

MUSKAN, 2015-16

NOTE FROM THE TEAM

Achieving 100% HIV testing through community led voluntary efforts

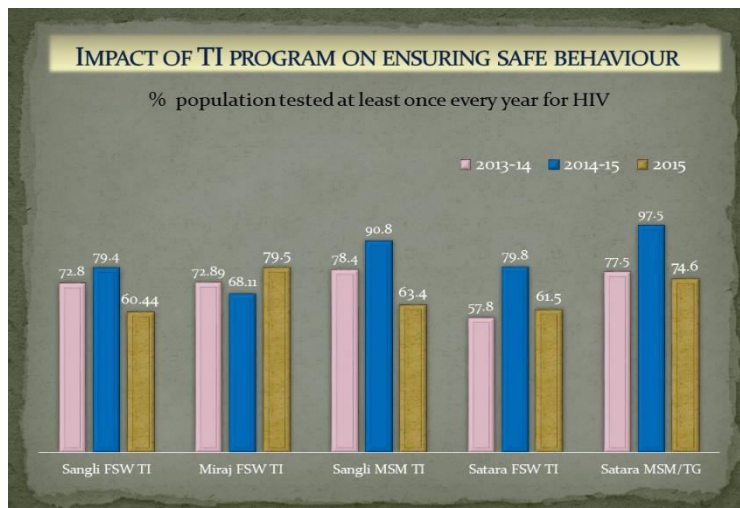
- The feature of this year's efforts of the SANGRAM team and its collectives has been their hard work in reaching out with HIV prevention services and health linkages to female, male and trans sex workers in their communities. At the end of the year, the MUSKAN collective managed to achieve 100% HIV testing through strong peer led efforts. As part of the partnership with the Government of Maharashtra and the National AIDS Control Program, there has been considerable efforts undertaken by sex workers and MSMs to strengthen peer led efforts and motivate communities to prevent HIV/AIDS. This success comes against the backdrop of limited fund and commodities availability through 2015.

Core Area 1. – HIV prevention program for female, male and trans -sex workers

BACKGROUND - UNCERTAINTY AROUND FUNDING OF HIV PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN 2015

A major part of 2015 and 2016 has been traumatic for SANGRAM and its collectives mainly because of the breakdown of the HIV/AIDS prevention programme called Targeted Interventions for key populations- women, men and trans people in sex work, supported by the National AIDS Control Organisation through the Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society [MSACS].

The main concern was that the abrupt withdrawal of these funds would lead to a resurgence of HIV among people in sex work. This was reflected in the later part of 2015-16. Community based HIV interventions that were showcased as the most successful HIV prevention programmes by the Government of India have not been paid despite contract, for more than six months now. Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad [female sex worker collective], Muskan [Male and TG sex workers collective] and Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha run 4 Targeted Interventions on HIV/ AIDS prevention service delivery programs for 4500 women, men and trans people in sex work in Satara and Sangli districts. The 1st instalment of Grant for period April to May 2015 was released on October 2015 (6 month delay) the 2nd instalment for June to September was released in December 2015.



The TI's have shown that the programme reached 100% of the estimated sex work population. Out of the 466 of them who are living with HIV 247 are on Anti-Retroviral Therapy [ART].

The lack of monetary support for the programme now impacts outreach that ensured both follow up and adherence. More than 22 years of work has convinced us

that marginalized groups require that we continue to engage with them on a planned regular basis to help adherence to HIV prevention and treatment follow-up.

MUSKAN COLLECTIVE- PEER LED HIV/AIDS PREVENTION INTERVENTION

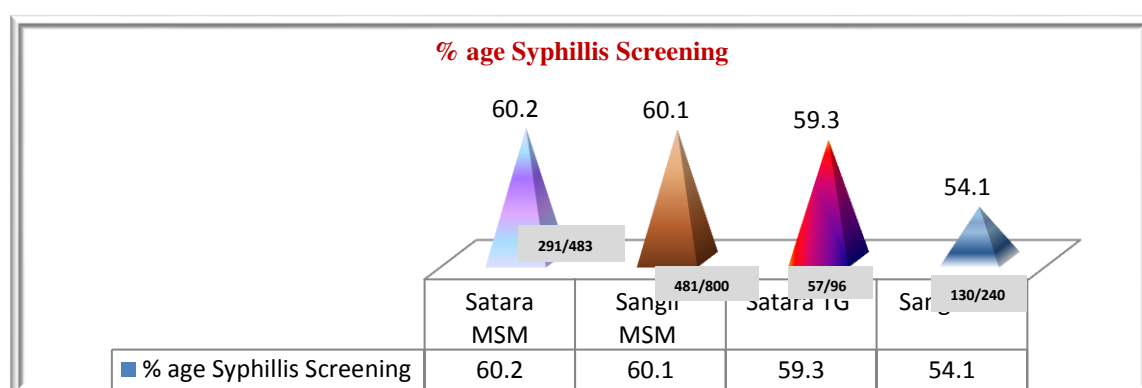
Area of Operation: Sangli, Miraj, Satara, Karad, Koregaon, Lonand, Wai,

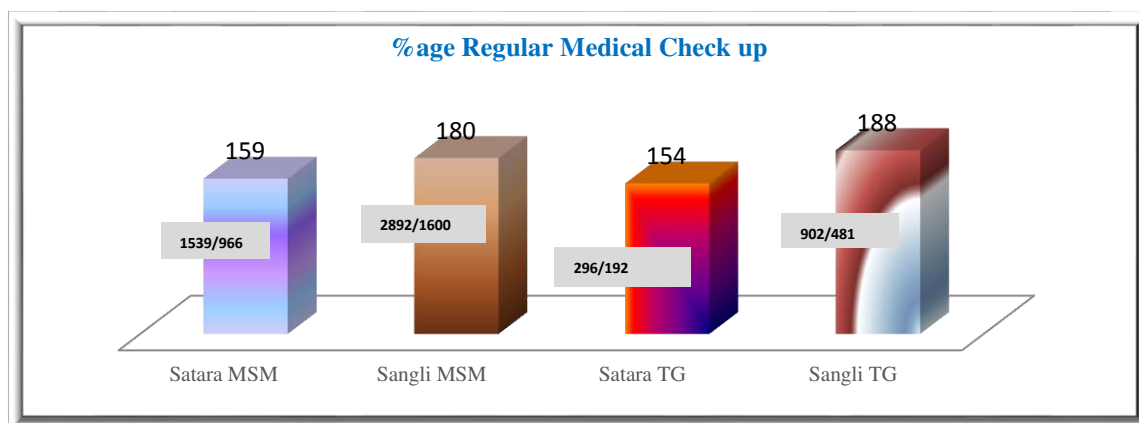
MUSKAN has been working with 801 MSM/TG within Sangli and Satara district through two projects.

Despite the break in supply of condoms, the collectives took condoms from the family planning program of the Government and distributed them as an emergency measure.

During the year, the two collectives distributed 188857 condoms through four targeted interventions in Miraj, Sangli and Karad. In addition, 5629 regular medical check-ups were conducted during the year as against a target of 3239 cases. Syphilis screening for the communities were also organised during the year. 7 STI cases were detected and treated. 26 cases of HIV were detected across the four interventions and were linked to ARV services.

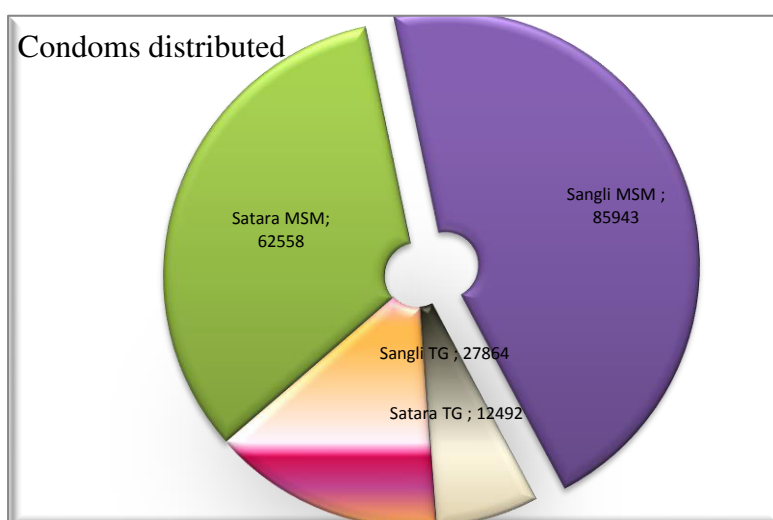
TI REPORT CARD 2015-16





HIV Reactive in TIs, 2015-16

STIs detected and treated in TIs, 2015-16



SANGRAM, VAMP AND MUSKAN AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE, DHAKA, 2016

Brother Born and Bred!

ACTORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.
CO-AUTHORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.

Children of sex workers face social stigma and rejection. Teachers beat them, school dropout rates are high. Child protection is impossible unless changed through the community. Parents, teachers, police, clients are abusive towards children who 'hang around' brothels. The threat of abuse envelopes young girl children of sex workers coming to school.

VAMP's collection of sex workers initiated a collective for children (Mitra) in 2009. Mitra works with 540 children, 30 men (18-25 years) among them were trained in HIV prevention programs to assist VAMP with documentation, report writing. This worked to keep children out of the criminal arena and help VAMP conduct a community-led HIV intervention. As Mitra got more involved in the VAMP collective they started representing issues of children who are born and bred in brothels.

Tuition adjoining the brothers started in 2005. In 2010, Tuitioners are adult children of sex workers. Mitra has been for VAMP providing residential facilities, education and nutrition, 33 children, 12 have passed out since 2012 with 8 teaching scholars to complete higher education. Cost certificates obtained in 22 cases, 36 children employed, 28 CHW, 15 working with VAMP. SANGRAM is HIV prevention and rights advocacy for community-led solutions.

Message Lines:
Sex workers' collectives can lead in strengthening children and ensuring enabling environment for their education, mainstreaming, creating a sustainable community resource, HIV programmes benefit by this resource to keep children safe and to use 'brothers' to run effective HIV interventions.

The Right(s) Process: Partnerships at Work, Sex work, violence and HIV

ACTORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.
CO-AUTHORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.

Issue: Protection of sex workers' human rights is required for their resistance to forced and coerced commercial sex, vulnerability and HIV risk. This evidence of the Right(s) Evidence, and responses to the evidence, is a key to the process of change.

Activities: A multi-country study developed to understand sex workers' experiences of violence, forced and coerced commercial sex, vulnerability, and HIV risk. The study was conducted in 10 countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. A National Working Group was established in each country to coordinate the research and monitor Government (UN and other partner) responses.

Result: 123 in-depth qualitative interviews (71 women, 22 men, 30 transgender sex workers). The subjects were from 10 countries: Bangladesh (30), India (30), Nepal (30), Pakistan (30), Philippines (30), South Africa (30), Thailand (30), Uganda (30), and Zimbabwe (30). 2000+ sex workers were involved in the research. A research community was formed. A research design and a research guide. Community resistance and research findings.

Message Lines: The Right(s) Evidence is a key to the process of change. It is a multi-country study developed to understand sex workers' experiences of violence, forced and coerced commercial sex, vulnerability, and HIV risk. The study was conducted in 10 countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. A National Working Group was established in each country to coordinate the research and monitor Government (UN and other partner) responses.

STOCK OUTS WITH ERRATIC AND DELAYED FUND DISBURSEMENT

ACTORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.
CO-AUTHORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.

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(Trans) Gender we embrace!

ACTORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.
CO-AUTHORS: Sangram, VAMP, Muskan, and others.

Transgender persons (TG) in sex work are deeply stigmatized for their gender presentation and the "dancing and dancing" work, even among the small transsexual community. This stigma was a barrier to organizing TG and HIV, in Bangladesh.

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Mainstreaming Sex Worker Rights Working with UN Treaty Bodies

Author: Sangita Mondal
Co-Authors: Meera Saitu, Anurita Pal

Issue: Though sex work is not illegal in India, laws such as Immoral Traffic Prevention Act criminalize transaction aspects. The discourse in South Asia and globally conflates sex work and trafficking.

Message Lines: Mainstreaming Sex Worker Rights Working with UN Treaty Bodies. The discourse in South Asia and globally conflates sex work and trafficking.



AIDS CONFERENCE, DHAKA AND COMMUNITY SHOWCASES HIV PREVENTION WORK

SANGRAM, MUSKAN and VAMP used the 12th International Conference of AIDS in the Asia-Pacific [ICAAP12] in Dhaka to advocate for both sex worker rights and for the rights of populations marginalised due to HIV and as persons from sexually diverse communities.

Posters of MUSKAN was accepted for the International AIDS Conference.

Strengthening access of transgender and MSM people to HIV/AIDS services without stigma

SANGRAM also helped to develop the Community Forum Statement that was read out at the closing ceremony of ICAAP. A more detailed report of the conference is available on the following link <http://www.sangram.org/resources/ICAAP12-Dhaka-Bangladesh-Community-Sessions-Report.pdf>

ANNIVERSARIES, CELEBRATIONS AND COMMEMORATIONS, CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATIONS

✚ MUSKAN observed Vat Pournima by winding white threads around the Vat (or Banyan) tree, and holding a procession through the streets. Guru Pournima, a festival specifically celebrated by the transgender community, and Makar Sankrat, were also celebrated.

✚ Muskan also participated in two rallies, one to protest the shooting of comrade Mr. Govind Pansare and Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, whose murders are still under investigation and another on world's AIDS day in Sangli.

✚ As part of the national recognition given to transgender people following a Supreme Court directive to recognise the citizenship rights of transgender people, 40 identification cards were presented to the transgender community recognising them under the category of "transgender".



A public event was held in Sangli attended by the district judge, district superintendent of police and the district collector. The recognition has enabled the transgender community get access to more social welfare schemes.