

## **Mapping and Training MSM and Transgender Community Groups in North-Eastern India for Participation in National AIDS Control Programme – Phase III**

**Network North-East Project: A joint effort of SAATHII, UNAIDS India and NACO**

### Summary of Progress from July 2008 to June 2009

**1. Project goal:** The project aims to assist the following initiate or scale up their response to the HIV epidemic in North-Eastern India through participation in the NACP-III activities:

- (a) Informal networks of men who have sex with men (MSM) and male-to-female transgender (TG) persons
- (b) CBOs of MSM and TG people
- (c) Formal coalitions of MSM and TG individuals or CBOs; and
- (d) NGOs that may not have an MSM or TG community base / leadership but work with MSM and TG populations.

The project started in mid 2008 and will conclude in July-August 2009.

### **2. Key activities of the project and progress made so far:**

#### **(a) Mapping the networks, coalitions, CBOs and NGOs to prepare a database of MSM and TG community groups in North-Eastern India:**

In September 2008, 16 informal networks, CBOs and NGOs in the eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim were mapped and included in a database. At this stage only Manipur had CBOs (three of them, all in existence before the project started), and one was in the making in Nagaland. Since September 2008, more NGOs started work with MSM / TG populations in the region, and at least six new CBOs were in the making as a result of the technical support provided to MSM and TG community groups in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. A coalition of the three CBOs in Manipur was also initiated. The database as of June 2009 would include at least 26 entries.

**Note:** The mapping activity was not focused on enumeration of MSM and TG populations. It covered mapping and socio-economic profiling of MSM / TG community groups.

#### **(b) NACP-III focused training and networking workshops for MSM and TG community groups mapped and officials of State AIDS Control Societies (SACS), District AIDS Prevention and Control Units and their technical support agencies:**

Two workshops (in September 2008 and January 2009) focusing on community mobilization, support group formation, features of HIV targeted interventions (TIs), highlights of NACP-III and issues of gender and sexuality were organized. Around 60 government and NGO personnel were trained. After the workshops, a dialogue was initiated with Arunachal SACS for mapping of MSM and TG populations as it plans to start the first HIV TI for these populations in the state. A similar dialogue was also initiated with Sikkim SACS.

**(c) Providing seed money support to assist informal networks attempting CBO formation, or to non-funded CBOs in need of administrative or capacity building support to prepare them for NACP-III participation:**

A total of six CBOs or CBO collectives were provided small grant support of Rs.5,000 each for preliminary outreach, networking, advocacy and training activities (most of them through parent NGOs). So far, all these agencies have been provided first installments of the grants. SAATHII also linked up or strengthened existing links of these CBOs and their associate or parent NGOs with respective SACS. The following CBOs received the reimbursement-based grants – based on successful grant applications prepared with mentoring support from SAATHII:

No.	State	Recipient CBOs
1.	Assam	Bhorokha supported by NGO Rural Multi Media Publicity & Promotion, Guwahati
2.	Manipur	All Manipur Nupi Association, Imphal, a coalition of three CBOs Aasha, Maruploi Foundation and Save
3.	Meghalaya	MEMSM Connect supported by NGO Manbha Foundation, Shillong
4.	Meghalaya	CBO for MSM in the making supported by Voluntary Health Association of Meghalaya, Shillong
5.	Mizoram	Par Vul Group supported by NGO FXB Suraksha, Aizawl
6.	Tripura	Nabachetana supported by NGO Minority Development Organization, Agartala

**3. Project outcomes:**

No.	State	At the start of the project	Project related outcomes
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	No or little information on MSM and TG populations in the state	Informal MSM network located in Roing (through an Internet-based social networking site). Rapport building ongoing with key individuals. Enumerative mapping of MSM / TG populations planned
2.	Assam	NGO Rural Multi Media Publicity & Promotion running a TI for MSM in Guwahati but no CBO for MSM / TG persons exists. Two other NGOs (NEVARD and Guwahati Youth Society) also working on a small scale with MSM	Rural Multi Media Publicity & Promotion provided support in formation of MSM CBO named Bhorokha. Links built with informal network of MSM in Karimganj district
3.	Manipur	Three MSM / TG CBOs named Aasha, Save and Maruploi Foundation, and one NGO Ideal Mothers Association (IMA) serving approximately 1,500 individuals through two TIs (Aasha and IMA)	Coalition of the three CBOs (All Manipur Nupi Association) started with support from Manipur SACS for joint development of IEC material on HIV, gender, sexuality, human rights
4.	Meghalaya	NGOs Impulse, Voluntary Health Association of Meghalaya and Manbha Foundation working on a small scale with MSM through TIs for IDUs	All three NGOs guided in formation of MSM / TG CBOs in Shillong (MEMSM Connect and two others as yet unnamed)
5.	Mizoram	NGO FXB Suraksha running a TI for MSM; also formed three self-help groups of MSM	FXB Suraksha provided support in building new MSM CBO (Par Vul Group) with the inclusion of representatives from the three SHGs

No.	State	At the start of the project	Project related outcomes
6.	Nagaland	NGO Guardian Angel working with MSM on a small scale through CBO for MSM named Goodwill Ashram	Goodwill Ashram applied for formal registration
7.	Sikkim	No or little information on MSM and TG populations in the state	Preliminary dialogue initiated with Sikkim SACS for mapping of MSM and TG populations in the state
8.	Tripura	NGO Minority Development Organization working on a small scale with MSM through a TI for other vulnerable populations	Minority Development Organization provided support in formation of MSM CBO named Nabachetana

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