145381  
E-mail: shipramesh@rediffmail.com

## **COASTAL NETWORK OF POSITIVE PEOPLE (CNP+)**

D.no.24-8-5, Near: Bible Mission Church  
Kacheripeta, KAKINADA-533001  
East Godavari District, Ph: 0884-2372618  
E.mail: cnpmohan@rediffmail.com

## **ANANTHA NETWORK OF POSITIVE PEOPLE (ANP+)**

Dharmashala, Beside TB/Chest Ward, Govt. General Hospital  
ANANTAPUR-515001. Ph: 08854-274633/276411  
E-mail: anpplus@gmail.com

## **NETWORK OF HIV POSITIVE PEOPLE (NHP+)**

Plot No.10, H.No.11-20-12, Opp Me-Seva, 1st Floor  
Huda Complex, Saroor Nagar, HYDERABAD-500 035  
Ph: 040-30661154  
E-mail: nhp.rrd@gmail.com

## **SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S AWARENESS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SWARD)**

H.No 4-15, Maitrivanam, Near M.D.O Office, Siddipet  
MEDAK District - 502 103, Ph: 08457-231437 / 9490129740  
E.mail: sward\_2k@rediffmail.com

## **CHANGES**

D.No. 1-135, Atchempeta Junction, Timmapuram  
Near Reliance Petrol Bunk, KAKINADA, East Godavari District  
Ph. : 0884-2307931/9849318393  
E.mail : changeskkd@rediffmail.com

## **ANANTA THALI SAMAKHYA**

D.no: 5/82, 4<sup>th</sup> Road, Opp: Anjeneyaswamy Temple  
Anantapuram – 515 001 Mobile: 9133306454  
E-mail: anantataalisamakhyaa@gmail.com

## **SAMA DARPAN**

D.No. 10-3-3/4, Raman's Corner, Near Shenoy Nursing Home  
East Maredpally, SECUNDERABAD - 500 026  
Ph : 040-65812285/40165114  
E-mail: sama\_darpan@yahoo.com

## **VASAVYA MAHILA MANDALI (VMM)**

D.No. 40-9/1-16, Vasavya Nagar, Benzcircle, VIJAYAWADA - 10. Krishna District, ANDHRA PRADESH  
Ph : +91 866-2470966/2473056 Mobile:+91 98490 81733  
E-mail: vasavyamm@sify.com, vmmsrhr@gmail.com, www.vasavya.com