



VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project

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MARCHING AHEAD

Approaches, **B**est Practices, **C**ontributions ₄ **D**issemination

End of Evaluation

PROJECTS DIVISION
The Voluntary Health Services (VHS),
Rajiv Gandhi Salai, T.T.T.I. Post,
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SEPTEMBER 2021



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VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project is funded by Gilead Sciences, Inc. and implemented by Voluntary Health Services (VHS). The project aims to improve the well-being and quality of life of vulnerable TG and MSM communities in seven districts of Tamil Nadu.

VHS is a registered non-profit society based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Established in 1958, the organization has a long history of providing affordable and quality medical care to marginalized and poor communities. VHS is a principal nodal agency and has 25-year track record of spearheading implementation and scale-up of community-based HIV/TB prevention, treatment, care, and support projects for most-at-risk and vulnerable communities.

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Foreword

VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project supported by Gilead Rainbow Grant has been implemented by the Project Division of VHS with the goal to improve the quality of lives of TG and MSM community members in selected districts of Tamil Nadu for period of nine months in an intensive way in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic. This project primarily addressed the TG and MSM communities including PLWHIVs in seven districts of Tamil Nadu (i.e.,) Chennai, Chengalpattu, Salem, Tiruvallur, Vellore, Pudukottai & Madurai. This project addressed 600 community members by involving 12 CBOs, 1 Informal Community Network and involved 30 DOSTs (community members / cadres) and implemented with community engagement. This project addressed HIV Plus initiatives and contributed for improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM communities, addressed comprehensive needs of TG/MSM communities and focused on young TG communities and preparing for Ageing with Dignity. This project primarily adapted the key strategies including evidence-based program; community mobilization and community engagement; capacity building; promoting behaviour change and health seeking behaviour; tech-enabled communication; community-led communication; creating enabling environment/eliminating stigma & discrimination; addressing rights of TG/MSM PLWHIVs; referral and linkages; and sustainability & transition. Overall, this project has undertaken key strategic, innovative, community friendly initiatives to address the following three objectives:



1. Build competencies of 75% of TG/MSM PLWHIV communities for improving physical, mental and social well-being;
2. Improve access to multi-disciplinary care services for TG/MSM PLWHIV by 50% (from baseline); and
3. Reduce stigma and discrimination of TG/MSM communities by 25% (from baseline).

This project demonstrated in developing community friendly e-posters and videos by engaging community consultants, community members, celebrities and professionals. These materials have been effectively and strategically used in social media campaign initiatives and contributed for achieving the desired results with community acceptance.

This End of Evaluation report focuses on the key activities undertaken, approaches, achievements, best practices, learnings and recommendations for dissemination and scaling up. This End of Evaluation has been conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic by adapting appropriate methodologies including qualitative and quantitative methods.

Appreciate the efforts and contributions made by Dr A Vijayaraman, Program Lead and Ms K Priya, Program Manager in planning, managing and contributing to achieve the desired objectives in a systematic and coordinated manner in close coordination with CBOs and engagement of communities at every stage. Also thank all the CBOs associated with, DOSTs (community volunteers) involved in the implementation of the program and all the other key stakeholders including development departments, NGOs, positive networks, health care providers, non-health professionals, lawyers, private sector, and all others who has associated and contributed.

Our sincere appreciation, acknowledgement and thanks to Gilead Rainbow Grant - Gilead Sciences, Inc. and their team for their financial and strategic technical guidance. This support has contributed for improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM communities and supported with innovative models and best practices which will be of useful for replication and scaling up with sustainability.

Thanks to the consultants and the team involved in conducting this End of Evaluation titled “Marching Ahead along with Approaches, Best Practices, Contributions & Dissemination”. Request the readers to go through the same and use the learnings and best practices for addressing the TG/MSM community needs and priorities with the focus on HIV Plus and continue to undertake the efforts to improve the QoL of TG/MSM communities across the country.

VHS Projects Division has simplified the preparation and amplified the achievements.

Kindly feel free to write to us for any information on the learnings and recommendations.

Dr Joseph D Williams
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List of Acronyms

ART	Anti-Retroviral Treatment
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CECM	Community Engagement and Community Mobilization
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
EoE	End of Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICN	Informal Community Network
ID	Identity
IPC	Inter-Personal Communication
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OI	Opportunistic Infection
PAN	Permanent Account Number
PLWHIV	People Living With HIV
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
QoL	Quality of Life
QoLIT	Quality of Life Index Tool
SLSMCC	State Level Social Media Communication Campaign
SMC	Social Media Campaign
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TG	Transgender
TGW	Transgender Women
TI	Targeted Intervention
U=U	Undetectable = Untransmittable
VHS	Voluntary Health Services

Chapter 1: VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project – An Introduction

1.1. Background:

Evidence from HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS), 2016-17 shows that national HIV prevalence for key populations has been steadily declining in India. The HIV prevalence among Transgenders declined from 8.8% (HSS 2010-11) to 7.50% (IBBS 2014-15) to 3.14% (HSS 2016-17). Among MSMs, HIV prevalence reduced from 4.43% (HSS 2010-11) to 4.30% (IBBS 2014-15) to 2.69% (HSS 2016-17). However, Transgenders and MSM communities are disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. HIV prevalence among Transgenders and MSMs continues to stay well above the national average for general population (0.22%).

According to the data from the National AIDS Control Program, the detection of HIV positive cases continues to remain high among TGs (0.46%) and MSMs (0.25%). There exist lot of gaps in coverage and service uptake. Among those tested HIV positive, only 74% are linked to anti retro viral treatment. According to national program data, there are 33 CBO interventions covering about 30,000 Transgender population and 115 interventions working among approximately 200,000 MSMs across the country. Mapping estimates from the year 2009 revealed 4,27,000 TG/MSM population in India. An estimation carried out in 2013 to exclusively map the Transgender community showed that there are approximately 70,000 Transgender population living in the country and a majority (62%) are involved in sex work. Alcohol consumption is quite common among more than half the Transgender/MSM population. A substantial proportion have faced exclusion from family, been victims of violence and experienced stigma and discrimination at healthcare facilities.

The prevention strategies implemented by the national programme have resulted in reduction in the number of annual new HIV infections by 57% during the last 10 years. Wide availability of free ART has resulted in a decline in the number of people dying of AIDS related causes. The national adult HIV prevalence has seen a consistent downward trend from a peak of 0.38% in 2001-03 to 0.34% in 2007 to 0.22% in 2017. The national estimations from 2017 show that there are 2.14 million people living with HIV in India, 87,580 new infections and 69,110 AIDS related deaths. The number of HIV positive persons on ART stands at 1.18 million. Further the needs of old age MSM/TG people, young MSM/TG community members have not been addressed in any of the programmes.

Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance (IBBS, 2014-15) among Transgender people reveal that,

- In terms of violence, 32% of TG/H people have been forced to have sex during their first sexual intercourse, strangers (32%) and family member / relative (23%) are the major perpetrators of physical violence, did not inform about the violence they encounter (28%).
- 49.8% have reported that they been treated disrespectfully by family/friends/neighbours because of being a TG/H person, 36.7% felt that they have been treated differently than other persons in hospitals because of being a TG/H person.
- Further, the reasons for high HIV prevalence among key populations include high risk unprotected sexual contact with multiple partners, consumption of alcohol (57%) and sharing needles during injecting drug use. The HIV epidemic is characterized by inconsistent condom usage (65%), irregular testing among key populations, untreated sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis co-infection, delayed initiation of HIV treatment and low adherence to HIV treatment protocol.

Based on the **Transgender stigma index study** conducted by VHS-MSA DIVA Project:

- **Gender transition**
 - Among those who had transitioned, half of them transitioned when they were between the ages of 15 and 19.
- **Awareness of HCPs:**
 - More than half (56%) of the participants who visited government or private health care institutions said that they taught their health care providers about trans people so that they could get appropriate care.
 - Lack of knowledge among health care providers, their negative perception and attitude on the health needs of trans people might have acted as a barrier in providing competent care to transgender people.
- **Discrimination with intimate partners and with HCPs:**
 - The prevalence of any kind of discrimination from intimate male partners was 10.9% and within the public health and private health facilities were 8.4% and 3.1%, respectively.
 - Intimate partner violence is often not revealed by TGW and thus not addressed by health care providers and counsellors. However, the high prevalence of violence from intimate male partner highlights the need for governmental and nongovernmental health care providers to focus on this issue.
- **Ran away from families / Discrimination:**
 - A majority (73%; n=198/270) of those who were out to their immediate family members had run away from their homes at some point of time. Among those who ran away from their homes, about one-third (31%) were between the ages of 7 and 15 years. Nearly three-fifths (58%) of participants said that the discrimination they faced from their family members was because of their transgender status.
- **Internal stigma:**
 - Overall, one-third (33%) wished that should not be a trans person, twenty-nine percent felt isolated from themselves, twenty-eight percent avoided personal/social involvement with other trans person, twenty-six percent felt that being trans person was a personal shortcoming for them, and fifteen percent sought some professional help in order to change their gender identity.
 - Besides elimination of discrimination from other people, stigma elimination programmes also need to address internalised stigma among TGW. Some of the ways by which this can be done are: providing information about the rights of TGW, screening for internalised stigma and providing counselling to promote self-acceptance, and promoting collectives of TGW to support themselves and their communities.
- **Depression:**
 - Of total sample, more than fifty percent (56%) reported experiencing one or more form of depression symptoms. A little over half (53%) reported feeling disappointed or depressed, while fifty-one percent reported getting little or no pleasure from things they used to enjoy.

- **CBOs:**
 - When asked which kinds of organization they know, almost all said that they were aware of some CBOs (100%) working among trans women while 47% said that they know some NGOs working for trans women.
 - As the community collectives/organisations of TGW help one another to get connected and empowered, financial and technical supports are needed for those collectives/organisations for effective community mobilisation and advocacy. Further, those agencies can also be supported to provide psychosocial counselling services and link TGW who faced discrimination with legal and necessary support services.
- **Violence:**
 - TGW faced severe discrimination/violence from ruffians (85.6%), followed by police (59.8%), and previous workplace (26.9%).

The key achievements over the past two decade has brought TG/MSM issues to the forefront accompanied by formation and capacity building of TG/MSM CBOs across the country. The work of CBOs has mainly focused on mobilizing the TG/MSM communities, linking them with testing and treatment services, promoting behaviour change, facilitating access to social protection, and sensitizing key stakeholders.

Based on various community consultations, secondary review, research studies undertaken, and other reports revealed that, there is a dire-need for addressing the comprehensive needs of TG/MSM communities including PLWHIVs. The comprehensive needs include beyond HIV/AIDS prevention including improving the Quality of Life and other related aspects. In addition to addressing the middle-aged and aged TG/MSM community, it was also recommended on the need for addressing young TG/MSM communities those who are not part of the TI program and efforts has not been undertaken so far.

To move the existing interventions to the next level and empower TG/MSM communities to lead a healthy and fulfilling life, the project seeks to focus on the fourth 90 quality of life dimension that includes creating awareness among communities especially on NCD management, mental health components, gender transition related services, nutrition, life skill education, managing the ageing problems. CBOs implementing the Targeted Intervention program will be further strengthened to work towards the fourth 90 target. To sustain the efforts of the program, a resource pool of grassroots cadre called “DOST” (friend) from the TG/MSM communities will be engaged, capacitated and involved for ensuring continued services beyond the lifetime of the project period in a sustained manner.

1.2. Goal and objectives of the project

Goal: To improve the quality of lives of TG and MSM community members in selected districts of Tamil Nadu.

Objectives: The *Primary objectives* of the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project are:

1. Build competencies of 75% of TG/MSM PLWHIV communities for improving physical, mental and social well-being.
2. Improve access to multi-disciplinary care services for TG/MSM PLWHIV by 50% (from baseline).
3. Reduce stigma and discrimination of TG/MSM PLWHIV communities by 25% (from baseline).

1.3. Project period

Overall project period with extension	December 2019 – September 2021
Initial grant awarded for the period	December 2019 – November 2020
No cost extension period	April 2021 – September 2021
Implementation period (active)	July 2020 – January 2021 July – August 2021
Lock down period	Wave I: April – June 2020 Wave II: February – June 2021

Overall, the project has been implemented in an intensive way only for 9 months with the intended population considering the Covid-19 pandemic Waves I and II including lockdown.

1.4. Target group

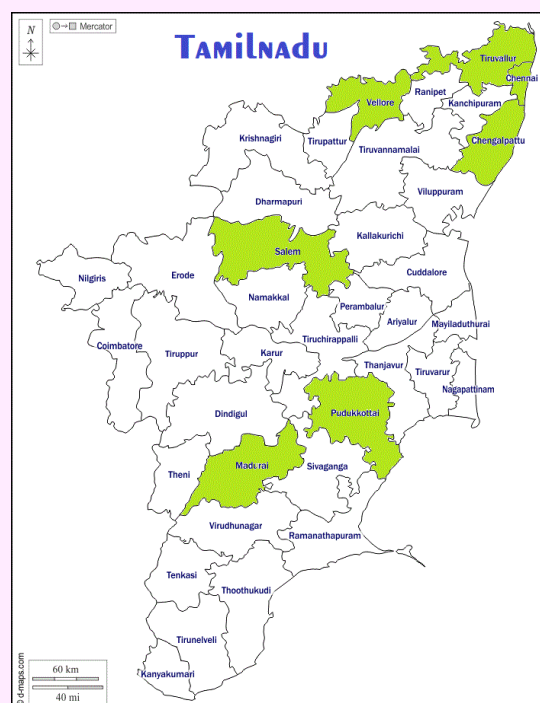
The project aimed at improving the well-being and Quality of Life of TG/MSM communities in seven districts in Tamil Nadu. Primary target groups are *TG and MSM communities including PLWHIVs*. In addition to intervention among the primary target groups, the project has also enhanced the capacity of CBOs, networked the key stakeholders in addressing the project priorities in an integrated manner.

1.5. Intervention area

The project team has undertaken the following efforts and identified *seven prioritized districts* for intervention in **Tamilnadu (i.e.,) Chennai, Chengalpattu, Salem, Tiruvallur, Vellore, Pudukottai & Madurai:**

- Community consultation
- Secondary review
- VHS experience in working with CBOs & districts
- Considering the project priorities and the needs of the community members
- Districts requires much attention and there is no ongoing intervention with TG/MSM communities beyond TI program.

The project identified the above seven districts and implemented the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project in close coordination with district-based CBOs, DOSTs (community members) and other key stakeholders in the respective districts.



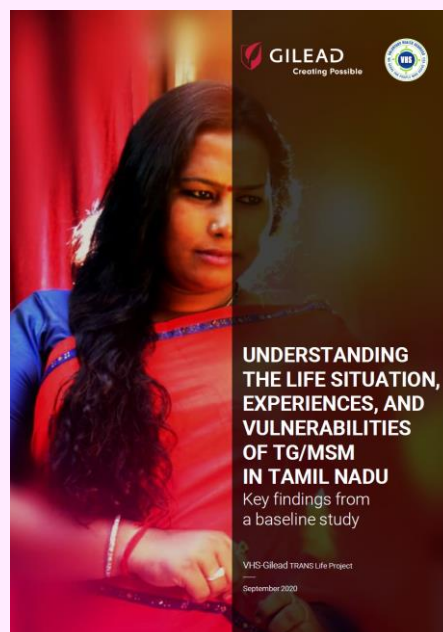
1.6. Baseline study findings

The project undertaken baseline study to assess the baseline situation and develop a benchmark for the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project. Considering this, the baseline study employed a mixed method approach with equal weightage to quantitative and qualitative data collection.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- Assess the Quality of Life of TG/MSM communities in Tamil Nadu, with special focus on People Living with HIV (PLWHIVs).
- Ascertain the general health and mental health condition of the target population.
- Capture the ageing related problems faced by the target population and their experiences of gender-based violence, stigma, and discrimination.
- Assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the target communities.

The study was conducted in five (5) districts of Tamil Nadu: Chennai, Chengalpattu, Salem, Vellore and Madurai. A total of 122 TG/MSM persons across the five (5) districts were selected as respondents through random sampling. The respondents were selected from a list of TG/MSM persons who are enrolled/recruited in TG/MSM CBOs.



The summary of key findings and recommendations are:

Major Issues	Recommendations
Mental health problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of depression, hopelessness, and dissatisfaction with life were widely reported. • Many TG/MSM were living alone, with their lives shrouded by fear and worry. • Gender identity and sexual orientation were the key reasons for increased risk of violence, stigma, and discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based mental health intervention package, covering early screening, suicide prevention counselling services, and referral and linkages. • Orientation of health care providers on the issues faced by TG/MSM due to their gender identity and sexual orientation. • Capacity building of CBOs to enable them to plan, implement, and manage mental health services for their target population; barefoot counsellors (DOST) at CBO level to provide basic mental health counselling and referral.
Ageing related problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many older TG/MSM face extreme financial hardship and have health-related issues. • Stigma, discrimination, and violence are a common experience. • A significant number reported feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and suicidal tendencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific intervention to help older TG/MSM have quality of life and live with dignity. • Online counselling through community-based barefoot counsellors (DOST).

Major Issues	Recommendations
Impact of the COVID-19 situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of TG/MSM were not aware of preventive measures to protect against COVID-19 infection. • The COVID-19 situation caused loss of income for most. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness building and behaviour change communication through targeted communication on COVID-19. • Distribution of dry ration and nutrition supplementation. • Promotion of income generation activities.
General health conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low condom usage with regular partners was reported. • Many were not aware of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV infection. • Non-communicable diseases and opportunistic infections were reported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with key stakeholders to re-emphasize condom usage with regular partners. • Communication and messaging on PrEP. • Education, early detection and screening through camps, and treatment of other diseases in collaboration with govt programs.
Experience of stigma, discrimination, violence, and harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high majority of TG/MSM reported having such experiences, especially at the hands of the general public. • Vulnerabilities have increased during the COVID-19 situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitization and awareness campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination, with focus on the general public. • Stigma reduction interventions linked with mental health services.
Social protection and livelihood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihood opportunities are lacking even though many TG/MSM are educated. • Many TG/MSM do not have basic civic IDs such as ration card and the TG ID card. • Very few TG/MSM are beneficiaries of the government health insurance scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of opportunities through the livelihood/vocational programs offered by the govt; advocacy for job reservations. • Intensive efforts to help them avail the civic IDs through Department of Social Welfare. • Advocacy with government and coordination with State AIDS Control Society (SACS) to issue health insurance to all TG/MSM people.
Association with CBOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all TG/MSM approach CBOs/NGOs in case of problems, but the latter may not be adequately capacitated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of CBOs to enable them to cater to the community's needs.

1.7. Community Engagement and Community Mobilization (CECM)

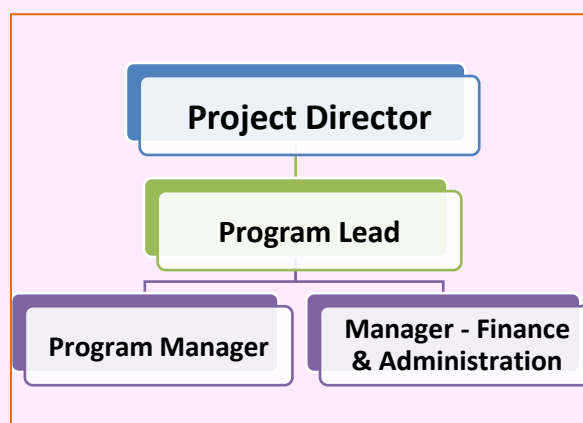
VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has undertaken systematic and meticulous efforts for engaging the community at every stage of this project. The project has adapted the following *efforts / approaches* for ensuring the community engagement:

Community Engagement and Community Mobilization (CECM)	Community consultation for designing the project with program areas
	Involvement of community members in undertaking baseline survey for identifying the needs
	Engagement of districts-based CBOs and capacity building of CBOs
	Identification of DOST (community members) in consultation with CBOs based on the criteria
	Engagement and execution of entire project activities by involving DOST (community members)
	Involvement of community consultants in capacity building initiatives
	Community involvement in designing of messages, materials and media channels for ensuring community friendly communication
	Engagement of CBOs in producing video films on community group song and involved the community members in video films
	Pre and Post testing of communication materials with community members for ensuring community acceptance and ownership
	Networked DOSTs at CBO level and across the interventions
	Involvement of community members in providing feedback and participation in monitoring of activities
	And other initiatives

1.8. Project management

The project has established a simple management system for:

- ensuring effective program management
- systematic implementation of the planned activities
- ensuring networking & partnership building
- capacity building initiatives
- mentoring & monitoring
- managing the project activities at all levels for achieving the desired objectives of the project.



This project management team is supported with district specific DOSTs (community volunteers) and undertaken outreach activities.

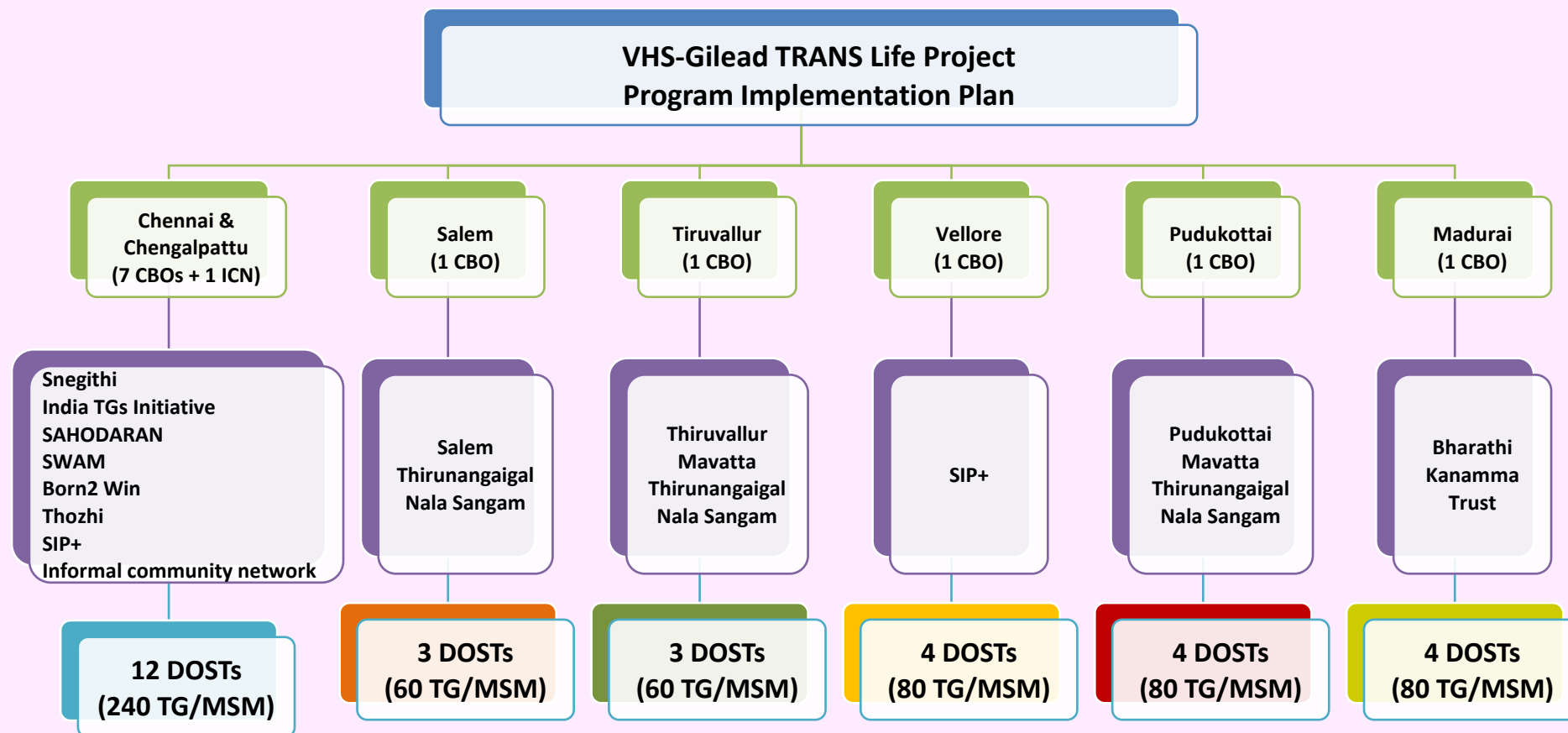
1.9. Key stakeholders involved

The project has undertaken utmost efforts in engaging the community at every stage of the project and implemented the project by ensuring partnership and engagement of key stakeholders such as:



1.10. Program Implementation Plan (PIP)

VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project implemented in seven districts by involving DOST (community members) in close coordination with CBOs in the respective districts. The project coordinated with 12 CBOs, 1 Informal Community Network (ICN) and involved 30 DOSTs (community members / cadres) and implemented project activities. The overall PIP are:



Note: One DOST communicates and extends services to 20 community members.

1.11. Core messages / areas

VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has been implemented on the following core messages / areas:



HIV Plus Initiatives:

- VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project focused on improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM communities.
- This project addressed comprehensive needs of the TG/MSM communities.
- This project focused on HIV Plus covering all aspects beyond HIV/AIDS.
- Complemented the ongoing HIV/AIDS prevention TI program efforts.
- Addressed the young TG communities, middle-aged and aged community members with the age specific priority needs.
- Undertaken community-led and community-owned initiatives.

1.12. Key strategies

The project has adapted the following strategies for implementation of the project to improve the well-being and Quality of Life of TG and MSM communities in seven prioritized districts of Tamilnadu:

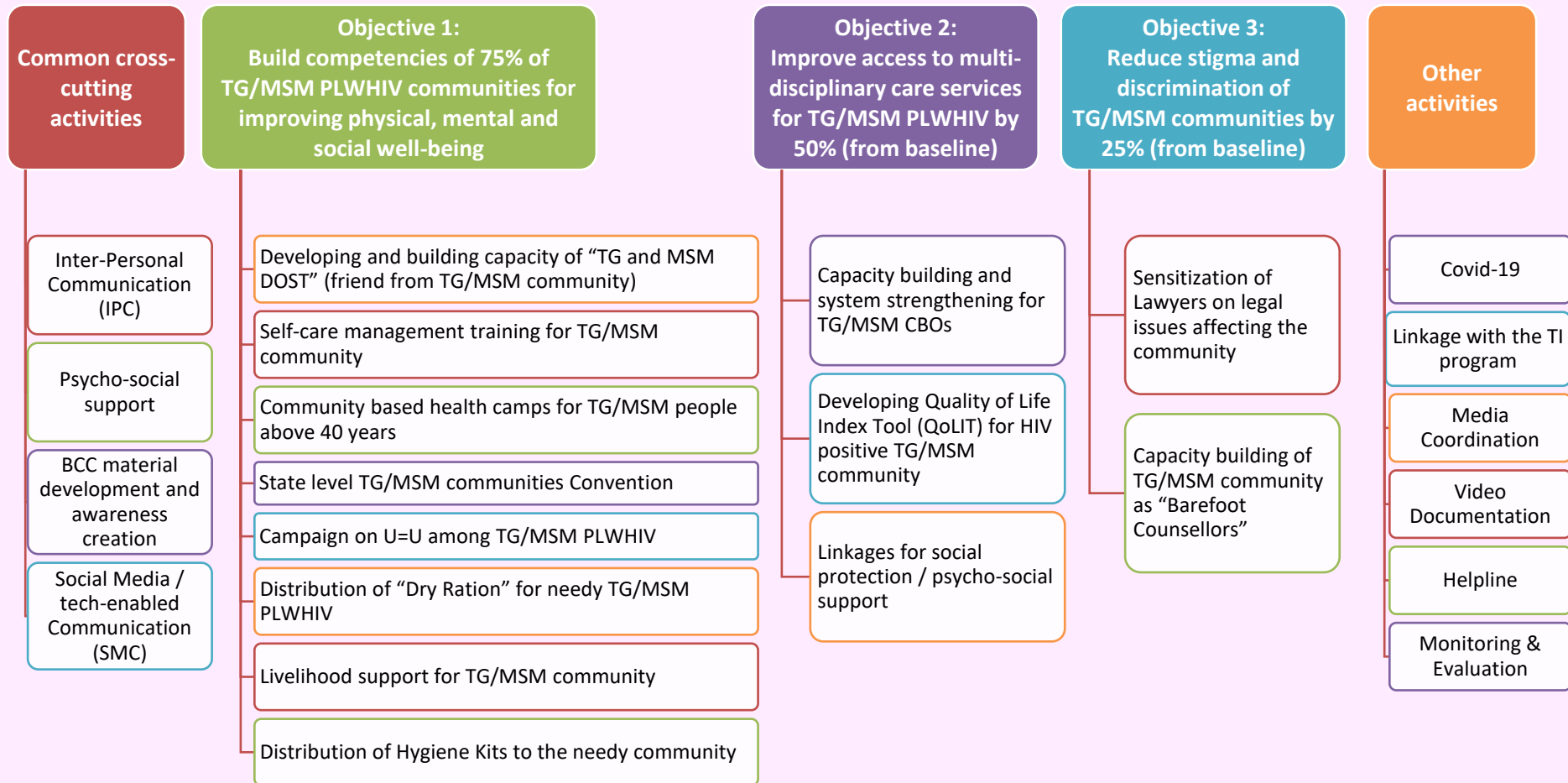


These key strategies and innovative approaches adapted by the project has contributed for delivering the desired results.

1.13. Key activities, approaches and achievements

Based on the baseline survey findings and recommendations, the project team has analyzed and evolved systematic and strategic approaches for addressing the community needs. The project has also considered the aspects such as: project priorities, planned activities, resources available, timelines, existing Covid situation, community preferred messages, preferred channels, etc.

Snapshot of the activities and its sub activities (overview of the presentation):



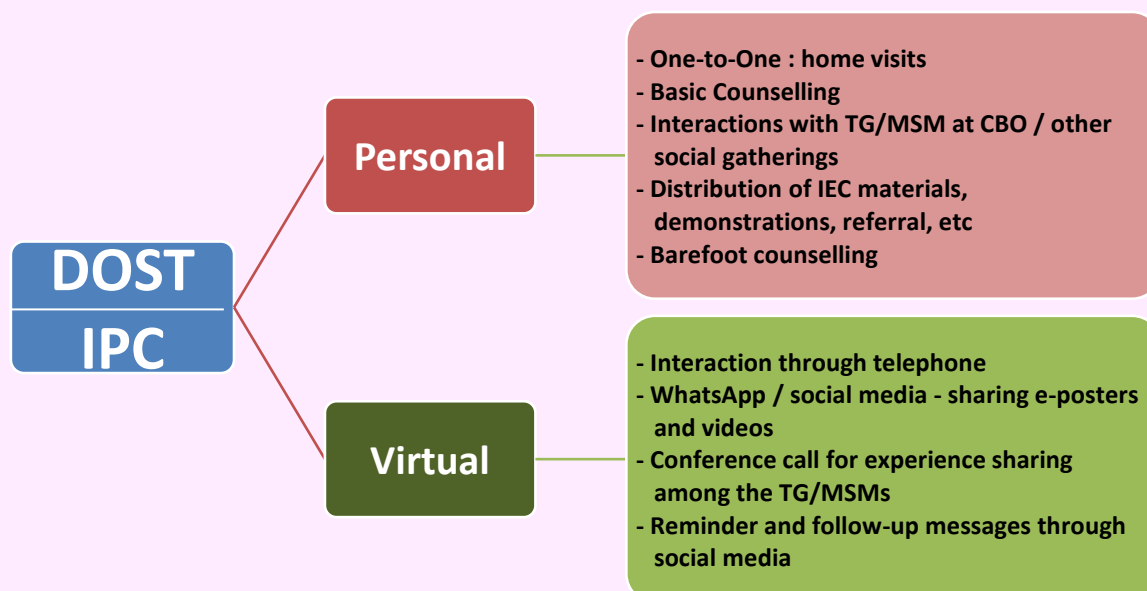
1.13.1. Common cross-cutting activities (to complement the objective wise activities)

- a. **Inter-Personal Communication (IPC):** DOST – community volunteers undertaken outreach activities by undertaking visits to the home / preferred place of the TG/MSM and provided inter-personal communication through one-to-one. Also, used the mobile phone and communicated the core messages / areas with the respective TG/MSM. As a part of one-to-one, the DOSTs has shared the e-posters on each of the core messages / areas and videos for creating awareness and to enhance the knowledge / practices. Also used mobile phone as a communication media and communicated effectively with the community members by screening videos, songs, showing e-posters, etc.

In addition to providing one-to-one, the DOSTs has also adapted the communication initiatives using social media network including WhatsApp. In addition to this, DOSTs were regularly interacting with the respective TG/MSM through phones for ensuring follow-up.

DOSTs has also provided need-based basic counselling to the individuals on aspects such as: mental health and psycho-social support. These DOSTs has also focused on: providing information on welfare schemes, guidance for filling up of application, referral and linkage with the development departments / related organizations to avail welfare schemes, referral for availing health services, etc. DOSTs has also adapted individual focused approach than common approach. Overall, the project reached all the **600** community members by providing one-to-one and provided “Barefoot Counselling” for **1103** members.

IPC activities for educating and empowering the community members



- b. **Psycho-social support:** The project facilitated in providing psycho-social support to the needy TG/MSM population through DOST. As a part of IPC, based on the training imparted to the DOSTs, each DOST has undertaken psycho-social support related activities to the needy in addressing mental health issues, emotional issues, social problems, etc.

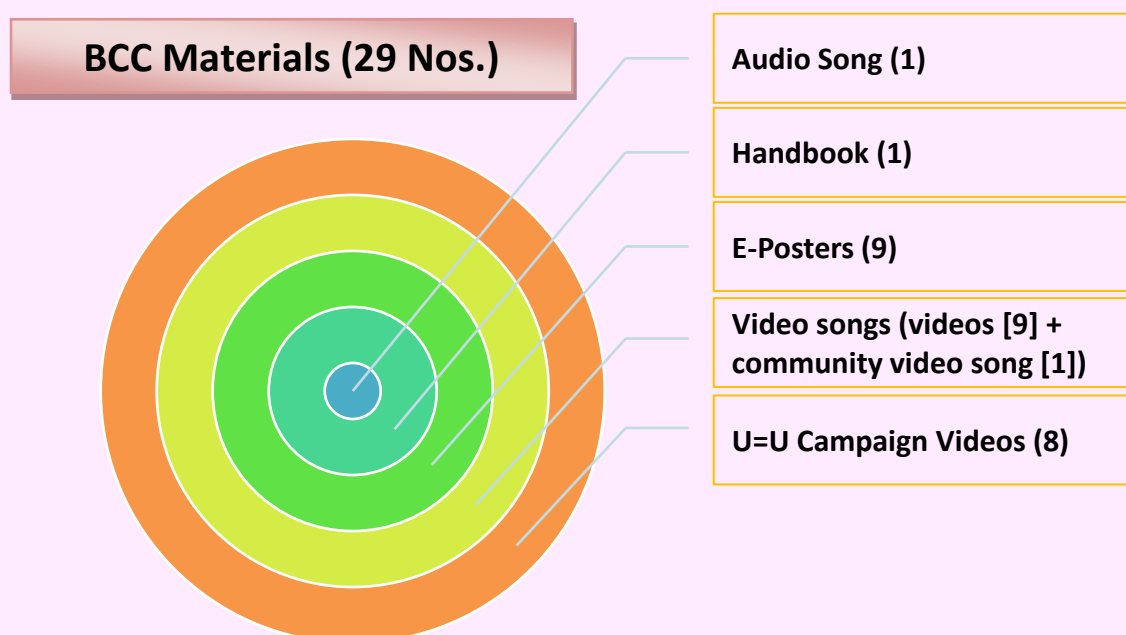
This IPC supported with barefoot counselling has helped the individuals to make informed decisions, coping better with illness and effectively with discrimination. This psycho-social support has also contributed to improve their Quality of Life and enabled them to cope-up with the situations / problems.

This initiative has also contributed for prevention of suicidal attempts, strengthening self-esteem, promoting positive attitude, etc. The project provided Psycho-social support for **2234** community members.

- c. **BCC material development and awareness creation:** Considering the community needs and preferences, the project has adapted the key approaches in developing BCC materials for communicating effectively with the community members as a part of IPC, awareness creation activities including through social media.

Key approaches adapted for developing BCC materials:

- Community consultation
- Developing plan on messages and materials
- Prioritization of core messages on each core area
- Development of proto-type materials
- Community led communication materials
- Pre-testing with community members
- Development of materials
- Use of materials as per the plan
- Feedback of the materials



Audio Song: The project has also developed audio song for creating awareness in addition to use of videos and e-posters.

Handbook: The project developed a comprehensive handbook for use by CBOs and DOSTS titled “Arockiyam Tharum Muyarchigal (ATM)” – improving Quality of Life – ways and means. This book is primarily focused on the detailed information on each of the core messages / areas. This handbook also served as a reference book, ready reckoner and use during the training programs. The project has developed e-posters, videos and other materials based on the handbook for ensuring consistency.



E-Posters: The project developed e-posters for use in social media campaign. One poster for each core areas has been developed. Each e-poster has been developed with ten key messages focusing on the particular core area. Overall, the project has developed **9 E-Posters** covering the following core areas with simple sentences, reader friendly along with pictures. These e-posters has been developed in a sequential manner with serial numbers for communicating with the community members in a phased and sequential manner.

E-Poster No.	Name of the E-Poster
E-Poster 1	Quality of Life Improvement
E-Poster 2	Nutrition
E-Poster 3	Non-Communicable Disease (NCD)
E-Poster 4	Opportunistic Infection
E-Poster 5	Mental Health
E-Poster 6	Social Protection
E-Poster 7	Covid-19 Prevention Methods
E-Poster 8	Adherence of ART
E-Poster 9	Undetectable = Untransmittable [U=U]

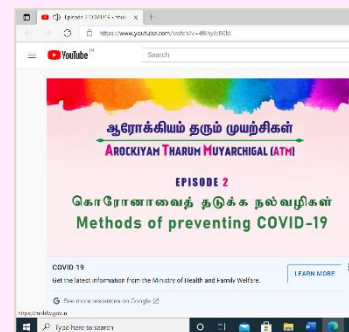
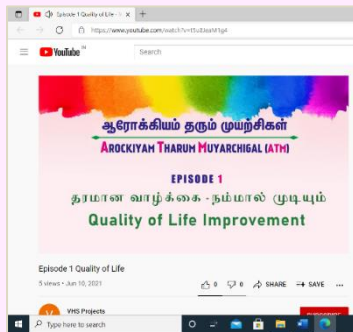
Usefulness of the E-Posters:

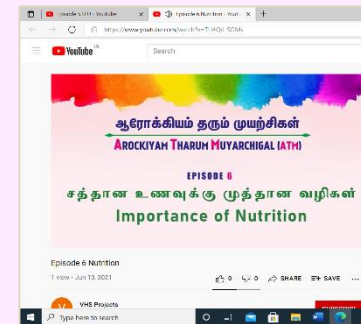
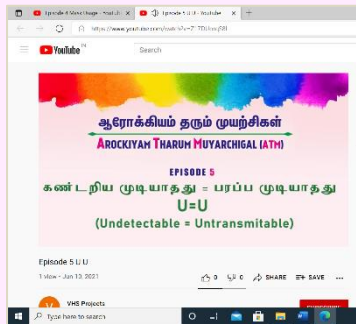
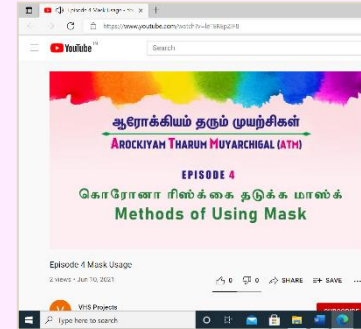
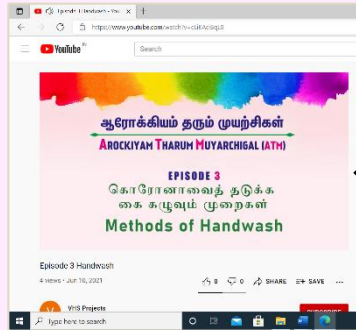
- 10 key messages on each of the core messages / areas.
- 9 E-Posters x 10 key messages on each core messages / areas = 90 important messages.
- Simple messages with easy to read.
- Complementing the messages provided through videos and one-to-one.
- Used as a reminder media for reinforcement.
- Cost effective and effective way of sharing through social media.
- Opportunity to utilize the e-posters and videos through social media in reaching the primary target groups and encouraging each of the community members / end-users in turn use the same and share with their own networks to reach beyond the desired audience.

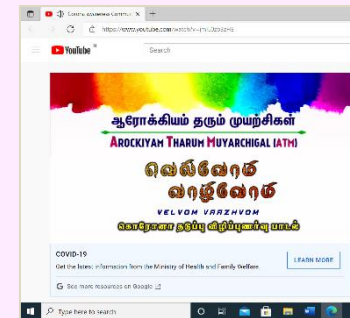
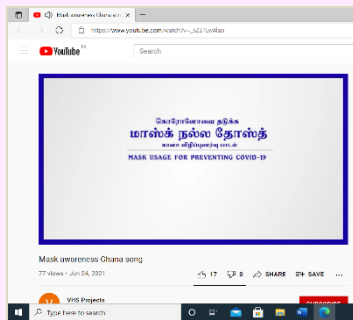
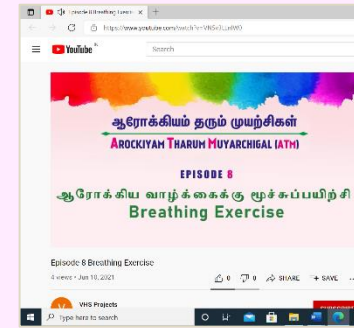
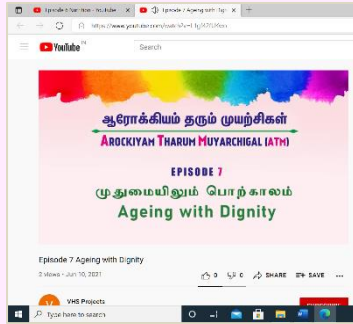
Videos and Community Video Song: The project has developed **10 videos** (Videos [9] + Community Video Song [1]) for use in social media campaign. Each video is presented with the introduction of the cine celebrity followed with information by the subject expert. The inclusion of celebrity has been undertaken with the intention to ensure viewership, enable them to view the full video & the content, and improve the viewers. These videos initially shared through social media campaign for communicating the core messages / areas of the project. In turn, the same has also been uploaded in other social media platforms such as: Facebook, YouTube, etc.

Episode No.	Core messages / areas	Name of the Celebrity	Video Link
Episode 1	Quality of life	Mr Deepak Dinkar, Actor	https://youtu.be/t5u8JeaM1g4
Episode 2	About COVID-19	Mx Kalaimamani Sudha, Community consultant	https://youtu.be/4fEhyJcR0bl
Episode 3	Handwash	Mr M Sakthivel, Project Supervisor	https://youtu.be/cLiKAciBqL0
Episode 4	Mask usage	Ms E Kavitha, Outreach Worker	https://youtu.be/leTEREpZIF8
Episode 5	Undetectable = Untransmittable [U=U]	Mx A Jaya, General Manager, SAHODARAN	https://youtu.be/Z17DUorgS8I
Episode 6	Nutrition	Dr Sadhana Rajkumar, Nutritionist and Dietitian	https://youtu.be/TH4QrI_SOMs
Episode 7	Ageing with Dignity	Mx S Noori, South India Positive Network (SIP+)	https://youtu.be/L1gf42fUKwo
Episode 8	Breathing exercise	Rtn. Dr G Preethi, Acupuncturist	https://youtu.be/VN5v3LLnIW0
Episode 9	NCDs Ghana song	Singer Choolaimedu Gana Vivek	https://youtu.be/_sZ3TLw4lao
Episode 10	Community video song on Quality of Life	By Transgenders / CBO Board members	https://youtu.be/jmIL0zb3zHE

Snapshot of the Videos







- d. **Social Media / tech-enabled Communication (SMC):** Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Reason for use of social media:

- Community preferences.
- Recommendations of baseline study.
- Usage of android phones by community members.
- Covid-19 restrictions and limitations in personalized communication.
- Opportunity of accessing social media by the community members considering the lock down due to Covid-19, stayed at home, and not involved in any activities (more leisure time).
- Cost effectiveness.
- Opportunity to use videos and visual communications.
- Intensifying the target specific communication to achieve the objectives and reach out to larger audience / community members.

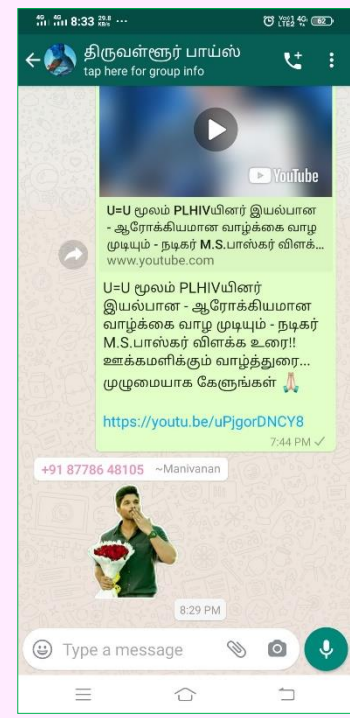
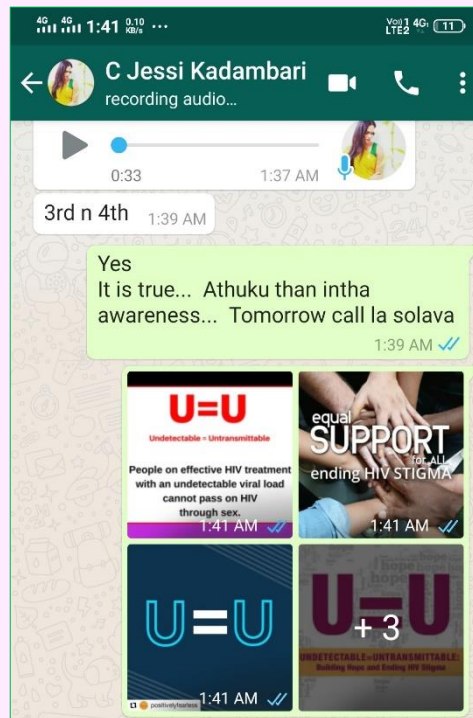
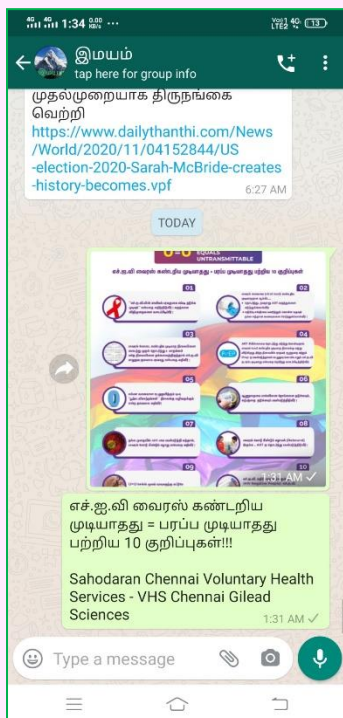
Social networking services can help the TG/MSM community people to develop their interests and find other people who share the same interests.



They can help introduce with TG/MSM community members on new things, ideas, etc. Social media allows to hear & respond. Considering the various reasons for use of SMC (refer box), the project has optimum utilized the WhatsApp for reaching out to the intended audience in a focused manner.

In addition to the intensified / target specific communication, the project has also utilized the other social media platform such as: Facebook, YouTube channel and WhatsApp group being used by the CBOs and communities.

The above communication activities has been undertaken for addressing the core messages / areas and to complement the three key objectives of this project.



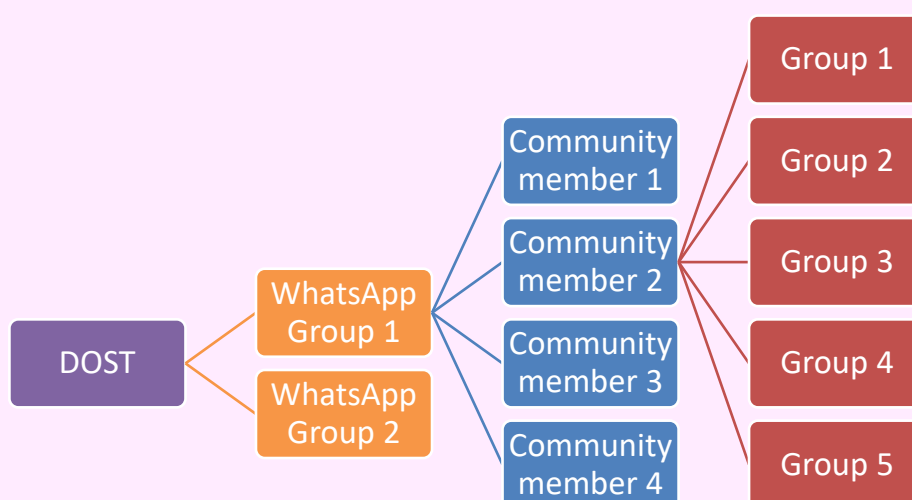
Through Social Media Campaign, the reach are:

Particulars	Total
Facebook reach	33500
Facebook likes	470
YouTube views	877
YouTube likes	71
YouTube subscribers	58
WhatsApp groups	37910
Third gender community reached	3800
No. of HIV Positives reached through personal interactions after viewing campaign	118

Note: These videos are available in social media and the same is being continuously viewed by members on regular basis.

The viewership and the reach is day-by-day increasing considering the continuous viewership in the social media platform and dissemination of information by the community members through their own personalized WhatsApp groups and other networks.

WhatsApp Reach:



- Each DOST shares the e-poster and videos to 4-5 WhatsApp groups based on his contacts with the community members.
- In turn, each community member reads and benefit of their own and share the same with the personal WhatsApp groups to 5-6 based on the WhatsApp groups available.
- Similarly, the community members received through the WhatsApp groups benefits and share the same in their known WhatsApp groups.
- Overall, this WhatsApp group has reached the intended community members and beyond the envisaged group but contributed for reaching larger group in a cost-effective manner.
- This process shows greater community ownership on the messages and enhance the responsibilities and contributions in sharing the same with their own group members.

1.13.2. Objective 1: Build competencies of 75% of TG/MSM PLWHIV communities for improving physical, mental and social well-being

Key activities undertaken for achieving the objectives are:

- a. **Developing and building capacity of “TG and MSM DOST” (friend from TG/MSM community):**
The project has engaged overall 30 DOSTs (in Tamil it is considered as “Nanbans”) for reaching out the community members covering all seven (7) districts in close coordination with 12 CBOs and 1 ICN. The criteria identified for selection of DOSTs and role of DOSTs are:

Criteria for selection of DOSTs	Role of DOSTs (Nanban – community volunteer)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in the same geographical area. • Willing to work during the Covid pandemic. • Community member. • Service mindedness. • Acceptability among the community members. • Previous experience in rendering services to the community (but not working with any projects). • Basic literacy and communication skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 20 TG/MSM PLWHIVs who are in need of services. • Participate in training and review meetings organized by the project. • Undertake communication activities with the identified members (physical and virtual). • Execute the planned activities and undertake efforts on the core messages / areas identified. • Undertake activities for improving physical, mental and social well-being. • Provide barefoot counselling for needy. • Initiate activities for improving access to multi-disciplinary care services for TG/MSM PLWHIVs. • Referral, linkages and other support for providing psycho-social support, social protection and livelihood support. • Undertake initiatives for enhancing the Quality of Life of the TG/MSM PLWHIVs. • Coordinate with the local CBO. • And other activities.

Based on the above criteria, the respective CBOs extended support in identifying the DOSTs for engaging in this project to carryout the assigned roles and responsibilities. The overall project plan on engagement of DOSTs and reach are:



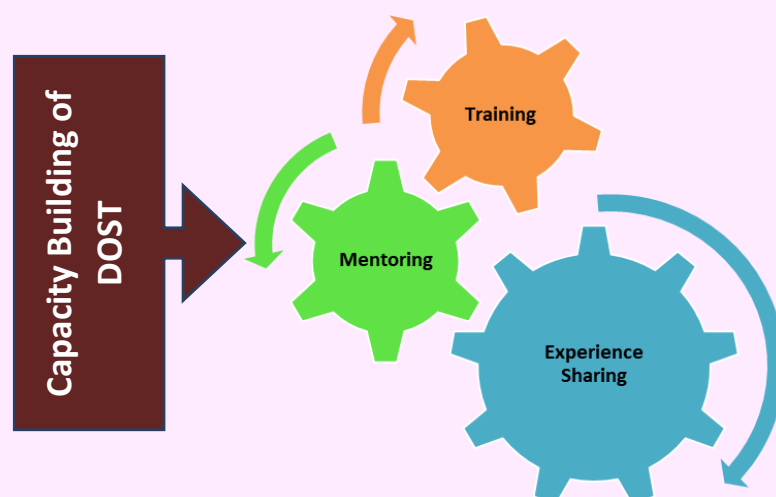
Capacity building of DOSTs: The project team undertaken methodical and tactical efforts in identifying the training needs of the DOST. Based on the capacity building needs identified and project has evolved a comprehensive training plan.

Based on the training plan on: DOSTs were capacitated on the following:

- Induction training for DOSTs on project priorities, role of DOST, approaches, introduction to core messages / areas, reporting requirements, etc for two-days.
- Training on communication skills including Inter-Personal Communication [IPC] – (One-to-one, Group interactions, and Counselling guidance) and use of social media.
- Training on Undetectable = Untransmittable [U=U] along with plans on promoting communication campaign.
- Introductory training on NCD, Opportunistic Infection, Nutrition & Covid & execution plan.
- Training on improving Physical, Mental and Social well-being of TG/MSM PLWHIVs.
- Orientation and experience sharing on psycho-social support, social protection and livelihood support.
- Training on methods of motivating the PLWHIVs to seek treatment and adherence of ART.
- Guidance and plans on promoting the “Ageing with Dignity” and intervention plan for reaching out the young communities.

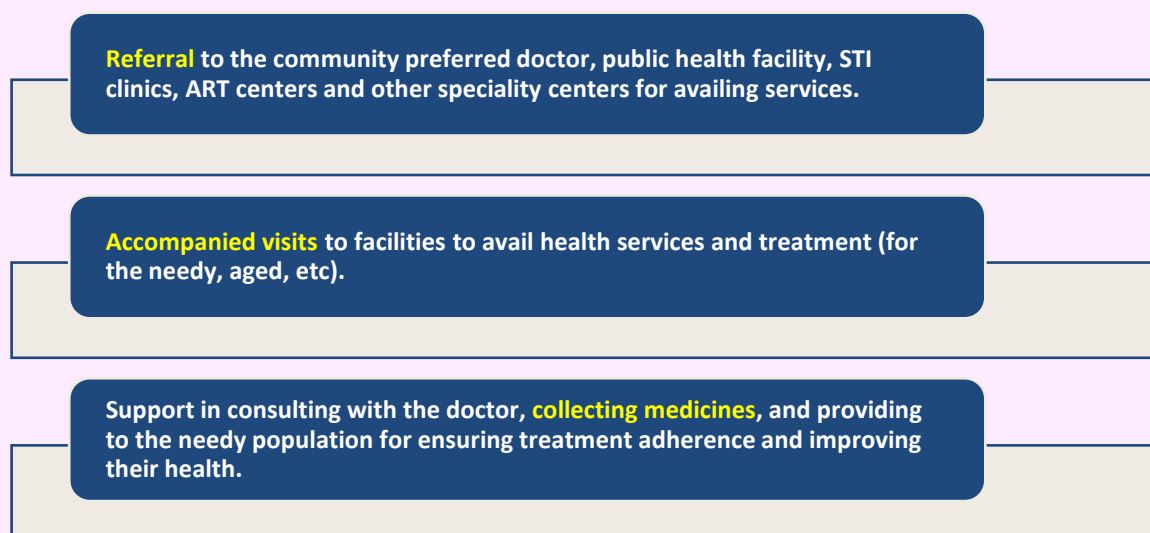
The above training programs has been conducted (virtually – considering Covid-19 pandemic and spread of the intervention area) at regular intervals, in an interactive way supported with experience sharing, question and answer sessions, opportunity to clarify the doubts, etc.

As a follow-up of the training programs, the project has also facilitated the **experience sharing platform** for ensuring technical update, overcoming field level challenges, facilitate for adapting good practices, etc. In addition to the training and experience sharing, the project team has also provided **mentoring** support to the DOST and to the CBO for effective implementation of the project by sustaining the partnerships and engagement of DOST.



Virtual and physical / in-person training: Based on the baseline study recommendations and considering the project priorities, the project facilitated in conducting virtual training on: mental health components, NCDs and methods and plans for sensitization of Lawyers and Health Care Providers. In addition, along with the CBO team, oriented the DOST on: refresher training on Mental Health component, Ageing with Dignity, and young community members. This virtual training followed with physical / in-person training enabled the DOST to understand and carryout the project priorities, related activities and thus contributed for achieving the desired outcome and impact.

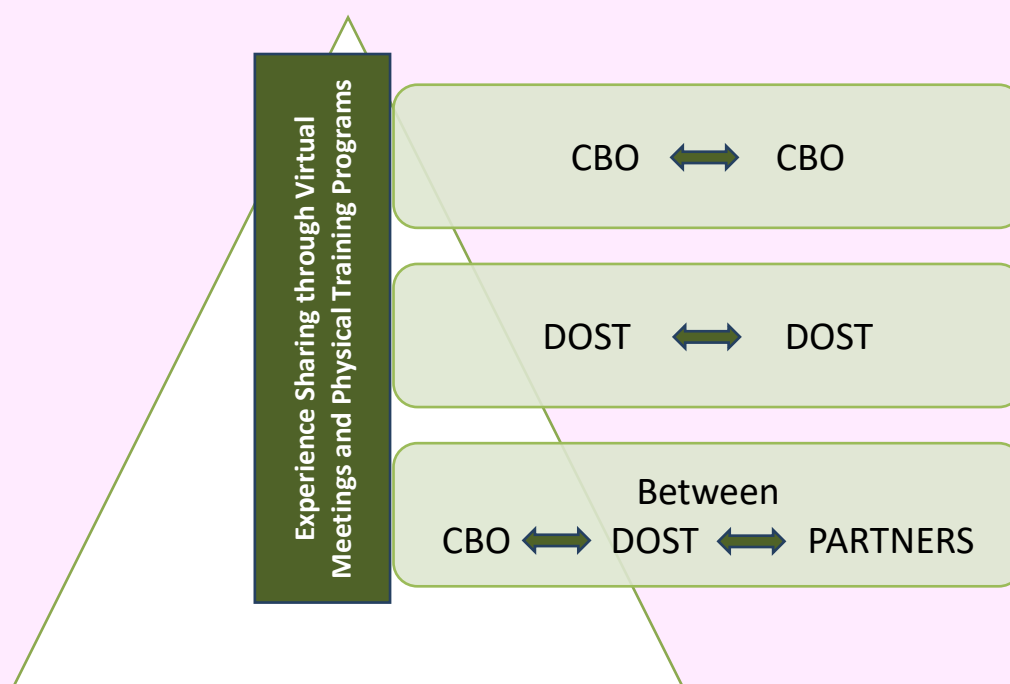
- b. Self-care management training for TG/MSM community:** Many of the TG/MSM community members does not inculcate the habit of personal hygiene and sanitation practices such as: washing clothes, taking bath, cleaning of utensils, cleaning the house, person hygiene practices, consuming timely food, using fresh food, nutritious food, etc. Considering this, the project has undertaken health education through DOST to the TG/MSM community on the need, importance, methods of adhering the self-care management. This health education has been provided in a personalized manner by undertaking home visits and through virtual manner. During the home visits, the DOST has also observed the existing practices and provided suggestions and motivation to improve self-care management practices. In addition to providing basic education and motivation, the DOSTs has also undertaken systematic follow-up for encouraging and sustaining the self-care management practices for leading a healthy and happy life. Also, on need-based, promoted the “*demonstration on preparing nutritious food by using the locally available*” and kitchen garden for promoting vegetables to use as a nutrition as a part of day-to-day life. The video on nutrition has also been shared as a part of the communication for emphasizing on the importance of nutrition and inculcating nutritional habits. Overall, the DOSTs has promoted self-care management among **564** community members.
- c. Community based health camps for TG/MSM people above 40 years:** The project identifying the health needs and planned for community-based health camps. Considering the Covid-19 wave I and II series of lockdowns unable to conduct the community-based health camps. However, the project encouraged the CBO and DOST to extend personalized care and services to the needy by adapting the following approaches:



These approaches helped in ensuring the linkages for the community members to avail health services from the health facility and taking care of their personal health. DOSTs has extended referral to health checkup including availing treatment for **122** community members.

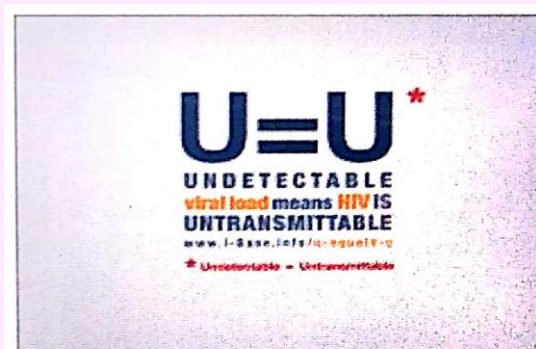
- d. State level TG and MSM communities Convention:** Initially, the project has planned for conducting the State level TG/MSM PLWHIV Convention for facilitating in providing additional knowledge, experience sharing, networking of community members, developing plans for sustained efforts, etc. Considering the Covid-19 wave I and II and series of lockdowns, the project unable to conduct the State level TG/MSM PLWHIV Convention as envisaged. However, the project with the support of CBO and DOST, has undertaken the efforts for facilitating experience sharing and technical updates through ongoing virtual programs.

Adapted following efforts through the ongoing virtual and physical training programs for ensuring experience sharing, learning from each other and enhanced their knowledge:



e. Campaign on U=U among TG/MSM PLWHIV:

People cannot pass HIV through sex when they have undetectable levels of HIV. This prevention method is estimated to be 100% effective as long as the person living with HIV takes their medication as prescribed and gets and stays undetectable. This concept known as Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U). Considering this, the project has undertaken campaign on U=U by using social media.



Engagement of celebrities in the U=U Campaign: In the U=U Campaign, the project has engaged the celebrities such as: film celebrities, TV serial actors, popular writers, sports celebrities, community leaders, etc. The project involved **6 celebrities and 3 community members** for spreading awareness on U=U through videos.

Purpose of involving celebrities:

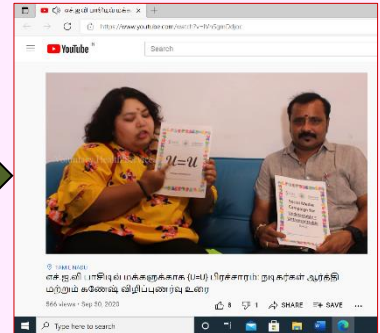
- Retention of viewers and messages
- Effective reach
- Getting more viewership
- Eliminating stigma and discrimination
- Communicating by involving acceptable celebrities
- Enable the viewers to view the entire video and understand the messages
- Motivates to share with other members in WhatsApp groups
- Reinforcement of messages through various celebrities by avoiding monotony and message fatigue

This has helped in ensuring better reach with greater acceptance supported with reinforcement of messages and reminder.

Snapshot of YouTube Video Series on U=U:



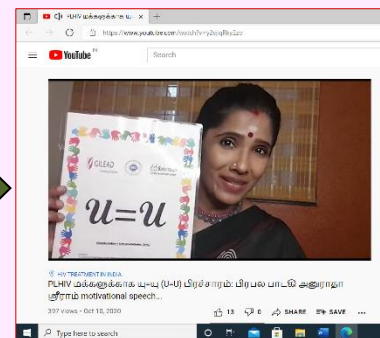
<https://youtu.be/lVhSgmDdjoc>



**Mr Ganeshkar, Comedy Actor
Mrs Aarthi Ganeshkar, Film Actress**



<https://youtu.be/y2qIqRky2zo>



Mrs Anuradha Sriram, Playback Singer



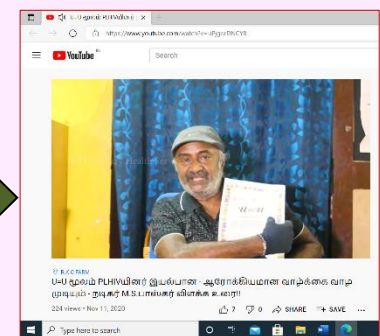
<https://youtu.be/iyiAMWvtHTQ>



Mr A Jaya, GM, SAHODARAN



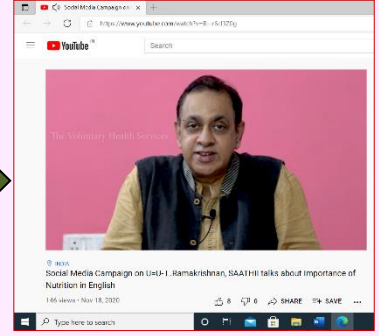
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Mr M S Bhaskar, Film Actor



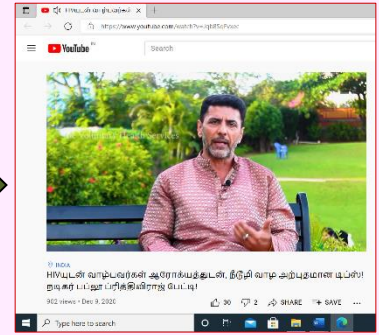
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Dr L Ramakrishnan, SAATHI



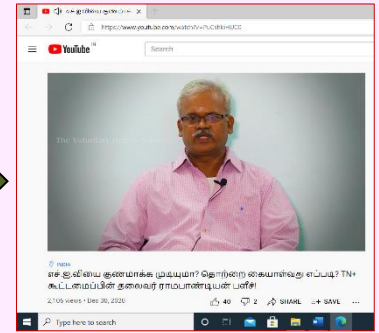
<https://youtu.be/lqb8SqFvxec>



Mr Babloo Prithiveeraj, Film Actor



<https://youtu.be/PuCshkiHUC0>



**Dr Ramapandian
Tamilnadu Network of Positive People**



<https://youtu.be/EvBD0dp9EN0>



**Dr N Kumarasamy
Chief & Director, VHS-IDMC**

- f. **Capacity building of mental health professionals:** Initially, the project planned for capacity building of mental health professionals. Considering the Covid-19 situation, the project has evolved an alternative plan of engaging DOST as “Barefoot Counsellors”.

The existing DOSTs were trained as Barefoot Counsellors and engaged in providing basic counselling on mental health to the needy in the intervention area. As a follow-up of the Barefoot Counselling, the DOSTs referred the needy, to the specialized services as per the requirements.

Capacity building of DOSTs as "Barefoot Counsellors"

Reading and reference materials on mental health and counselling

Integrating / addressing mental health issues by DOSTs

Identification and personalized meeting with mental health professionals by CBOs and DOSTs and enlisted their support

Referral and linkage to the mental health professionals and other facilities as per needs

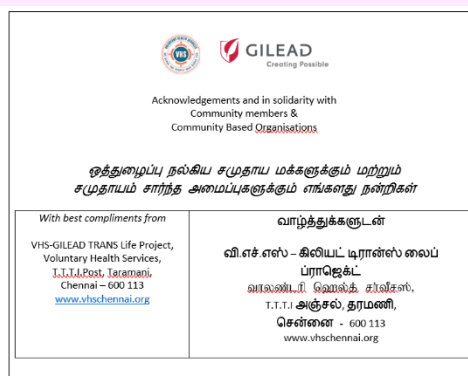
This has contributed for availability of Barefoot Counsellors for addressing the immediate needs and referral and linkages with the mental health professional. In addition to this, CBOs and DOSTs has also identified the mental health professionals available in the intervention area and developed partnerships for utilization of their services.

- g. **Distribution of “Dry Ration” for needy TG/MSM PLWHIV:** During the Covid-19 pandemic, the project has undertaken efforts for distribution of “Dry Ration” for needy TG/MSM by adapting the following approaches:

Distribution of “Dry Ration” by the project:

- Development of broad guidelines for distribution of dry ration.
- Discussions with the CBOs and DOSTs on:
 - community needs and requirements for providing as a part of dry ration
 - estimation of number of TG/MSM in need of dry ration
 - possible mechanisms to distribution without duplication and ensuring to provide to the right person, etc.
- Developed a list of 17 items along with re-usable bag for providing to the needy (i.e.):
 - 14 items as a part of dry ration including rice, groceries, etc.
 - 3 items of sanitizer / health kit
- Developed supply chain management for providing to the CBO and distribution management system to the needy.
- Distributed dry ration to **511 needy TG/MSM PLWHIV members** through CBOs/DOSTs in covering seven (7) districts.
- Monitored the distribution and collected the information on the distribution.

- 17 items
- Including groceries and health kit
- Distributed to the needy and aged TG/MSM communities
- Distributed / handed over at doorsteps during Covid-19 in the midst of lock down
- Community members extended help along with the DOSTs in distribution by sparing their vehicles (two-wheelers)
- Branded the bag
- Providing to 511 TG/MSM communities as a part of project
- Locally mobilized and provided the groceries (around 970 – Rs. 4,86,500/-)
- Provided food packets to the needy through local mobilization (more than 4,000 packets including providing on regular basis)



Mobilization and distribution of “Dry Ration” by the CBO / DOST: In addition to the distribution of dry ration by the project, encouraged the CBO and DOST to leverage / mobilise possible dry ration / other materials to the needy. The CBOs and DOST has undertaken efforts and mobilized the materials for distribution to the needy.

The details on the tentative resources mobilized and distribution are:

Details	Amount value (Rough estt.)	No. of persons benefited
Groceries, utensils, health kit, food, etc.	Rs. 4,86,500/-	970 (including the TG/MSM PLWHIV community members associated with the project and other needy TG/MSM community members.

The dry ration was provided to TG/MSM PLWHIV communities including aged, PLWHIV, person with illness, dependent on others, and other needy in the intervention area. In addition to this, facilitated regular provision of food packets to the deserving TG/MSM PLWHIV community members.

- h. **Livelihood support for TG/MSM community on sanitizer as per WHO guidelines:** The project encouraged, guided and facilitated the CBOs and DOSTs to undertake livelihood support by ensuring referral and linkages with government welfare schemes, corporates, and other organizations. The CBOs and DOSTs identified the needy and facilitated for **556** TG/MSM PLWHIV community members in availing the livelihood support. Some of the livelihood support provided and arranged by the project for the community members will *include*: opening of bank account, promoting savings, enrolment into SHG groups, arranging loans to community members through SHGs, facilitated small loans through banks for undertaken small scale business / income generation activities, etc. In addition to arranging livelihood support for the community members, the team has also extended needed guidance, motivation and other follow-up support.
- i. **Distribution of Hygiene Kits to the needy community:** During this Covid-19 pandemic situation, DOSTs has undertaken awareness building, promoting knowledge and skills on prevention of Covid and motivated to adhere safe prevention methods. The project supported and facilitated the provision of hygiene kits including handwash soap, re-usable / washable mask, hand sanitizer, etc.:



Overall, this project has undertaken all possible efforts to provide hygiene kits to **605 primary target groups** and also to the other TG/MSM PLWHIV communities.

1.13.3. Objective 2: Improve access to multi-disciplinary care services for TG/MSM PLWHIV by 50% (from baseline):

Key activities undertaken for achieving the objectives are:

- a. **Sensitization to non-health experts and other key stakeholders:** The baseline study recommended on the need for sensitizing the non-health experts and other key stakeholders. Initially, it was planned to conduct physical sensitization program. Considering the Covid-19, this activity has been undertaken only through personalized visits and face-to-face interactions. In this regard, the project had consultations with the communities and undertaken efforts such as:

- Sensitized the community preferred lawyers available in the intervention area
- Contacted, communicated and interacted with key officials in Revenue and Social Welfare department
- Sensitized the elected body representatives in the rural and urban areas (wherever required)
- Sensitized the faith leaders, opinion leaders, SHG women leaders, field level outreach team involved in health and social welfare programs and other stakeholders in the intervention area.

This face-to-face / one-to-one interaction has contributed for enlisting the support of non-health experts and other key stakeholders for availing needed support and creating an enabling environment.

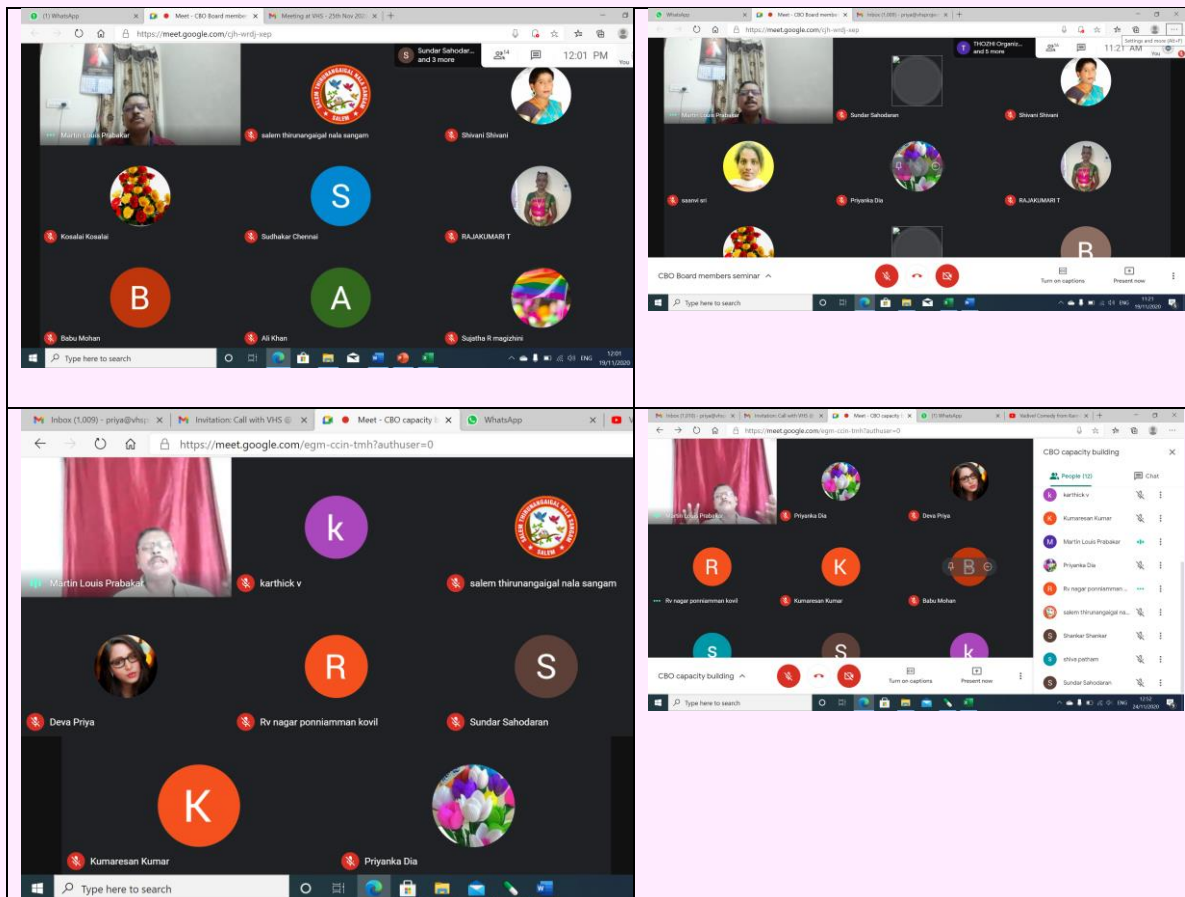
- b. **Capacity building and system strengthening for TG/MSM CBOs:** The project has undertaken utmost effort in engaging the CBO in the entire lifetime of the project. Efforts has been made to capacitate the CBOs through virtually on the following:

- Mental health components
- NCDs
- Methods and plans for sensitization of Lawyers and Health Care Providers
- Leadership and Governance for CBO leaders
- Orientation on Stigma Index Tool for TGs

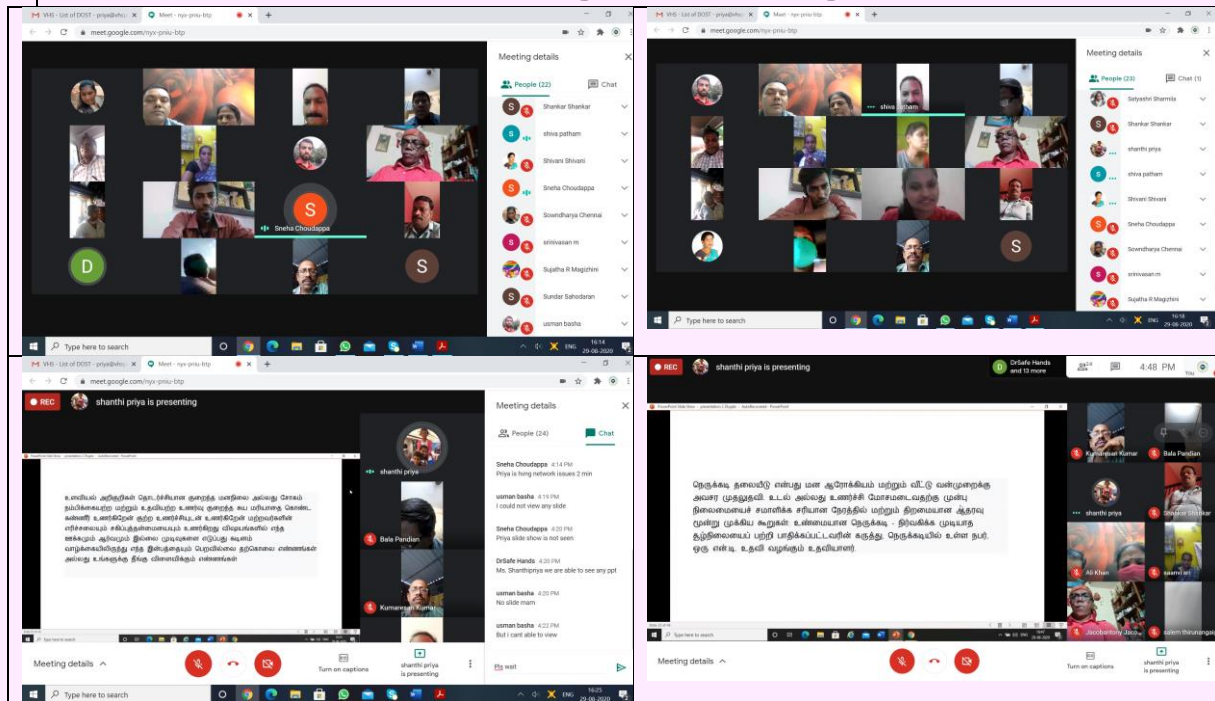


As a part of the capacity building of CBOs, the board members have also been provided in-person training on: Refresher training on Mental Health component, Ageing with Dignity, and young community members. The project enhanced the capacity of **12 CBOs, 1 ICN and 36 board of members**.

In addition to the above capacity building initiatives undertaken by the project, CBO representative participated and benefited through all the training programs planned and conducted for DOST. This comprehensive training has helped in coordinating the response and enhancing the capacities and engagement of CBOs.



Virtual training via Google Meet



Physical / face-to-face trainings



- c. **Developing Quality of Life Index Tool (QoLIT) for HIV positive TG/MSM community:** The project significantly contributed for the development of **Model Quality of Life Index Tool for TGs** through a consultative process and standardize the tools. This QoL Index Tool for TGs is first of its kind in India and piloted through the project in regional language. This standardized tool can be adapted by any organization in the entire country by translating the same. The partnering CBOs and the DOSTs has also been provided with QoL Index Tool for TGs supported with orientation on how to use this tool. The CBOs were requested to use this Tool for TGs in the geographical area for identifying the existing QoL and evolving plans for enhancing the QoL. This tool is primarily developed with 32 questions covering about yourself and questions related to QoL.
- d. **Linkages for social protection / psycho-social support:** Baseline study has strongly recommended on the need for helping them to avail Civic IDs through the Department of Social Welfare. In this regard, the project has undertaken the efforts such as:
- Circulated and shared the guidelines for obtaining Civic IDs along with formats, contact details and process associated with.
 - The CBOs and DOSTs were also provided with needed information on the same during the monthly virtual meetings to enable them to understand and help the needy.
 - The DOSTs identified the people those who are in need of Civic IDs and extended intensive support to enable everyone to apply for obtaining Civic ID cards.
 - DOSTs with the support of CBO has also undertaken efforts for engaging the stakeholders and mobilize their support for obtaining the Civic ID cards and other social welfare schemes.
 - Through a process, the project has contributed for guiding, referring and linkage with social protection for **777** TG/MSMs
 - The project has capacitated 12 CBOs, 1 ICN and 30 DOSTs for continue to support in promoting social protection for TG/MSM population in the intervention area during the project period and beyond lifetime of project period.
 - This linkage with social protection has contributed for enhancing their income, availing their rights and eligibilities, improving the quality of life, etc.

Developed linkages for social protection:

- Revenue department
- Social welfare department
- Health and Family Welfare department
- Department of Co-operation, Food and Consumer Protection
- Transport department
- And other departments

Social protection initiatives will include:

- ID card – Aadhar card, voter ID
- Ration card
- Health Insurance membership card
- TG Welfare Board membership card
- Free bus pass
- Old age pension
- Covid-19 relief amount for ration card holders (Rs. 2,000 – two times)
- Free ration items provided by the government as a part of Covid relief
- Social welfare schemes
- Certificate for declaring as Transgender (by ensuring the guidelines)
- And others

In addition to the linkage with social protection, the DOSTs has facilitated in providing psycho-social support for 2,234 individuals.

Overall, these initiatives has contributed to improve access to multi-disciplinary care services for TG/MSM PLWHIV without middle-man. In addition, community members were empowered to help their own community members to avail social protection based on the eligibilities.

1.13.4. Objective 3: Reduce stigma and discrimination of TG/MSM communities by 25% (from baseline):

Key activities undertaken for achieving the objectives are:

- a. **Sensitization of Lawyers on legal issues affecting the community:** A sensitization session on the role of legal fraternity in upholding transpersons' legal rights. This sensitization program has been organized for engaging and sensitizing the young lawyers for extending support in addressing the legal issues addressing the TG/MSM community.

Need for engaging young lawyers	Key Stakeholders involved in lawyers' sensitization	Sensitization focused on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy accessible • Possible for long-term engagement • Willing to support • Less fee / free services • Easy approach with involvement • Understanding the community problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar Council • Tamil Nadu Women Lawyers' Association • Lawyers • CBOs • Community trainer (Thirunangai Satyashri Sharmila) • VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project • Sriraksha organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding TG/MSM community problems and needs • Major legal issues / problems faced by TG/MSM communities • Legal provisions / legal solutions for the common legal issues of TGs/MSMs. • Role of young lawyers.

Through this process of sensitization program, **more than 150 lawyers** (young aspirants, including community preferred lawyers) have participated and benefited. These lawyers has agreed to extend support in addressing the TG/MSM community legal issues. The project facilitated and shared the district wise list of lawyers with CBOs in the intervention areas and in other areas for availing the services of the sensitized lawyers.

The project also shared related reference materials, documents, copy of the bills, etc with lawyers for their ready reference and support to the community members on request. These sensitized lawyers will be available for supporting the legal issues of the TG/MSM community on long-term basis by ensuring consistent networking and relationships.

- b. **Sensitization of non-health personnel:** The project has identified the needs and undertaken efforts for sensitizing the non-health personnel such as: SHG women, opinion leaders, faith leaders, development department officials, outreach workers associated with development departments (serving in rural and urban areas) and others. The project provided needed

Voluntary Health Services & Sriraksha (A wing of MLA)
Jointly Organizes
A Special Session on
Role of Legal Fraternity in upholding Transpersons' legal rights
GUEST SPEAKERS

Mrs. Adhilakshmi Legamurthy
Advocate / Social Activist
Hony. Director, Sriraksha

'Kalaimaamani' Thirunangai Sudha

Thirunangai Satyashri Sharmila
India's First Transgender Lawyer

Dr. Joseph D Williams
Project Director

Dr. A Vijayaraman
Programme Lead

31-10-2020 (Saturday) 3.00 to 5.00 pm
WhatsApp message your details for registration
+91 98410 14926

guidance to the CBOs and DOSTs and encouraged them to sensitize the non-health personnel for enlisting their support to link with services, avail social welfare programs, etc. This sensitization program undertaken at the intervention level has also contributed in creating an enabling environment and mobilizing the support of key stakeholders and officials. This informal sensitization program has been undertaken by team of members covering CBO and DOSTs in each intervention area.

- c. **Capacity building of TG/MSM community as “Barefoot Counsellors”:** Developed the DOST as “Barefoot Counsellors” by ensuring capacity building. DOSTs were provided with intensive training and interactions with mental health professionals / medical psychiatrists. This training, interactions and experience sharing enabled the DOST to integrate and undertake systematic efforts in providing need-based basic counselling services to the TG/MSM community members in the intervention area. This has contributed for availability of “Barefoot Counsellors” for addressing the immediate needs and referral and linkages with the mental health professional. The project capacitated **30 DOSTs, 24 CBO members on “Barefoot Counselling”**. The DOSTs trained on “Barefoot Counselling” has established relationship and partnerships with mental health professionals available in the intervention area, facilitating referrals, undertaking follow-up and ensuring coordinated efforts in addressing the mental health issues of the TG/MSM community members.

Barefoot Counselling training focused on:

- *Understanding mental health issues on community members*
- *Various types of mental health issues*
- *How to identify people with mental illness (including suicidal tendency)*
- *Possible immediate help / basic counselling*
- *Services available for mental illness*
- *Role of DOST in helping the people with mental illness*
- *And other related topics*

In addition to this training, these DOSTs were provided with special training on mental health, ageing with dignity, psycho-social support, etc.

1.13.5. Other activities:

- a. **Covid-19:** The project has undertaken various strategic efforts for communicating with the people in creating awareness on Covid-19, promoting safe preventive practices, sustaining such safe practices, identifying and referring person at risk for testing, providing education and care for the Covid-19 positive patients, motivating for vaccination, etc among TG/MSM PLWHIV community members.

Trained DOSTs has undertaken efforts in an integrated manner and provided education and awareness on Covid-19 supported with demonstrations on use of mask, methods of washing hands, etc. The video developed on Covid-19 – Washing of hands, Ghana song on usage of mask, etc has also been used as a part of the social media campaign for promoting awareness and inculcating the habit of adherence of safe preventive practice. The project also promoted the “SMS” for preventing the Covid-19.

“SMS” for Covid-19 prevention:

- S - Sanitizing*
Soap for handwashing
- M - Mask Usage*
- S - Social Distancing*

Key activities on Covid-19:

- Awareness on safe preventive methods
- Demonstration of use of masks, hand sanitizing and hand wash
- Distribution of mask
- Use of videos on Covid-19 – Washing of hands, Ghana song on usage of mask
- E-Posters on Covid-19 covering all prevention methods including use of mask, social distance, sanitizing, hand washing, etc.

- Referral for Covid-19 screening camps (need based)
- Nutritional / food support for community members those were on quarantine
- Referral for admission in hospitals for community members tested positive on Covid-19 for availing treatment
- Basic education / guidance for care givers
- Nutritional tips for improving immune system
- Free food packets for care givers & communities those who were on quarantine
- And other strategic efforts

These CBOs and DOSTs also collaborated with primary health centers, urban health centers and other government / government related institutions in conducting Covid-19 awareness camps, support in referring people for Covid-19 screening, etc. The project mobilized and distributed **4,000 N95 masks** and **3,000 three-layered masks** to the community members and inculcated the habit of using mask on regular basis to prevent from Covid-19.

b. Linkage with the TI program:

**Re-enrolment of
community members in TI**

- The project has contributed for re-enrolment of the community members in the ongoing Targeted Intervention program to continue to benefit from STI/HI/AIDS prevention program. Overall, the project facilitated for **re-enrolment of 41 community members** in the TI program.

**Enrolment of
young community members in TI**

- DOST has undertaken efforts in identifying the young community members to provide services. In addition to providing services, DOST has also undertaken efforts in educating, motivating and referring to TI program to avail services on STI/HIV/AIDS on regular basis. Overall, **22 young community members** have been linked with STI/HIV/AIDS program.

- c. Media Coordination:** The project team developed a media coordination plan and identified the team of journalist / media professional involved in health programs. Networked these journalists / media professionals at state and district level. These network members were informed and availed their support for publishing information about the project activities with the intention to: create visibility for the project, sharing experiences for similar organizations to replicate, develop positive opinion among the public on TG/MSM communities, etc. Involvement of media has been undertaken in a limited way considering the Covid-19.

SAFETY FIRST

Hosp, NGO work to fight HIV among transgenders

OMJASVIN M D @ Chennai

HIV remains a major public health concern in India though effective prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care are available, as awareness is low. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Tamil Nadu is among the eight states in India that had more than one lakh HIV cases in 2017.

The WHO, in its 2020 report, said intervention must focus on populations left-behind and those who are at an increased risk of contracting HIV. Taking a cue from this, the Voluntary Health Services (VHS) hospital at Tharamani, Chennai, along with Sahodaran, a social services NGO, launched a campaign sponsored by GILEAD Sciences, an American research firm. The campaign aims to raise awareness on HIV, precautions, diagnosis and treatment in transgender people.

Dr Joseph D Williams, director - projects, VHS, said the campaign is named 'U=U, undetectable is equal to un-transmissible'. "It means when the HIV viral load becomes undetectable, it becomes un-transmissible, so a person would no longer be able to sexually transmit the virus," he explained.

"A person achieves U=U when they have a viral load of less than 200 copies of HIV per ml of blood. This can be achieved through adherence to long-term treatment of antiretroviral therapy," said Dr Williams, adding that this is the message they want to send out. He further said the hospital focused on spreading awareness among trans-

gender people as they are at a high risk due to their psychosocial background.

(For the full story, visit newindianexpress.com)



Dr Joseph D Williams

The New Indian Express
31st January 2021

VHS helps elderly transpersons during pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The COVID-19 pandemic had taken a toll on 43-year-old Roopakala, known as Kala Amma, a transperson from Washermenpet, as she was depressed due to unemployment. However, help came in the form of young members from her community, trained by the Voluntary Health Services (VHS), who counselled her and helped her recover.

"I run the Roopakala Tiffin Centre in Washermenpet.

But during the pandemic, I did not have any income. The volunteers from VHS gave me courage and hope. Today, I am earning ₹300 per day and I am sure I will be earning more in the future," she said.

Over 400 people

More than 400 transpersons in six districts - Chennai, Vellore, Salem, Madurai, Pudukottai and Tiruvallur - were helped under the VHS - Gilead TRANS Life project. "During the COVID-19 pan-

demic, the elderly transpersons were affected and suffered from stress, anxiety and depression due to various issues, such as loss of income and diminished social support. We imparted mental health-related counselling to a select group of transpersons who, in turn, provided psychosocial support to the affected communities," said Joseph D. Williams, director, Projects, VHS.

A. Vijayaraman, programme director, VHS, said

they trained 25 young members of the trans community. "The trained volunteers visited elderly transpersons and provided them with necessary care and help. This helped them tide over their struggle. This initiative has been going on for the past five months," he added.

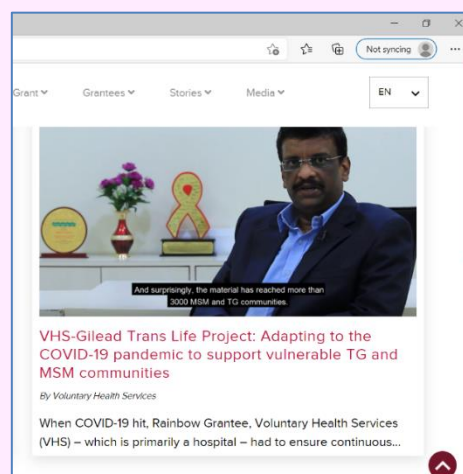
Besides, they were provided with assistance to avail themselves of social welfare schemes. "We also provided all of them with dry ration kits, which had 30 products," he said.

The Hindu
20th February 2021

- d. **Video Documentation:** The project has developed a video documentation on “Adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic to support Vulnerable TG and MSM Communities. The same is available in the following link:

[Stories : GILEAD: HIV Support Grants \(gileadrainbowgrant.com\)](https://gileadrainbowgrant.com/stories)

This video has captured the key features of the project and being disseminated to NGOs/CBOs, consultants and others to learn and adapt.



- e. **Helpline:** DOSTs promoted a dedicated **Helpline number 9013262626** for enabling the community members to seek for additional information, basic counselling, career guidance, Covid-19 related information, welfare schemes, and other details. This information and motivation enabled the community members to obtain needed right information from the experts / counsellors as and when needed.

In addition to the dedicated helpline number, the DOSTs has also shared and provided information on the following helplines on need based to seek any additional and specialized information:

• POLICE	100
• COVID - 19	1075 (OR) 011-23978046
• WOMEN HELPLINE	1091
• DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE PREVENTION	104 (or) 8526565656
• STI/HIV/AIDS	1097
• DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE – WOMEN HELPLINE	181

The DOSTs provided the basic awareness on the needed area on need based encouraged for availing more information through helpline. Primarily, the referral to helpline will include: Covid-19, women helpline, depression and suicidal prevention, STI/HIV/AIDS, de-addiction centers, etc. In addition, the DOSTs has also provided local police station numbers and woman police patrol numbers for any emergency purposes. This referral has enabled overall **1,011** community members benefitting through the helplines established through the project. In addition, the community members were also referred and encouraged to contact other helplines as per the requirements.

- f. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The project strongly believes in ensuring the systematic monitoring and evaluation system in the project. As a part of the M&E system, the project has undertaken the efforts for timely implementation of the activities, monitoring the progress, conducting monthly review meetings, identifying the gaps / undertaking mid-course corrections, reviewing and providing feedback on the reports received, developing and submission of reports to the donor, documentation on the activities, undertaking end of evaluation, etc. Project Director of VHS Projects Division conducts monthly review meeting and undertake the follow-up on the decisions taken and provided strategic guidance to the team for successful roll-out of the activities for achieving the desired results. This coordinated monitoring and evaluation systems has contributed for achieving the indicators as envisaged in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic / lockdown.

Limitations of the project:

- The project initially planned for 12 months, considering the Covid-19 pandemic including Waves I and II, the project necessitated to extend the activities for 18 months.
- The project intensified the activities for 9 months and accomplished the planned activities and contributed for achieving the objectives.
- Utilized / adapted more virtual platform for facilitating the capacity building, experience sharing and technical update initiatives.

Chapter 2: VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project – End of Evaluation (EoE)

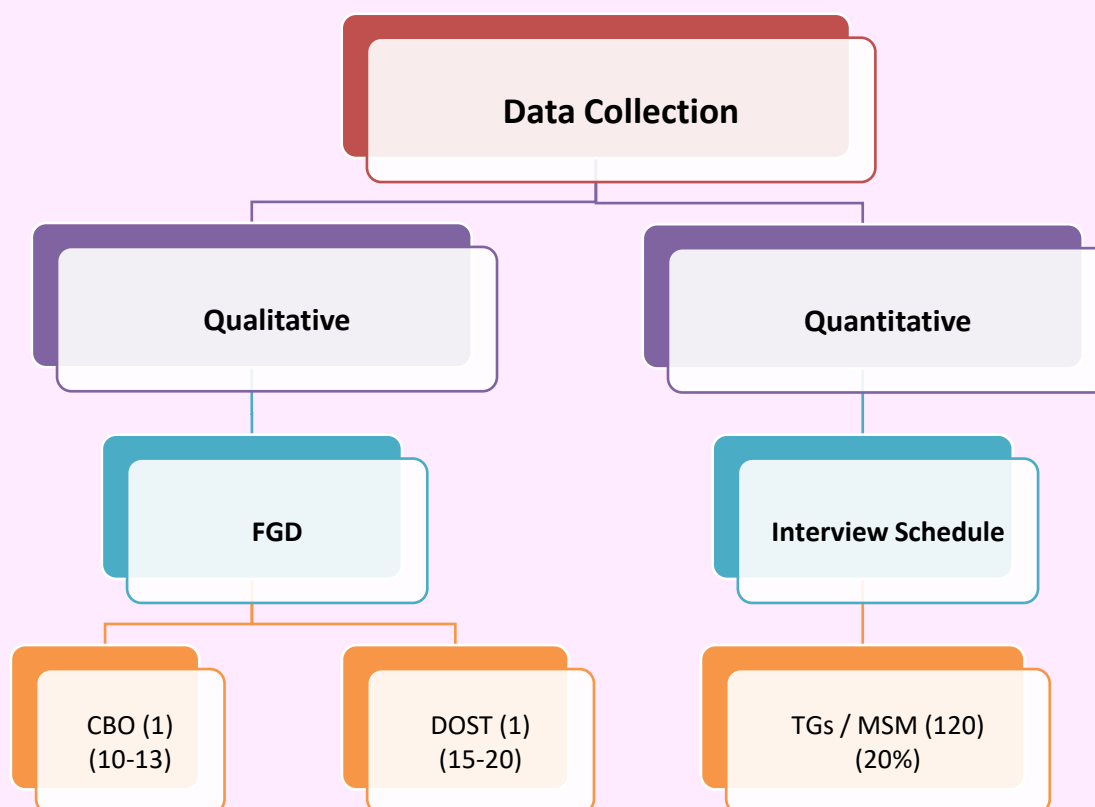
VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has been implemented for the period from April 2020 to September 2021 (with intensive interventions during July 2020 to January 2021 and July to August 2021) with the support of Gilead Sciences, Inc. - Gilead Rainbow Grant in seven districts in close coordination and collaboration with 12 CBOs and 1 ICN by engaging 30 DOSTs and the project aimed at enhancing the Quality of Life of TG/MSM PLWHIV community. Considering the new initiative, it is planned to undertake End of Evaluation (EoE) of the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project. The End of Evaluation methodology and study plan are provided in this chapter.

2.1. Evaluation Purpose

- To establish and document the impact and effectiveness of the project interventions.
- To identify best practices and learnings for dissemination, replication, scaling-up, etc.
- To evolve recommendations to guide for future programming.

2.2. Methodologies

End of Evaluation has been conducted by adapting the following primary methodologies (including qualitative and quantitative methods) and other aspects including desk review, secondary literature, collection of feedbacks from the partners / stakeholders, etc:



Other methodologies will includes: desk review, secondary literature, collection of feedbacks from the partners / stakeholders, etc.

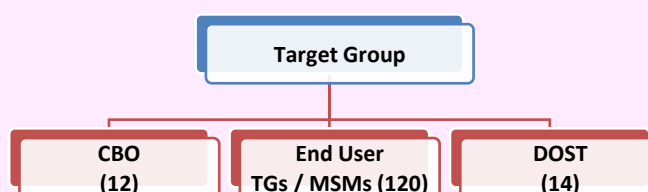
The FGDs has been conducted among the following groups by using Random Sampling Methods:

Category	Number	Number participated
FGDs:		
FGD with CBO	1	12
FGD with DOST	1	14
Total number (qualitative sample)	2	26
Interview Schedule:		
Data collection from TG/MSM community members (20% of target population)		120
Total (qualitative and quantitative)		146

2.3. Sampling for evaluation

For conducting End of Evaluation, the team considered the primary target group such as:

- CBOs – served as partners / collaborators in implementation of the program.
- DOST – instrumental in reaching out the community members by ensuring specific roles and responsibilities.
- End Users – the target community members who has benefited through the intervention.



2.4. Tools

FGD Tools: The team has conducted the FGD with the respective stakeholders / sampling planned. The details on the **FGD Tools** used in the respective FGDs as a part of **Qualitative Study** are:

- FGD Tools (DOST):** The team has developed FGD guidelines and conducted one (1) FGD with DOSTs involved as outreach team in the project. The FGD guidelines primarily focused on: basic profile, opinion on serving as DOST, efforts undertaken to improve the capacity of DOST, competencies developed, opinion and acceptability among community members for DOST, social media usage and usefulness, contributions for improvement of QoL, existence of stigma and discrimination, reaching out to young communities and services, plans to continue the services as DOST beyond the lifetime of the project and suggestions for improving the QoL if TG/MSM community members in future.
- FGD Tools (CBOs):** The team has developed FGD guidelines and conducted one (1) FGD with CBOs who has served as partners / collaborators in implementation of the program and extended support in engaging DOST and reaching out the desired targeted population. The FGD guidelines primarily focused on: basic profile, partnership in the project activities, core messages / areas, capacity building, role of DOST, usage of social media campaign, contributions of the project for improving QoL, usefulness of U=U campaign, development of competencies, existence of stigma and discrimination, opinion and usefulness of “Dry Ration”,

usefulness of sensitizing non-health functionaries, performances of the DOST, suggestions for undertaking to improve the QoL of community members in future and other related details.

Interview Schedule: The team has developed interview schedule along with open-ended and closed-ended questions for collection information from TG/MSM community members. The interview schedule has also been pre-tested, improved based on the pre-testing and used for data collection. The tool has been developed in Tamil considering the familiarity of the interviewers and the community members. However, the same has been translated in English for reporting purposes without diluting the messages collected. The team involved for collecting data has also been trained and engaged in collecting data.

2.5. Data collection

Quantitative Study: The team has collected data from 120 respondents (about 20% of the sample size). The collected data were coded, tabulated, analysed and developed report on the findings. This study has helped in identifying the reach, usefulness, suggestions for follow-up, etc.

Qualitative Study: Overall, 26 respondents participated covering two (2) FGDs. Participants for these FGDs has been selected on Random Sampling Method. Conducted two (2) FGDs using the FGD guidelines.

2.6. Presentation plan

The End of Evaluation study report is presented in the succeeding chapters. The same has been presented along with data analysis of qualitative and quantitative study, findings, recommendations, limitations, etc.

2.7. Limitations

The study has been conducted with qualitative and quantitative methods. The limitations of the study will include:

- Considering the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown with travel restrictions, the team has not undertaken observation visits to the field and interact with key stakeholders such as: development department officials, non-health professionals, health care providers, counsellors, etc.

Chapter 3: Data Analysis

3.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The team has undertaken quantitative study by using interview schedule. Developed interview schedule in Tamil, pre-tested and used for data collection. The investigators were trained on collecting data using interview schedule. Collected data were coded, tabulated, analyzed and presented in this chapter:

Part 1: Personal details:

Profile of respondents: Through interview schedule, profile of the participants such as: age, educational status, occupation, resident type, living area, mobile phone & internet usage, social media access, HIV status, monthly income and other related details were collected as a part of the study. The details on the profile analysis are given below:

Table 1: Age of the respondents:

SN	Age group	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Amongst 120 respondents, 29.17% of the respondents are falls in 26-35 age group, 25.83% are in the age group of 36-45, equal % (20%) of the respondents are in the age group of 19-25 and 46-55, and only 5% of them falls in the age group of 56 and above. Overall, 55% of them are in the age group of 26-45. It is also observed that, about 20% of the respondents are in the age group of 19-25 and these young communities are also reached through the interventions.
1	19-25	24	20.00	
2	26-35	35	29.17	
3	36-45	31	25.83	
4	46-55	24	20.00	
5	56 and above	6	5.00	
Total		120	100.00	

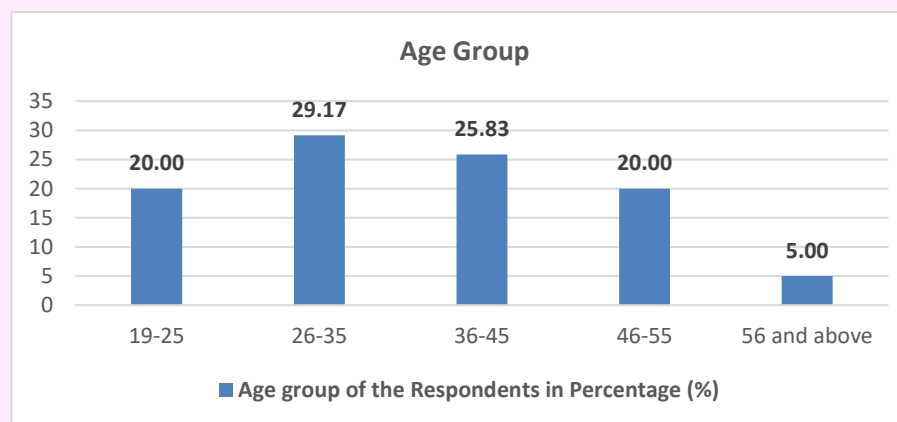


Table 2: Education:

SN	Education	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Majority of the respondents, 45% are with education of upto 8 th Std., 40.83% of them are between 9-12 th Std, 10% of them are with nursing or other specialized courses, beautician course, tailoring, etc., remaining 4.17% of the respondents includes 1.67% illiterates and 2.50 % of Degree / Polytechnic / ITI. Overall, 99% of them are having basic education either upto 8 th Std., or upto 12 th Std.
1	Illiterate	2	1.67	
2	Upto 8 th Std	54	45.00	
3	9 th to 12 th Std	49	40.83	
4	Degree / Polytechnic / ITI	3	2.50	
5	Post-Graduation	-	-	
6	Nursing or other specialized courses, beautician course, tailoring, etc.	12	10.00	
	Total	120	100.00	

Table 3: Occupation:

SN	Occupation	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Amongst 120 respondents, majority of 61.67% of the respondents are involved in daily wages, 20.83% are involved in temporary / part time work and the remaining 17.5% of the respondents are only with monthly salaried (3.3%), self-employed or business (9.17%), not having any job (3.33%) and remaining 1.67% of them are pursuing their studies. It is evident from the analysis that, majority of the community members are daily wages, part time work, etc.
1	Daily wages / earners	74	61.67	
2	Temporary / Part time work	25	20.83	
3	Monthly salaried	4	3.33	
4	Self-employed / business	11	9.17	
5	No job	4	3.33	
6	Pursuing studies	2	1.67	
	Total	120	100.00	

Table 4: Individual monthly income (average):

SN	Individual Monthly Income	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Amongst 120 respondents, majority of the respondents 50.83% are earning between 5,001-10,000 pm as income, 30.83% of the respondents are earning only upto 5,000 pm, 15% of them are earning between 10,001-15,000 pm and remaining 3.33% of them are earning 15,001-20,000 pm. Overall, 81.66% of them are earning only less than 10,000 pm.
1	Upto 5,000 pm	37	30.83	
2	5,001 – 10,000 pm	61	50.83	
3	10,001 – 15,000 pm	18	15.00	
4	15,001 – 20,000 pm	4	3.33	
5	20,001 – 25,000 pm	-	-	
6	Above 25,000 pm	-	-	
	Total	120	100.00	

Table 5: Type of residence:

SN	Type of residence	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Majority of the respondents 59.17% of them are living in the rental house, 21.67% of them are staying with their Gurus, 10.83% of the respondents are staying with the friend, 5% of them are living in their own house and remaining very minimal 3.33% of them are staying with their family.
1	Own house	6	5.00	
2	Rental	71	59.17	
3	Staying with Friend	13	10.83	
4	Staying with Family	4	3.33	
5	Staying with Guru	26	21.67	
Total		120	100.00	

Table 6: Living area:

SN	Living area	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Amongst 120 respondents, majority of the respondents (74.17%) are living in urban areas, 15% of them are residing at rural areas and 10.83% of them has mentioned as rural and urban, it may include bordering areas, living in rural areas, operating in urban areas, etc.
1	Rural	18	15.00	
2	Urban	89	74.17	
3	Rural and Urban	13	10.83	
Total		120	100.00	

Table 7: Telephone, Internet and Social Media:

SN	Usage of Telephone, Internet and Social Media	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	Amongst 120 respondents, highly majority of the respondents (90%) are using Android mobile with internet facility. Overall, 92.50% of them are using Android mobile with internet and computer / laptop facilities. Remaining 7.50% of them are either not having phone or not having internet, however, they might have access to social media through friend's mobile. Amongst all those who has internet connectivity, 92.50% of them has mentioned that they are using social media directly.
	Telephone and Internet usage:	-	-	
1	Using only normal mobile phone	7	5.83	
2	Using Android mobile without internet	2	1.67	
3	Using Android mobile with internet	108	90.00	
4	Using Android mobile with internet & computer / laptop	3	2.50	
5	Not having mobile phone	-	-	
	Total	120	100.00	
	Social Media usage (directly):			
1	Yes	111	92.50	
2	No	9	7.50	
Total		120	100.00	

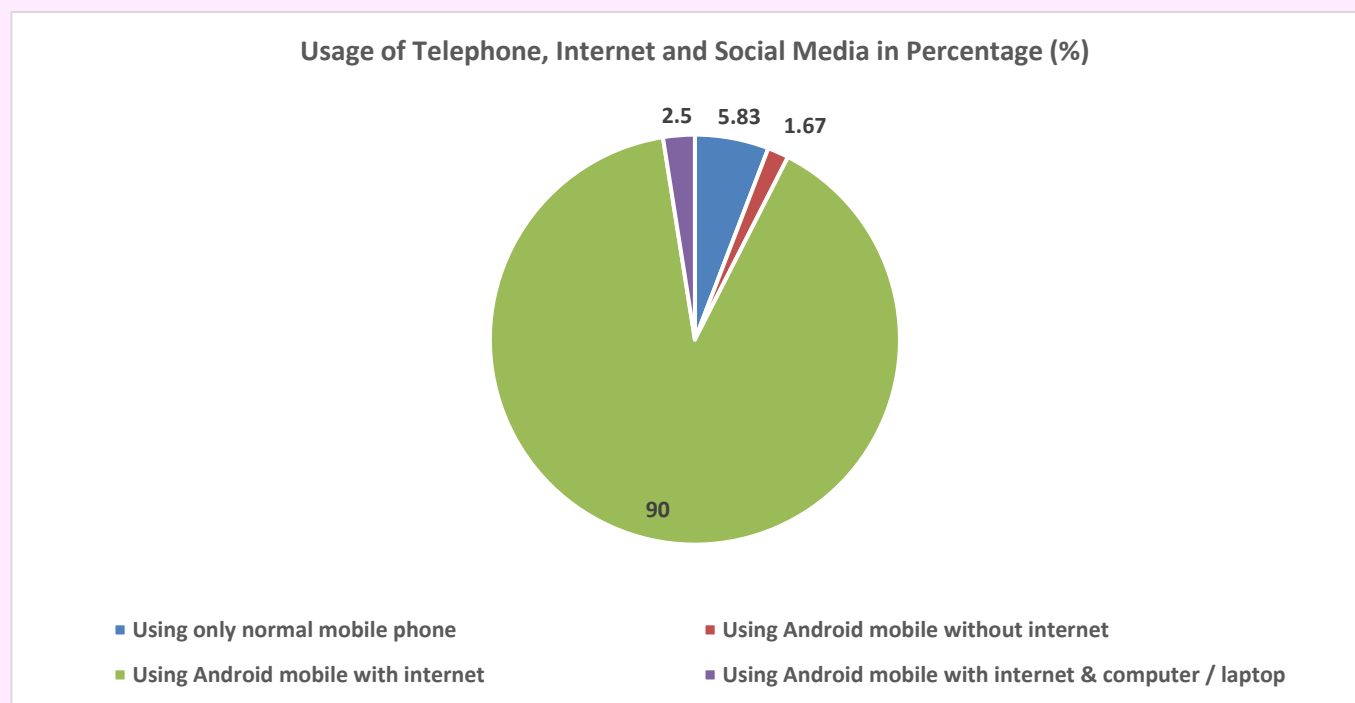


Table 8: HIV Status:

SN	HIV Status	No. of responses	Percentage (%)	To the question on “Information on whether infected with HIV”, 5% of the respondents have openly reported that, they are living with HIV (PLWHIV). All the reported PLWHIVs are in ART treatment and adhering.
	Information on HIV infection:			
1	Yes	6	5.00	
2	No	114	95.00	
	Total	120	100.00	
	If yes, details on ART adherence:			
1	Yes	6	100.00	
2	No	-	-	
	Total	6	100.00	

Part II: Project activities / services related information:

Table 9: Awareness about implementation of VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project in your area:

SN	Details	Yes		No		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Awareness about the project	120	100.00			120	100.00
2	If yes, details on participation & benefits through the project	120	100.00			120	100.00
3	If benefited, details on the services received from DOST	120	100.00			120	100.00

Among all 120 respondents, 100% of the respondents are aware about the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project, all of them participated and benefited through the project and received services from DOST. It is evident that, the project has reached community members in a more systematic and strategic manner.

Table 10: Opinions on the services provided by DOST and using community representative as DOST:

SN	Details	Very Useful		Useful		To an extent useful		Not useful		No Opinion		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	If availed services from DOST, opinion about the services provided by DOST – project staff	81	67.50	26	21.67	12	10.00	1	0.83			120	100.00
2	If availed services from DOST, opinion about awareness being provided by community representative / local area representative “DOST” – Project staff	83	69.17	32	26.67	5	4.17					120	100.00

Amongst the 120 respondents, majority of the respondents (67.50%) of them are mentioned that the services provided by DOST are very useful, 21.67% mentioned as useful 10% of them are mentioned as to an extent useful and only 0.83% of them have mentioned that it is not useful. Overall, 89.17% of the respondents have reported that, the services of DOST are very useful / useful.

Almost 95.84% of the respondents opined that, local community member / DOST in providing awareness education are very useful (i.e.,) 69.17% responded as very useful and 26.67% responded as useful. Overall, engaging the local specific community member as DOST is found more acceptable and useful.

Table 11: Opinion on the acceptability of the DOST and plans to avail benefits in future:

SN	Details	Yes		No		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Opinion on the acceptability of the DOST	109	90.83	11	9.17	120	100.00
2	Plans to contact and avail benefits from same DOST even beyond project period	93	77.50	27	22.50	120	100.00

Amongst the 120 respondents, almost 90.83% of them opined that, the engagement and contributions of DOST is acceptable and 77.50% of them are having plans to contact and avail benefits from same DOST even beyond project period. Overall, the engagement of community member as DOST is acceptable and members plans to avail services in future too. This found to be acceptable and sustainable model.

Table 12: Opinion on the overall functions and activities of TRANS Life Project:

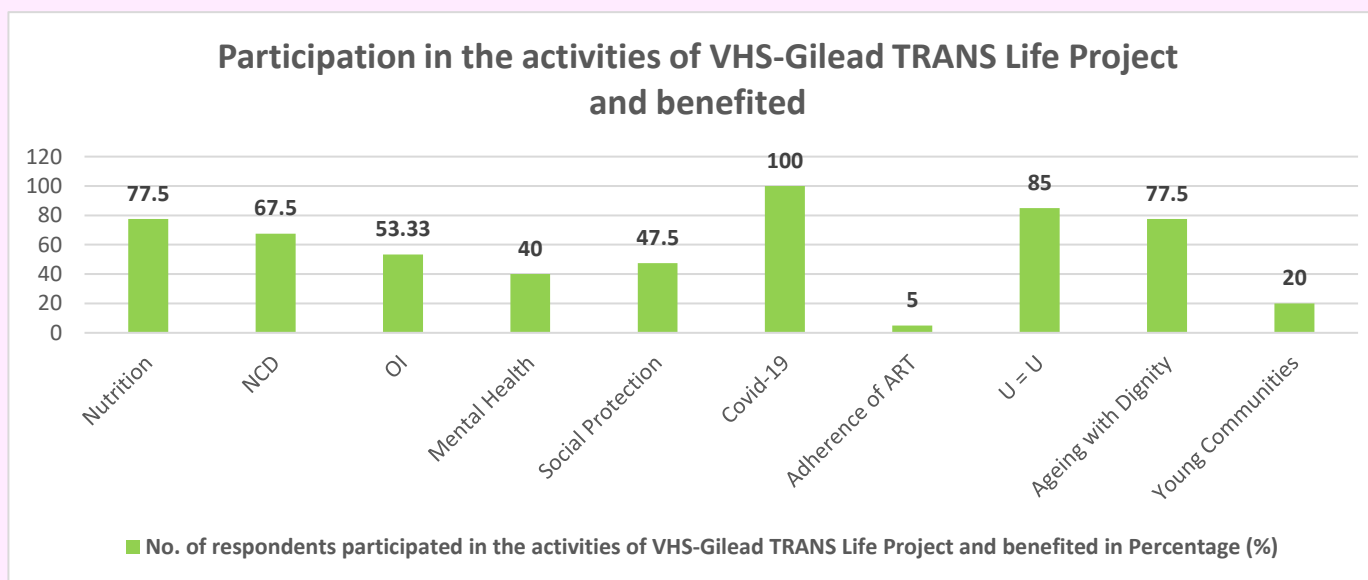
SN	Details	Very Useful		Useful		To an extent useful		Not useful		No Opinion		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Overall opinion on functions and activities of TRANS Life Project	89	74.17	23	19.17	8	6.67					120	100.00

Amongst the 120 respondents' interview, majority (74.17 %) of the respondents opined as very useful and 19.17% of them responded as useful. Overall, 93.34% of them expressed that, overall functions and activities of the TRANS Life Project is useful.

Part III: Opinion on functions and activities of TRANS Life Project

Table 13: Participation in the activities of VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project and benefited:

SN	Details	Yes		No		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Nutrition	93	77.50			93	77.50
2	Non-Communicable Diseases [NCD]	81	67.50			81	67.50
3	Opportunistic Infections	64	53.33			64	53.33
4	Mental Health	48	40.00			48	40.00
5	Social Protection	57	47.50			57	47.50
6	Covid-19 Prevention Methods	120	100			120	100
7	Adherence of ART	6	5.00			6	5.00
8	Undetectable = Untransmittable [U=U]	102	85.00			102	85.00
9	Ageing with Dignity	93	77.50			93	77.50
10	Young Communities	24	20.00			24	20.00



VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has undertaken key activities on 10 core areas to improve the quality of lives of TG and MSM community members in selected districts of Tamil Nadu. The respondents were requested to share on the benefits / services received through the TRANS Life Project on the core areas of information / services provided. Out of 120 respondents, it is observed that, all the 10 core areas of related services are availed by the community members based on the needs and priorities. The community members participation in the core areas of TRANS Life Project and benefits received are as (multiple choice question – respondents responded only to those services availed).

From the above responses, it is evident that, 100% of them are benefited through Covid-19 prevention methods, about 85% of them benefited through U=U and equally 77.50% of them benefited through nutrition and ageing with dignity, 67.50% of them are benefited through Non-Communicable Disease, about 50% of them are benefited through Opportunistic Infections and social protection related initiatives. 40% of the respondents are availed services on mental health. About 20% of the young community members have also benefited in their priority area. 5% of them have availed the benefits pertaining to adherence to ART.

Table 14: Opinion on acceptability and contributions of the project on Quality of Life and improvement.

SN	Details	Very Useful		Useful		To an extent useful		Not useful		No Opinion		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Opinion and acceptability on information provided on focusing on QoL Improvement beyond HIV/AIDS	71	59.17	43	35.83	6	5.00					120	100.00
2	Contribution for enhancing the Quality of Life of self	67	55.83	49	40.83	4	3.33					120	100.00
3	Improved on Quality of Life in you at present	41	34.17	59	49.17	17	14.17			3	2.50	120	100.00

Opinion and acceptability on information provided on focusing on Quality of Life Improvement beyond HIV/AIDS: Amongst 120 respondents, 59.17 % of them reported as very useful and 35.83% of them are reported as useful. Overall, 95% of them have accepted on the information provided with the focus on QoL improvement as beyond regular HIV/AIDS messages among TG and MSM communities.

Contribution for enhancing the Quality of Life of self: Similarly, 96.66% of the respondents opined that, this project and its activities contributed for enhancing the QoL of the individual. This includes, 55.83% reported as very useful and 40.83% reported as useful.

Improved on Quality of Life in you at present: Similarly, 83.34% of the respondents opined that, this project and its activities improved the QoL at present for self. This includes, 34.17% reported as very useful and 49.17% reported as useful.

Overall, the initiatives on the QoL improvement is mostly acceptable and contributed for enhancing and improving the QoL of self.

Table 15: Opinion on the key approaches through which learnt / understood the comprehensive information

SN	Activities	No. of Responses (Yes)	%
1	Inter-Personal Communication (One to one) including physical and virtual	120	100.00
2	Counselling / Guidance	89	74.17
3	Psycho-Social Support	48	40.00
4	Social media campaign	111	92.50
5	Handbills / information materials / e-posters	120	100.00
6	Videos	120	100.00
7	Training including physical and virtual	41	34.17
8	Referral and linkage with social welfare programs, obtaining ID cards etc.	63	52.50
9	Availing health services including referral	41	34.17

VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has adapted key approaches for providing comprehensive information on the core areas among the community members. The respondents were requested to provide their opinion on the key approaches through which learnt or understood the comprehensive information for the multiple-choice questions. In this regard, amongst 120 respondents, 100% of them equally opined that: received information through IPC, communication materials including e-posters and videos. 92.50% of them opined that, learnt comprehensive information through social media campaign, 74.17% learnt through counselling and guidance, 52.50% of them through referral and linkages with social welfare programs, obtaining ID cards, etc. 40% of the respondents learnt / understood through psycho-social support. About equally 34.17% of them learnt and understood through: training including physical and virtual and availing health services including referral.

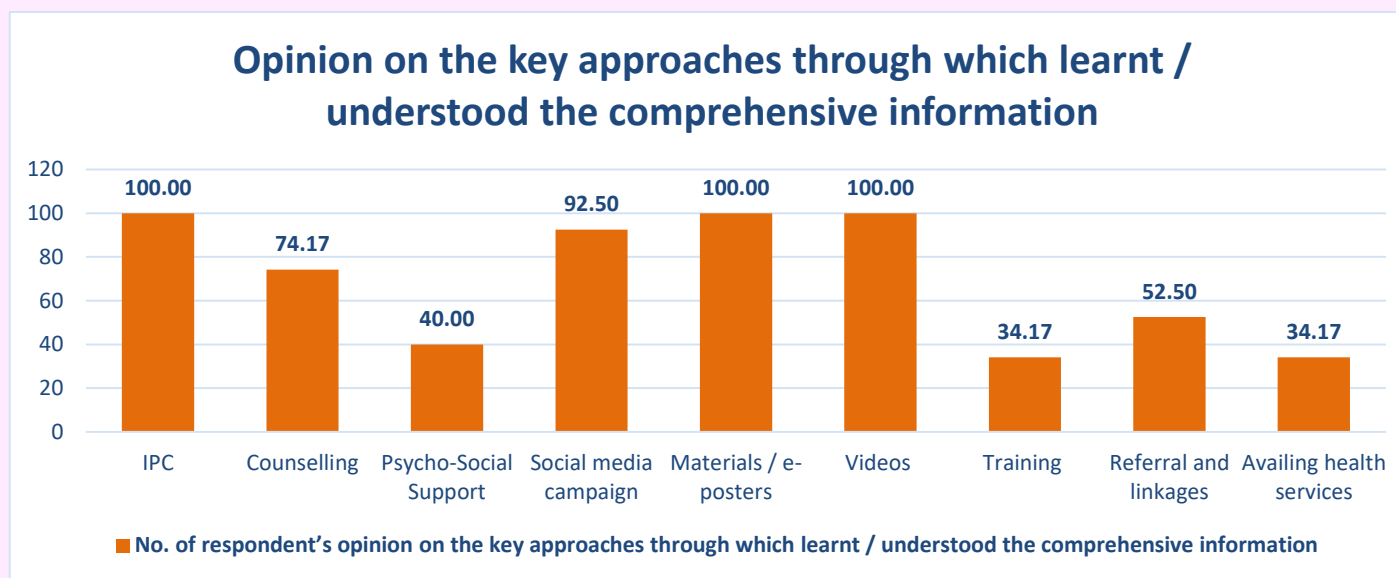


Table 16: Opinion, usefulness and suggestions on “U=U” campaign undertaken for first time in India, addressing TG/MSM community:

SN	Details	Yes		No		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Did this campaign on “U=U” was useful?	112	93.33	8	6.67	120	100.00
2	If yes Did the Unique approaches of using videos, e-poster and other communication materials in campaign was useful?	110	98.21	2	1.79	112	100.00
3	In your opinion, does this campaign will need to be undertaken in other areas for TG/MSM communities	94	83.93	18	16.07	112	100.00

VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has undertaken U=U campaign through social media. In this regard, opinion, usefulness and suggestions were sought from the respondents. Amongst 120 respondents, 93.33 % of them opined that, U=U campaign was very useful.

Amongst the respondents (112) opined as useful, 98.21 % of them responded as the unique approaches of using videos, e-posters and other communication materials in campaign was useful.

Amongst the respondents (112) expressed as U=U campaign was useful, 83.93 % of them recommended for undertaking similar campaigns for TG and MSM communities in other areas.

Overall, it is observed that, the U=U campaign was well accepted considering the strategic approaches adapted and there is a desire need for replicating such U=U campaign initiatives in other areas.

Table 17: Following U=U guidelines by reported PLWHIV:

SN	Details	Practicing		Proposed to practice		At present no opinion		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Following U=U guidelines by reported PLWHIV	6	66.67	2	33.33			6	100.00

Amongst 120 respondents, 6 respondents has reported as living with HIV status. Amongst these 6 PLWHIVs / respondents, 66.67 % of them are practicing the U=U guidelines and 33.33% of them reported that proposed to practice U=U based on the information and knowledge gained through the campaign. The U=U campaign enabled the PLWHIV for ART adherence and following other guidelines of U=U.

Table 18: Improvement of competencies among TG/MSM Communities and plans to undertake continued efforts to improve further:

SN	Details	Yes		No		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Improvement of competencies among TG/MSM Communities	74	61.67	46	38.33	120	100.00
2	If competencies improved, do you have plans to undertake continued efforts to improve further	63	85.14	11	14.86	74	100.00

VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project has undertaken efforts to improve the competencies among TG and MSM communities. In this regard, out of 120 respondents, 61.67% of them expressed that, there is an improvement of competencies among TG/MSM communities. The competencies developed among community members will include communication skill, managing social media campaigns, capacity building of community members to serve as a DOST, producing videos, sensitizing and networking with key stakeholders, reaching the community members even during the lock down periods, developing Tik Tok by community members, manage performances, learning, managing conflicts and stress, overcoming mental health illness, etc.

Amongst the respondents (74) mentioned as there is an improvement in competencies, 85.14% of respondents reported that, plans to undertake continued efforts to improve further.

Table 19: Opinion on still in existence of Stigma and Discrimination, efforts contributed to reduce and suggestions to further reduce stigma:

SN	Activities	Total Responses (Yes)	Total Percentage (%)
	Opinion on still in existence of Stigma and Discrimination		
1	Not at all existing	71	59.17
2	To an extend existing	14	11.67
3	Mostly existing	29	24.16
4	No opinion	6	5.00
	Total	120	100.00
	Efforts contributed to reduce		
1	Advocacy and networking with police, media, policy makers, lawyers, etc	81	67.50
2	Efforts undertaken by positive networks, NGOs, CBOs, etc	97	80.83
3	Media support	46	38.33
4	Engagement of private sector in testing	11	9.17
5	Communication campaigns for eliminating stigma and discrimination	73	60.83
6	Celebrities' involvement	36	30.00
7	Positive speakers, goodwill ambassadors, etc	87	72.50
	Suggestions to further reduce stigma and discrimination		
1	Educating the teachers in the schools to understand and accept the person as they are to enable in accepting them as they are (this will avoid dropouts)	76	63.33
2	Educating and enabling the parents to understand the children	64	53.33
3	Creating awareness to understand the TG/MSM communities in rural areas for greater acceptance to lead a normal life with the family	81	67.50
4	Positive write-ups in the media on regular basis	38	31.67
5	Recognizing the supporters of the TG/MSM communities – which will motivate more supportive groups to support the TG/MSM population	49	40.83

SN	Activities	Total Responses (Yes)	Total Percentage (%)
6	Networking of CBOs and undertaking campaign on common focused messages during particular period	67	55.83
7	Promoting goodwill ambassadors for addressing stigma and discrimination	72	60.00

Opinion on still in existence of Stigma and Discrimination: Out of 120 respondents, overall, 59.17% of them opined that stigma and discrimination is not at all existing, 11.67% of them expressed that stigma and discrimination is existing to an extent. 24.16% of them expressed that mostly existing. 5% of them expressed as no opinion. It is observed that, around 60% of them have informed that, there is no stigma and discrimination.

Efforts contributed to reduce: The respondents were requested to share the efforts contributed to reduce the stigma and discrimination. For this multiple-choice question, the respondents revealed various efforts contributed for eliminating stigma and discrimination and the same is presented in order of ranking which includes: efforts undertaken by positive networks, NGOs, CBOs, etc (80.83%); positive speakers, goodwill ambassadors, etc (72.50%); advocacy and networking with police, media, policy makers, lawyers, etc (67.50%), communication campaigns for eliminating stigma and discrimination (60.83%); media support (38.33%); celebrities' involvement (30.00%); and engagement of private sector in testing (9.17%).

Suggestions to further reduce stigma and discrimination: Community members responded on ways to further reduce the stigma and discrimination, the suggestions emerged are in ranking: creating awareness to understand the TG/MSM communities in rural areas for greater acceptance to lead a normal life with the family (67.50%); educating the teachers in the schools to understand and accept the person as they are to enable in accepting them as they are (this will avoid dropouts) – (63.33%); promoting goodwill ambassadors for addressing stigma and discrimination (60.00%); networking of CBOs and undertaking campaign on common focused messages during particular period (55.83%); educating and enabling the parents to understand the children / youth (53.33%); recognizing the supporters of the TG/MSM communities – which will motivate more supportive groups to support the TG/MSM population (40.83%); and positive write-ups in the media on regular basis (31.67%).

Table 20: Receipt of “Dry Ration” kit:

SN	Details	Yes		No		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Receipt of “Dry Ration” kit	97	80.83	23	19.17	120	100.00

The project has undertaken efforts in providing “Dry Ration” kit to the community members with 17 items along with re-usable bag for providing to the needy (i.e.,) 14 items as a part of dry ration including rice, groceries, etc and 3 items of sanitizer / health kit. In response to the question on the receipt of “Dry Ration” kit, 80.83% of the respondents were received and only 19.17% of them were not received.

Table 21: Opinion on quality and quantity of materials provided through “Dry Ration” and its usefulness:

SN	Activities	Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)	<p>Amongst the 97 respondents received “Dry Ration” kit, almost all of them opined that, the quality of the materials were good quality which includes 47.42% has very good and 52.58% as good.</p> <p>Similarly, amongst the 97 respondents received “Dry Ration” kit, almost 97.94% (Very good + good) of them opined that, quantity is sufficient, and which includes very good 60.82% and good 37.11%.</p> <p>Amongst the 97 respondents received “Dry Ration” kit, almost all of them opined that, the materials provided were useful which includes 42.27% has very much useful and timely help, 44.33% as much useful and 13.40% as useful.</p> <p>Overall, the “Dry Ration” kit is found to be very much acceptable and helpful considering the good quality, quantity and providing the required materials.</p>
	Opinion on quality			
1	Very good	46	47.42	
2	Good	51	52.58	
3	Average	-	-	
4	Not good	-	-	
	Opinion on quantity			
1	Very good	59	60.82	
2	Good	36	37.11	
3	Average	2	2.06	
4	Not good	-	-	
	Usefulness of the “Dry Ration”			
1	Very much useful and timely help	41	42.27	
2	Much useful	43	44.33	
3	Useful	13	13.40	
4	Not useful	-	-	

Table 22: Suggestions for promoting safe preventive measures, improving quality of life and planning for future by young community members

SN	Suggestions	Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
1	Undertake social media campaigns to identify young community members	92	76.67
2	Promote awareness and knowledge and skills at initial stage itself	81	67.50
3	Develop videos or self-learning materials to enable young community members to read and understand (in the absence of unreached)	101	84.17
4	Training the Gurus / Amma to understand the young community members and guide accordingly	74	61.67
5	Provide counselling on career guidance & employment opportunities – to enable them to be away from begging & sex	67	55.83
6	Develop helpline for TG/MSM – this may be useful for young communities also will benefit	53	44.17
7	Educate parents, parent-teacher associations and school teachers to accept	48	40.00
8	Introduce schemes for families accepting the trans as a part of the family	31	25.83

SN	Suggestions	Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
9	Linkage with organizations preparing the skills for employment	22	18.33
10	Undertake HIV/AIDS prevention through virtual methods – to reach the unreached	63	52.50
11	Encourage and involve all CBOs to undertake systematic efforts in identifying young communities and provide services	72	60.00

Respondents were asked to suggest for promoting safe preventive measures, improving quality of life and planning for future by young community members. In this regard, out of 120 respondents, many suggestions were provided. The suggestions provided by the respondents are given in ranking order based on the percentage (i.e.):

- Develop videos or self-learning materials to enable young community members to read and understand (in the absence of unreached)
- Undertake social media campaigns to identify young community members
- Promote awareness and knowledge and skills at initial stage itself
- Training the Gurus / Amma to understand the young community members and guide accordingly
- Encourage and involve all CBOs to undertake systematic efforts in identifying young communities and provide services
- Provide counselling on career guidance and employment opportunities – to enable them to be away from begging and sex
- Undertake HIV/AIDS prevention through virtual methods – to reach the unreached
- Develop helpline for TG/MSM – this may be useful for young communities also will benefit
- Educate parents, parent-teacher associations and school teachers to accept
- Introduce schemes for families accepting the trans as a part of the family
- Linkage with organizations preparing the skills for employment

These suggestions will be of useful for further consideration for initiating interventions focusing on young community members.

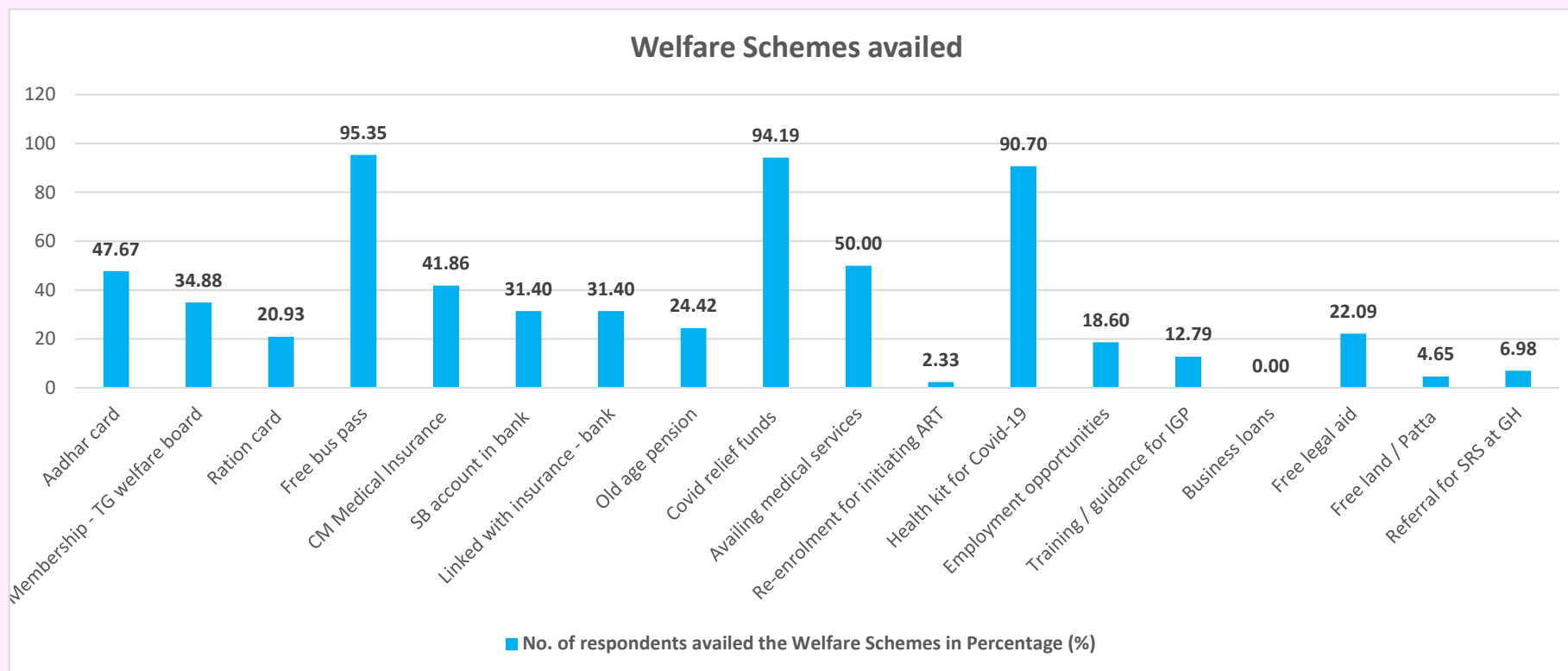
Table 23: Information on benefits received through welfare schemes with the support / guidance of DOST:

SN	Details	Benefited		Necessary not raised		Plans to avail		Submitted application and awaiting		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Information on benefits received through welfare schemes with the support / guidance of DOST	73	60.83	25	20.83	9	7.50	13	10.83	120	100.00

Out of 120 respondents, 60.83% of them informed that they received benefits through welfare schemes with the support and guidance of DOSTs. In addition, 10.83% of them are in the process of availing and awaiting for the approvals. Overall, 71.66% of them have benefited through welfare schemes through the initiatives of the project.

Table 24: List of welfare schemes, benefits received with the guidance / support of DOST:

SN	List of Welfare Schemes availed	Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
1	Aadhar card (new, changes in the existing card) – ID proof	41	47.67
2	Membership card for TG welfare board	30	34.88
3	Ration card (including new and corrections)	18	20.93
4	Free bus pass	82	95.35
5	Chief Minister's free Medical Insurance ID card	36	41.86
6	Opening of SB account in bank for initiating savings	27	31.40
7	Linked with insurance as a part of existing bank accounts	27	31.40
8	Old age pension (for 40+)	21	24.42
9	Covid relief funds provided by the govt (Rs. 2,000 x 2 times)	81	94.19
10	Referral, accompanied visits and guiding for availing medical services	43	50.00
11	Re-enrolment for initiating ART (among dropouts)	2	2.33
12	Health kit for Covid-19	78	90.70
13	Employment opportunities	16	18.60
14	Training / guidance for income generation	11	12.79
15	Business loans	-	-
16	Free legal aid	19	22.09
17	Free land / house Patta and related	4	4.65
18	Guidance and referral for SRS at govt hospital	6	6.98



Amongst the 86 respondents (including 73 received benefits and 13 awaiting for receiving benefits) shared the information on the list of benefits received by the respondents. The various benefits received by the respondents are in ranking which includes:

- Free bus pass
- Covid relief funds provided by the govt (Rs. 2,000 x 2 times)
- Health kit for Covid-19
- Referral, accompanied visits and guiding for availing medical services
- Aadhar card (new, changes in the existing card) – ID proof
- Chief Minister's free Medical Insurance ID card

- Membership card for TG welfare board
- Opening of SB account in bank for initiating savings
- Linked with insurance as a part of existing bank accounts
- Old age pension (for 40+)
- Free legal aid
- Ration card (including new and corrections)
- Employment opportunities
- Training / guidance for income generation
- Guidance and referral for SRS at govt hospital
- Free land / house Patta and related
- Re-enrolment for initiating ART (among dropouts)

These benefits includes guidance and support extended by DOST for availing ID cards, health benefits, Covid relief benefits, opening of bank account, employment opportunities, old age pension and other benefits. Many of these benefits will be of continuous in nature for availing benefits in routine manner. The above data also indicates some of the individuals have benefited through more than one welfare scheme.

Table 25: Opinion / suggestions on the implementation / replication of this project in other districts / other areas:

SN	Details	Highly recommended		Recommended		Not recommended		No opinion		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Opinion / suggestions on the implementation / replication of this project in other districts / other areas	35	29.17	67	55.83	12	10.00	6	5.00	120	100.00

To the question on opinion / suggestions on the implementation / replication of this project in other districts / other areas, out of 120 respondents, almost 85% of the respondents recommended for replication of this project in other areas (including 29.17% - highly recommended and 55.83% - recommended). This data also proves that, the project has demonstrated acceptability among the community members and felt the need for replicating in other areas for their own community members to benefit.

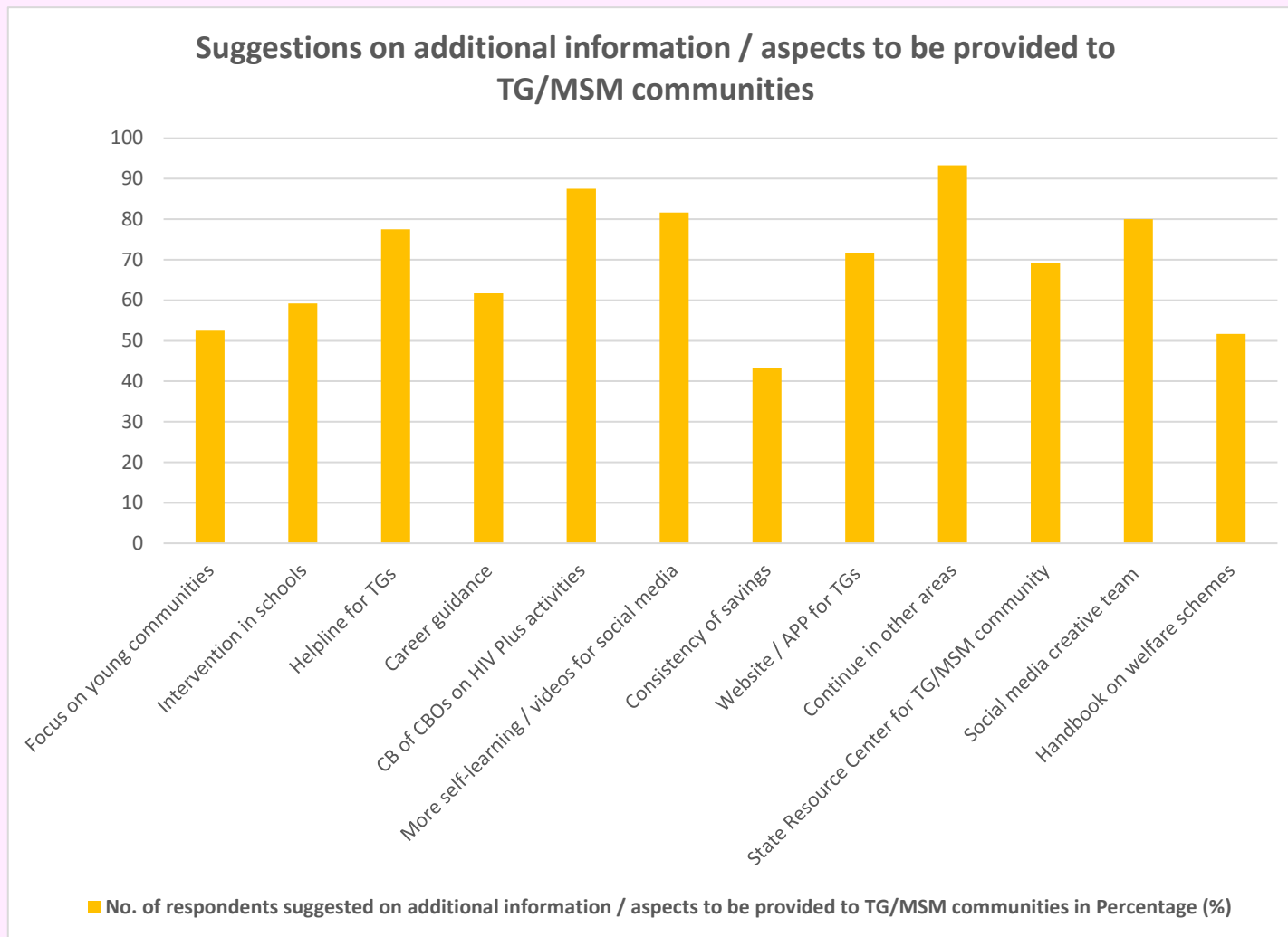
Table 26: Stimulus to share the benefits received through the program with fellow community members for improvement:

SN	Details	Very well share		Will share		Will not share		No opinion		Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
		No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%		
1	Stimulus to share the benefits received through the program with fellow community members for improvement	58	48.33	39	32.50	6	5.00	17	14.17	120	100.00

For the question on stimulus to share the benefits received through the program with fellow community members for improvement, amongst 120 respondents, 80.83% of the respondents are willing to share the benefits received with fellow community members including (48.33% - very well share and 32.50% - will share).

Table 27: Suggestions on additional information / aspects to be provided to TG/MSM communities:

SN	Suggestions	Total Responses	Total Percentage (%)
1	Focus on young communities	63	52.50
2	Intervention in schools	71	59.17
3	Helpline for TGs – by involving Psychiatrists / Counsellors	93	77.50
4	Career guidance for young and other TG/MSM	74	61.67
5	Capacity building of CBOs on HIV Plus related activities (comprehensive health care of TGs)	105	87.50
6	More self-learning / videos for use in the social media campaign (health consciousness, self-care, health seeking behaviour, personality development, career development options, success stories, etc)	98	81.67
7	Preparing for consistent improvement of savings among TGs across the state	52	43.33
8	Establish a website / APP for TGs to access all information under one roof (one stop shop)	86	71.67
9	Continue the existing program to other areas	112	93.33
10	Establishing state level resource center for TG/MSM community as one stop shop	83	69.17
11	Developing social media creative team for developing thematic creatives and create awareness	96	80.00
12	Handbook on welfare schemes updated	62	51.67



The respondents has expressed their opinion on various aspects of the projects initiatives. As a part of the data collection, the respondents were asked to share suggestions on additional information / aspects to be provided to TG/MSM communities in future.

In response to this question, responses received are provided in ranking (response received from 120 respondents) which includes:

- Continue the existing program to other areas
- Capacity building of CBOs on HIV Plus related activities (comprehensive health care of TGs)
- More self-learning / videos for use in the social media campaign (health consciousness, self-care, health seeking behaviour, personality development, career development options, success stories, etc)
- Developing social media creative team for developing thematic creatives and create awareness
- Helpline for TGs – by involving Psychiatrists / Counsellors
- Establish a website / APP for TGs to access all information under one roof (one stop shop)
- Establishing state level resource center for TG/MSM community as one stop shop
- Career guidance for young and other TG/MSM
- Intervention in schools
- Focus on young communities
- Handbook on welfare schemes updated
- Preparing for consistent improvement of savings among TGs across the state

3.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

3.2.1. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with CBO representatives

FGD Title	Focus Group Discussion with CBO representatives involved in VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project
FGD No.	1
No. of participants	12
Age profile of the participants	25-35 (6 members); 36-45 (5 members); 46 + (3 members)
No. of CBOs represented	6
No. of districts represented	7

Opinion on partnership with VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project and its related activities:

- Majority of the members expressed that, the partnership with VHS has enabled them to contribute to the TG and MSM communities in providing services beyond the routine activities of HIV.
- “This partnership helped Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam to realize the need for and importance of focusing on Quality of Life of TG/MSM communities, received trainings, understood the innovative approaches to reach out the community members, realize the importance of using the social media and many more” - *K Vijayakumar, Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam.*
- “Partnership is really a partnership... received training, guidance, mentoring, innovative resource materials for use during the lifetime of the project and beyond... etc” – *V Karthick, SAHODARAN*
- “Thanks for the great opportunity for engaging the CBO and enabling us to contribute to the community members through DOST... This partnership provided opportunities and developed skills to contribute for overall needs of the community members... appreciate the comprehensive efforts undertaken with thoughtful initiatives....” - *Bharathi Kannamma, Bharathi Kannamma Trust*
- “This partnership contributed for developing cadre of trained community volunteers for addressing total needs of TG/MSM communities and with the focus on improving QoL and addressing the young communities and preparing for Ageing with Dignity” - *S Noori, SIP+*
- Other common opinion discussed will include: very useful, the capacity building initiatives gained through this partnership will be of permanent use, DOSTs engaged in this project will be of cost effective and best way to reach the community members, acquired new skills to reach the young TG/MSM communities, etc.

Capacity building efforts undertaken for CBOs and usefulness and efforts undertaken for community participation and community engagement in the project activities:

- The CBO representatives shared that the training provided to the CBOs are:
 - Leadership and Governance for CBO leaders
 - NCDs
 - Mental health components
 - Methods and plans for sensitization of Lawyers and Health Care Providers
 - Orientation on Stigma Index Tool for TGs
- Generally, all have expressed that, the trainings are very new, first time undergone this training program, that too.... it is new area of information acquainted through the training.
- “Training was very much useful (Romba Ubayogama Irundhuchu). Conducted training both virtually and face-to-face. This has motivated me, enriched knowledge of self and will be of permanent use in managing the CBO” - *Saranya, SIP+*

- “Training supported with mentoring, opportunity to clarify doubts with the program team, experience sharing with other CBOs during virtual meetings, is very much acceptable approach. Thank you... Thank you...” - *Niranjan, SWAM*
- Many of them have expressed that, engaging CBO representatives as a part of the training for DOSTs also have helped in learning new information, understanding DOST role and it is found to be more useful in monitoring or coordinating the DOST activities.
- Similar trainings may be provided to all the other CBOs in other districts (Engalaipol matravargalum payam pera vendum).
- Very few of them have expressed that, training on resource mobilization for sustaining the CBO will be of useful.

Content / core messages provided as a part of VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project and its usefulness:

- When information on content / core messages covered as a part of VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project were asked. Immediately all of them have expressed that, QoL improvement is the prime focus and this content is more useful and contributed for improving the quality of community members.
- “We have implemented and carried out the activities related to NCD, nutrition, addressing mental health issues, promoting U=U, ensuring ART adherence, linkage with social welfare schemes and many more...” - *Sudhakar, Snegithi*
- “The efforts undertaken on creating awareness, developing knowledge and skills on managing Covid-19 and preventing NCD are very timely, useful and motivated as to practice the safe methods during Covid and will adapt regularly” - *Jaya, SAHODARAN*
- “First time our CBOs started working on HIV Plus programs (HIV ku appaal) covering the focus on QoL improvement. This program is very much useful and community members showed lot of interest in learning and benefiting, considering their needs are addressed (Engalukku thevayana seidhiya sonnadh u engalukku romba pudichirundhuchu)” - *V Karthick, SAHODARAN*
- “Our community members are very much liked the core messages on livelihood support, social protection, U=U, mental health, etc. Really, very simple messages, useful messages and community friendly” - *A Chakravarthy, Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam*
- “This social protection program has demonstrated very good results and many of the community members benefited through availing ID card, aadhar card, ration card, pension, Covid-19 relief and many more... It is very useful for improving economic condition and enhancing the QoL” - *A Jacob Antony, SWAM*
- “The mental health program really the need of the hour and addressed the community top priority areas” - *K Vijayakumar, Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam*
- Overall, almost all the CBO members were able to articulate the core messages on the TRANS Life Project and expressed that these messages were much useful considering the new area and it is beyond HIV/AIDS.

Opinion on the contributions of DOSTs in the project activities:

- Almost all of them have strongly opined that, DOST approach is very much acceptable among the community members. DOST word also provided a great recognition to the community members to serve with the motivation.
- Majority of them mentioned, DOST is a cost effective, sustainable and with the good reach.
- “DOST has greater acceptance among the community members than the “Peer Educator” designation being used in the targeted intervention program” - *Sudhakar, Snegithi*
- “Each DOST was supposed to reach and provide services to 20 members. But, it is overwhelming that, each DOST has reached more than 20 and motivated to provide services to their own community members” - *Alikhana, Bharathi Kannamma Trust*

- “The trained DOST available in the CBO area will be of permanent use and will continue to motivate and engage in rendering the services to the community in the newer areas for enhancing the QoL improvement” - A Chakravarthy, *Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam*

Social media campaign – its approaches, usefulness and acceptability among the community members: The statements expressed and shared by the CBOs during the discussions were:

- E-poster and videos were used in the social media campaign in a phased manner.
- Numbering and sequencing of the messages in an orderly way has greater acceptance with the community members.
- So far, community members developed WhatsApp groups and undertakes chatting but not used the groups for communication purposes. First time, the group members enthusiastically used these e-posters and videos through their personal WhatsApp groups. This has reached beyond the target groups.
- The videos produced with the introduction of celebrity has motivated the community members and others to view the video fully.
- Social media campaign undertaken through WhatsApp group, Facebook and YouTube. These approaches reached community members within intervention, beyond intervention area and reaching the unreached (Kandu pudikka mudiya dhavangalukku ellam seidhi poi senduduchi).
- During Covid-19 pandemic, considering the lock down there is a greater viewership, acceptance and response to the social media initiatives. This social media campaign has been considered as an entertainment and execution with the time passing.
- Overall, the members expressed that, learnt to use the social media for effective awareness creation and enhance the capacities to use such platforms for awareness creation on any areas with the community members.

Contributions of VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project for improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM:

- 100% of the participants expressed that, this project with the coordinated initiatives of CBOs and DOSTs has greatly contributed for improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM with whom we have reached.
- The experiences shared by the members on contributing factors for improving the QoL are: focusing on nutrition, addressing mental health issues, ART adherence, linkage with social welfare programs and arranging for old age pension, Covid-19 relief fund, groceries through ration shops (fair price shops), establishment of small business through loans and SHG support, increase in savings, opening of bank account, etc.
- “This project invested on the seed & this will grow and continue to enhance the QoL (indha vidai thulithulladhu thodarndhu nalla palangai tharum)” - *Niranjana Sivapatham, SWAM*
- “As a CBO, with the help of DOST, motivated 25 MSMs and 12 TG community members to open SB bank account in Bank of Baroda and for the last five months started saving minimum amount during every month in the midst of Covid-19” - *V Karthick, SAHODARAN*

Opinion and usefulness of the “U=U” campaign:

- Amongst the 12 participants attended this FGD, 100% of them expressed that, this campaign on U=U was very useful.
- The video developed in U=U campaign with the engagement of CBO leader Mx Jaya is more community friendly, simple and easy to understand.
- Many of them with enthusiasm & happiness expressed that, the film and media celebrities endorsement messages on U=U was very useful, attracting among the community members and motivated the community members to share it with their own known communities.
- DOSTs played a key role in providing clarity on U=U to PLWHIVs and this approach was useful in motivating.

Contributions of the project in improving the competencies:

- “This project provided opportunity to compose a theme song by involving community singers, producing a video by involving community members... These skills gained through this partnership and project support will be of very much useful in producing audio/videos by engaging community members in future., We feel proud as a CBO and as a community member contributed for thematic song and the same has been used in the project titled “Velvom Vaazhvom” - community video song on Quality of Life by Transgenders / CBO Board members” - *K Vijayakumar, Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam*
- Other members expressed that, this project has contributed for development of competencies such as: effective communication skills, skills to use social media and undertaking social media campaigns, competencies to reach the unreached / young communities, trained cadre of DOSTs for communicating with community members, demonstration skills (nutrition, handwash, use of mask, etc), ability to sensitize the lawyers and government officials.
- “Gained skills to mobilize resources for providing groceries, nutrition food packets, etc to the needy including community members with aged during the Covid-19 situations, these skills will be efficiently used” - *Sudhakar, Snegithi*

Existence of Stigma and Discrimination and ways to reduce the S&D if available:

- Amongst the members, 9 of them (75%) raised their hand and mentioned that there is no existence of stigma and discrimination. However, remaining people mentioned that, there is a self-stigma associated with certain TG/MSM community members that need to be addressed.
- “Minimal stigma is existing in schools, among selected govt doctors and govt officials. But this is not common across the intervention and across the state. This minimal existence of stigma varies area to area and among the different functionaries” - *S Noori, SIP+*
- For reducing the stigma, suggestions emerged are:
 - CBOs will need to undertake the efforts to remove self-stigma among the community members.
 - CBOs can identify the officials / functionaries practicing stigma and sensitize them by engaging them community members.
 - Writing positive stories on the achievements and the credentials of TG/ MSM communities to develop positive image.
 - Career guidance for young community members for undertake salaries jobs. This will help in establishing more recognition and eliminating stigma and discrimination.

Usefulness and quality of the “Dry Ration” bags provided:

- All of them expressed that the “Dry Ration” bags are very useful during the time of Covid-19 for ensuring the basic livelihood.
- The Groceries Kit and Health Kit are very useful.... and this has supported our food requirements with nutrition and safety during Covid (unavukkum sugadharathirukum, corona illadha vaazhkaikkum romba payanpattuchu).
- “The quality of the items provided in the ration are very good and these groceries were very much useful to the community members with ageing” - *Bharathi Kannamma, Bharathi Kannamma Trust.*
- “In addition to the “Dry Ration” bag provided by the project, considering this model support, we have undertaken efforts to mobilize more groceries and food packets and provided to the community members” - *Niranjan Sivapatham, SWAM*

Sensitization activities undertaken and its usefulness if any:

- All the participants / CBOs informed that, undertaken efforts for sensitizing non-health functionaries such as: development department officials, lawyers, SHG women, outreach workers associated with development departments (serving in rural and urban areas), opinion leaders, faith leaders, and others.
- Discussions held on the approaches adapted for sensitizing the non-health personnel. The approaches adapted by the CBOs are:
 - Prioritized the community preferred personnel for sensitization
 - Undertaken mapping and evolved plans for sensitization
 - Participated in the guidelines and briefing provided by the project team
 - Team approach (CBO, DOSTs and good communicators) and undertaken personal visits and sensitized the individuals and requested their support.
 - Continuing the follow-up contacts with the sensitized personnel and mobilizing their support on need based.
- “Sensitization of non-health professionals is an unique approach for mobilizing their support, creating an enabling environment and strengthening our referral and linkage system. This model can be replicated in other districts also” - *Saranya, SIP+*

Efforts and approaches undertaken to reach out the community members during Covid-19 pandemic situations:

- The participants shared some of the approaches adapted by the CBO and DOST to reach out the community members during the Covid-19 pandemic situations:
 - During the lock down period, the community members were necessitated to be at home. Our team has capitalized their leisure time effectively by using virtual platforms.
 - “DOSTs identified the possible opportunities for interacting the community members and undertaken communication approaches such as: telephone call, video call, zoom meeting for group interactions, sending WhatsApp messages, etc” - *Fathimabivi, Snegithi*
 - “Social media campaign on nine core messages has been undertaken in a sequential manner and this has effectively reached the community members considering the lock down period. In addition, the community members also shared these core messages to similar WhatsApp groups of their own” - *V Karthick, SAHODARAN*
 - Undertaken house visits on need based.
 - “Availed the opportunity of interacting with the community members at Jamath / Guru’s house and during other social functions” - *S Noori, SIP+*
 - On many occasions, community members contacted the DOST and availed services.
 - “Along with the outreach activities, our area DOSTs has also undertaken efforts for arranging welfare schemes, facilitate in linkage with the health services, etc by ensuring safety precautions for preventing themselves from Covid-19” - *Jaya, SAHODARAN*

Suggested activities for further improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM community members:

- “Capacity building of CBOs on QoL improvement in the entire state will be of useful. This training will motivate all CBOs for integrating and undertaking activities on QoL of TG/MSM” - *K Vijayakumar, Salem Thirunangaigal Nala Sangam*
- “Establishing a “State Level Communication Resource and Support Center” for undertaking activities such as: developing resource materials, establishing repository of TG related information, information and guidelines on welfare schemes, undertaking videos for creating awareness among TGs, documenting best practices, developing social media messages for creating awareness among TGs, facilitating experience sharing and technical sessions, etc” - *V Karthick, SAHODARAN*

- “I too agree with this... With this information, an APP may also be developed for TG/MSM community to access for information through single window system” - *S Noori, SIP+*
- “Promoting self-care management among community members in all districts in Tamilnadu and across India based on the learnings from this project” - *Bharathi Kannamma, Bharathi Kannamma Trust*
- “TI staff involved in HIV program also be trained and motivated to integrate this comprehensive information for improving QoL for TG/MSM communities” - *Niranjani Sivapatham, SWAM*
- “Efforts can be undertaken for 100% of community members are linked with services and welfare schemes through a coordinated efforts and by undertaking a campaign” - *Sudhakar, Snegithi*
- Other suggestions evolved during the discussions are: developing video series on QoL and arranging to circulate through social media campaigns, developing e-newsletters on nutrition and other related information, etc.

3.2.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with DOSTs

FGD Title	Focus Group Discussion with DOSTs involved in VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project
FGD No.	2
No. of participants	14
Age profile of the participants	20-30 (4 members); 31-40 (9 members); 40 + (1 member)
No. of CBOs represented	6
No. of districts represented	7

Opinion on serving as DOST as a community member in VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project:

- “All the participants expressed, it is a big recognition for serving as DOST ” - *A Usman Basha*
- “Initially, I thought it is difficult to work for our own community members... but, the word ‘DOST’ provided enough confidence in reaching out to the community members and unexpectedly there is a great acceptance for my position and role” - *D Gomathi*
- “The word ‘DOST’ gave me confidence (Nambikkai) and the guidance and support extended by the project team through training and mentoring enabled me to perform well and thus yielded results” - *R Balapandian*
- “DOST word itself established a good bond between me and the community members. There is no hesitation with the community members... However, we always got good support and cooperation from the community members. This acceptance and demand for services motivated us to commit to do more and more” - *Babu Mohan*
- “I like DOST... it means friend... it also means a person providing care as a friend... when we provide information and services to our own members as a friend, this never created any un-comforts (edhirpugal illai). DOST is well accepted, and I am proud to serve as DOST” - *M Srinivasan*
- “I was one among the community member... the CBO identified and motivated me to contribute to this project... It is a very big recognition (angeegaram) and provided opportunity for getting visibility, acceptance and recognition from the community members... I am proud to be a well-accepted DOST and contributed to the improvement of QoL of our own community members” - *M Shankar (A) Kushboo*
- Overall, DOSTs expressed that, it is a community-friendly word, provided good recognition and opportunity to serve the community members with the greater acceptance.

Efforts undertaken to improve your capacity for efficient functioning as DOST:

- During the discussions, the DOST shared that, this project has contributed for improving the capacity for functioning as DOST. Some of the contributions of the project highlighted by the members are:
 - Orientation cum induction training (arimuga payirchi)
 - Improving communication skills and undertaking IPC activities
 - Introduction to: NCD, nutrition, Covid-19, U=U, OI, etc.
 - Training on mental health
 - Guidance for handling the ageing with dignity related activities
 - Information on welfare schemes and methods of availing
 - Basic orientation on “Barefoot Counselling”
 - Guidance for managing social media campaigns
 - And other training programs
- “I have participated in many training programs including orientation programs conducted both virtually and physical training. It’s a great opportunity to learn, gain confidence and share the same with our community members” - *Priyadharshini*
- “Initially, I use to have inhibitions (thayakkam) in moving with others through this training, mentoring and guidance improved my communication skill, overcome the inhibitions and established about 20 new friends through this project. Thanks for building my capacities and competencies” - *Shanthini*
- “Virtual training created a great opportunity to learn from other DOSTs in other districts and also opportunity to learn from the CBOs. This cross learning and experience sharing also helped me to gain knowledge skills and confidence” – *K Priyanka*
- “Thanks to Priya, Program Coordinator for her guidance in roll-out of the activities and providing clarifications in executing the responsibilities” - *Saanavi*
- “This association as DOST provided opportunity to realize the importance of improving the QoL of TG/MSM community members and that too focusing on: ageing with dignity and reaching out young community members... Excellence Opportunity.. great efforts and contribution.... and very much happy... (Nalla vaaipu.. nalla muyarchi... nalla santhosham...)” – *P Kumaresan*
- Overall, the members expressed that, DOSTs provided great recognition and opportunity to contribute to their own community members in the new areas with the focus on QoL improvement. They also shared that the training, mentoring and guidance contributed to enhancing their abilities to deliver efficiently.

Efforts undertaken by the project to improve the competencies and improvement of competencies in self:

- During the discussion on the type of efforts undertaken by the project to improve the competencies, the participants shared are: training, mentoring, experience sharing, accompanied visits, review meetings, guidance by the CBO and the project team, cross learning between DOSTs, etc.
- DOSTs shared that this project contributed for developing competencies in self such as:
 - “Improved communicating skills and overcome the fear and inhibitions (pesa theriyadha enakku pesum thiran)” – *K Sundar*
 - “Learnt the needed skills to communicate with aged community members irrespective of my age” - *R Shivani*
 - “Gained skills to use and manage social media campaigns in an efficient manner and these acquired competencies will be of permanent use” – *Sathyashri Sharmila*
 - “Increased my ability to sensitize the doctors and others” - *Priyadharshini*

- “Strengthened my competencies in building relationship with government officials and in mobilizing the schemes for community members” – *A Usman Basha*
- “The project also developed the skills in me to identify and extend services to young community members... it’s really a new and unique experience... (puthiya unnadhamana anugumurai)” – *Babu Mohan*
- “I learnt the “Barefoot Counselling” and provided barefoot counselling to our community members... before the project, I was merely a community member... now, I am skilled person with the recognition as DOST and ability to provide barefoot counselling” – *Sathyashri Sharmila*

Opinion on the acceptability on the information / messages provided by DOST (community member) among the community members:

- Almost all of them expressed happiness and informed that, “DOST” word is more acceptable to each one of us and it is also acceptable with the community members (engalukkum pudichirukku enga makkalukkum idhu pudichirukku).
- “In a day, key role played by me as DOST are: undertake IPC activities, provide “Barefoot Counselling” to the needy, sending messages through social media, linkage with the services to the needy, facilitate for social protection of livelihood support, awareness on U=U and many more...” - *M Shankar (A) Kushboo*
- “As a DOST, communicate with 20 members in my own area and contributing to improve the QoL of community members by providing awareness education, social media campaigns, linkage with services, creating an enabling environment, addressing stigma and discrimination, sensitizing the non-health personnel, promoting ART adherence, guiding for improving their income, etc” - *R Balapandian*
- “DOST word is a beautiful identification (azhagana peyar arpudhamana kandupidippu)... it has a greater acceptance with the community members and enabled to provide the comfort situation for communication, providing messages and with greater acceptance” - *Shanthini*
- “In addition to undertaking IPC and social media, some of the specific and challenging activities undertaken are: improving physical, mental & social well-being, referral, linkages and other support for providing psycho-social support, ongoing and continuous efforts for availing social protection and promoting livelihood support. DOST work closely with local CBO, received guidance and work in close coordination” - *D Gomathi*
- “DOST program is an excellent initiative by VHS that brought people together, supported enormously during the Covid time. It has helped to reach out to more community members and contributed to improve the QoL of TG/MSM community members in our own area with the friendly approach – ‘A friend for a friend’ ” - *K Sundar*

Habits and utilization of telephone and internet among the community members and usefulness of the social media:

- All of them conveyed that, 90-95% of the community members are using android phones with internet facility and only limited percentage of the people are using mobile phone without internet connectivity (saadharana phone). Majority of the community members are using social media primarily WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube. Amongst the social media users, about 50% of them are using other social media platforms.
- “Social media is found very effective in reaching the community members considering their primary use of social media, inclination in accessing WhatsApp and Facebook, etc and that too it is cost effective (paisa selavilla)” - *Saanavi*
- “During Covid-19, due to lock down, almost all the community members were ideally sitting at home. During these days, the project undertaken social media campaign. This leisure time enabled the community members to view the e-posters and videos, benefits and share

with other WhatsApp group to enable other community members to benefit” – *R Balapandian*

- “Each DOSTs has been given the responsibility to reach out 20 community members. But, this social media has enabled each DOST to reach out the assigned 20 community members and reached beyond the target group / intervention area” – *R Shivani*
- “E-poster & videos developed and used in social media in an orderly way was very effective and these e-posters and videos will be continued to be made available in the social media platform and will reach more and more beyond the project period also” – *Babu Mohan*
- “I am having six WhatsApp groups with average number of 30-70 members in each group. I have used all the WhatsApp groups available with me for designating project core messages (e-posters and videos). Through this process, reached out to around 250-300 members eventhough my responsibility is to provide services to 20 members. Similarly, the members who received the messages also forwarded in their own groups (multi-levels of dissemination of messages through various WhatsApp groups” – *K Priyanka*
- “Social media platform also played a critical role in substituting personalized one-to-one activities due to Covid-19. Used video calls and zoom meetings for interacting with community members and providing services” – *K Sundar*

Did this project contributed for the improvement of QoL of TG/MSM community members:

- Almost all the DOSTs unanimously expressed that, TRANS Life Project has contributed for the improvement of QoL of TG/MSM community members and also mentioned that, this innovative effort on addressing QoL has well received by the community members.
- “The project addressed nutrition, mental health, Covid-19, providing social protection, linkage with services, preparing for ageing with dignity, U=U, ART adherence, livelihood support and many other. Overall, this has helped in improving the QoL”. – *K Priyanka*
- “In my area, out of 20 community members, about 18 members have benefited through more than 2 or 3 services including social welfare schemes and other services”. – *R Shivani*
- The social media campaign supported with mentoring and guidance has contributed for creating awareness, motivating people to seek for information and services, developing plans for healthy well-being, etc. Many of the community members now practicing self-care management which they were not practicing earlier”. – *P Kumaresan*

In your opinion / experience, is there a stigma and discrimination in the intervention area:

- All of them confirmed that, stigma and discrimination against TG/MSM community members is highly reduced. Earlier TG/MSM community members were not recognized and now there is a greater acceptance through a coordinated effort of stakeholders, govt, CBOs, community members, media, and many more.
- “Earlier, while travelling in bus, co-passengers (general public) will hesitate to sit next to me... now it has changed and they feel comfortable to sit next to us (i.e.,) due to greater acceptance and understanding” – *Shanthini*
- “The efforts of NGOs, CBOs, donors, govt, and others undertaken efforts for addressing stigma during last two decades. Thus, has yielded good results... now the stigma is very minimal and that too easily manageable” – *M Srinivasan*
- “Stigma is slightly found in schools, selected private hospitals and with few govt officials. However, we cannot expect 100% of acceptance at all levels, we need to manage to face challenges to overcome stigma and discrimination and we should never have self-stigma” – *M Shankar (A) Kushboo*
- “Stigma and discrimination may also be addressed continuously through social media campaigns at state and national level at frequent intervals to enable the general public and service providers to understand the TG/MSM community members” – *P Kumaresan*

Efforts undertaken to identify and reach out young community members for providing services:

- Discussions were held with regard to the efforts undertaken to identify and reach out young community members for providing services. During the discussions, the members shared the following:
 - Reached the young community members through social media platform such as WhatsApp group, Facebook, etc.
 - Visiting, interacting and enlisting the support of Guru / Amma in referring young community members for providing services.
 - Undertaking efforts to reach the unreached including invisible and operating through social media networks.
 - Referral from the clients on the newly operating TG/MSMs in the area.
 - Encouraging the community members to bring young TG/MSMs and other approaches.
- “Identified three young TG/MSM in our area and provided with basic services and linked with ongoing TI program” – *Babu Mohan*
- “Through Facebook, identified six young TG and MSM community members living in an area with Amma/Guru. Reached these members and provided services and shared all social media campaign messages to enable them to benefit” – *M Shankar (A) Kushboo*
- Young community members provided with information on prevention of HIV/AIDS, safety measures, prevention of Covid-19, need for and importance of savings, preparing for ageing with dignity, referral and linkages for obtaining ID cards and availing welfare schemes, etc” – *Shanthini*
- “In our area, young community members showed lot of interest in pursuing education to go for salaried position by avoiding begging and sex. These type of community members needs career guidance and counselling to choose appropriate courses and continue their studies with sponsorship” - *K Priyanka*

What are all the social welfare schemes benefited by the community members through the project initiatives:

- The members shared that, broadly the support will include: obtaining ID cards (aadhar card, ration cards, PAN card, voter ID, TG board membership card, free medical insurance, etc), opening of bank account, availing Covid relief fund, loans from SHGs / banks, health services, etc.
- “In my area, I have taken efforts and helped our community members to avail benefits such as: 16 members received ID cards, 33 members received Covid relief fund at 4,000 each, 3 members received old age pension, etc” – *Saanavi*
- “I have contributed and helped community members to receive ID card (21), referral for health services (41), old age pension (2), ration card and availing monthly rations (7) and other supports” – *P Kumaresan*
- “Young community members expressed on the need for undergoing beautician training. Extended support in arranging the same” – *R Sathyashri Sharmila*
- “Arranged employment opportunities for 40 members in Amazon based group and they are receiving monthly salary” – *M Srinivasan*
- “Provided needed information on the schemes and services available in different development departments and facilitating the linkages, guidance and accompanied visits to the needy” – *Babu Mohan*
- “I personally take interest in ensuring the provision of eligible benefits for each community members and extending support for people in need of counselling and other support for mental illness” – *A Usman Basha*

- Developed personalized rapport with outreach team at village level, officers at block and district level. This relationship helps in referring the community members to apply for eligible schemes and avail the same” – *R Balapandian*

Plans for continuing the services and contributions beyond the lifetime of the project by using the training and skills acquired:

- The participants (DOSTs) expressed that will continue the DOST roles and responsibilities during the project period and beyond the lifetime of the project period.
- The reasons shared by the participants for ensuring continuity of functions:
 - Great recognition among the community members
 - Will maintain the established relationship with the community members and other stakeholders.
 - Continuing service as DOST will provide sense of satisfaction and acceptance with our own community members.
 - Ensuring continuity of DOST also provides an opportunity to emerge as a community leader with social acceptance.
 - Need to strengthen network of all DOSTs at district and state level through WhatsApp group for exchange of experiences.

Suggested activities for further improving the Quality of Life of TG/MSM community members:

- All participants informed and agreed that the programs for improving the QoL is very much important and needed (avasiyam). The existing VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project is unique and addressed many needs of the community members beyond HIV/AIDS.
- Suggestions emerged during the discussions are:
 - Providing counselling for choosing job-oriented courses
 - Training for preparing for competitive exams to enable them to enter into the salaried professionals
 - Engaging well employed community members to share their experiences and motivate community members.
 - Develop an APP with resources, services and schemes available for TG/MSM communities to enable them to access through their own android phones.
 - Develop a state level creative team for undertaking State Level Social Media Communication Campaign (SLSMCC). This team can develop creatives and undertake series of campaign at different spells on various thematic areas. This will help in increasing awareness, developing knowledge and skills, etc for enhancing their QoL.
 - Educate and empower young communities for inculcating the habit of savings.
 - Expand this model to other districts for improving the QoL.

Chapter 4: Results of the evaluation

4.1. Findings

The team has undertaken quantitative and qualitative analysis for the purpose of identifying the effectiveness of the interventions, identifying best practices and suggest recommendations to guide for future program. The study findings based on the quantitative analysis are detailed below:

- Overall, 99% of them are having basic education either upto 8th Std., or upto 12th Std.
- Majority (61.67%) of the community members are daily wages, part time workers and remaining are monthly salaried, self-employed / business, pursuing studies, etc.
- Overall, 81.66% of them are earning only less than Rs. 10,000/- pm.
- Majority (59.17%) of the respondents are living in the rental house, 21.67% of them are staying with their Gurus, 10.83% of the respondents are staying with the friend and 5% of them are living in their own house. Only 3.33% of them are staying with the family.
- Majority of the respondents (74.17%) are living in urban areas, 15% of them are residing at rural areas and 10.83% of them has mentioned as rural and urban, it may include bordering areas, living in rural areas, operating in urban areas, etc.
- Overall, 92.50% (111 respondents) of them are using Android mobile with internet and computer / laptop facilities. Amongst all those who has internet connectivity, 92.50% of them has mentioned that they are using social media directly.
- 5% of the respondents have openly reported that, they are living with HIV (PLWHIV). All the reported PLWHIVs are in ART treatment and adhering.
- 100% of the respondents are aware about the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project, all of them participated and benefited through the project and received services from DOST. It is evident that, the project has reached community members in a more systematic and strategic manner.
- Overall, 89.17% of respondents have reported the services of DOST are very useful / useful.
- Almost 95.84% of the respondents opined that, local community member / DOST in providing awareness education is very useful. Overall, engaging the local specific community member as DOST is found more acceptable and useful.
- Almost 90.83% of them opined that, the engagement and contributions of DOST is acceptable and 77.50% of them are having plans to contact and avail benefits from same DOST even beyond project period. Overall, engagement of community member as DOST is acceptable & plans to avail services in future too. This found to be acceptable & sustainable model.
- Overall, 93.34% of them expressed that, overall functions and activities of the VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project is useful.
- The project has undertaken key activities on 10 core areas to improve the Quality of Lives of TG and MSM community members in seven selected districts of Tamil Nadu. The community members participation in the core areas of TRANS Life Project and benefits received are: it is evident that, 100% of them are benefited through Covid-19 prevention methods, about 85% of them benefited through U=U and equally 77.50% of them benefited through nutrition and ageing with dignity, 67.50% of them are benefited through Non-Communicable Disease, about 50% of them are benefited through Opportunistic Infections and social protection related initiatives. 40% of the respondents are availed services on mental health. About 20% of the young community members have also benefited in their priority area. 5% of them have availed the benefits pertaining to adherence to ART.
- Overall, 95% of them have accepted on the information provided with the focus on QoL improvement as beyond regular HIV/AIDS messages among TG and MSM communities. Similarly, 96.66% of the respondents opined that, this project and its activities contributed for enhancing the QoL of the individual. Likewise, 83.34% of the respondents opined that, this

project and its activities improved the QoL at present for self. Overall, the initiatives on the QoL improvement are mostly acceptable and contributed for enhancing and improving the QoL of self / individual.

- The project has adapted key approaches for providing comprehensive information on the core areas among the community members. The respondents opinion on the key approaches through which learnt or understood the comprehensive are: 100% of them equally opined that: received information through IPC, communication materials including e-posters and videos. 92.50% of them opined that, learnt comprehensive information through social media campaign, 74.17% learnt through counselling and guidance, 52.50% of them through referral and linkages with social welfare programs, obtaining ID cards, etc. 40% of respondents learnt/ understood through psycho-social support. About equally 34.17% of them learnt & understood: training including physical/virtual and availing health services including referral.
- The project has undertaken U=U campaign through social media as an innovative and model initiative. 93.33 % of the respondents opined that, U=U campaign was very useful. Amongst the respondents (112) opined as useful, 98.21 % of them responded as the unique approaches of using videos, e-poster, celebrities' involvement and other communication materials in campaign was useful. Overall, it is observed that, the U=U campaign was well accepted considering the strategic approaches adapted by the project and there is a desire need for replicating such U=U campaign initiatives in other areas. This U=U campaign enabled 6 PLWHIVs (66.67 %) are practicing the U=U guidelines and 33.33% of them reported that proposed to practice U=U.
- The project has undertaken efforts to improve the competencies among TG and MSM communities. 61.67% of the respondents expressed that, there is an improvement of competencies among TG/MSM communities and majority of them plans to undertake continued efforts to improve further. The competencies developed among community members will include communication skill, managing social media campaigns, capacity building of community members to serve as a DOST, producing videos, sensitizing and networking with key stakeholders, reaching the community members even during the lock down periods, developing Tik Tok by community members, manage performances, learning, managing conflicts and stress, overcoming mental health illness, etc.
- Around 60% of them have opined that, there is no existence of stigma and discrimination in the intervention area among TG/MSM communities. 35.83% of them opined that stigma is existing mostly / to an extent.
- The respondents revealed various efforts contributed for eliminating stigma and discrimination and the same is presented in order of ranking which includes: efforts undertaken by positive networks, NGOs, CBOs, etc (80.83%); positive speakers, goodwill ambassadors, etc (72.50%); advocacy and networking with police, media, policy makers, lawyers, etc (67.50%), communication campaigns for eliminating stigma and discrimination (60.83%); media support (38.33%); celebrities' involvement (30.00%); and engagement of private sector in testing (9.17%).
- Community members responded on ways to further reduce the stigma and discrimination, the suggestions emerged are in ranking: creating awareness to understand the TG/MSM communities in rural areas for greater acceptance to lead a normal life with the family (67.50%); educating the teachers in the schools to understand and accept the person as they are to enable in accepting them as they are (this will avoid dropouts) – (63.33%); promoting goodwill ambassadors for addressing stigma and discrimination (60.00%); networking of CBOs and undertaking campaign on common focused messages during particular period (55.83%); educating and enabling the parents to understand the children / youth (53.33%); recognizing the supporters of the TG/MSM communities – which will motivate more supportive groups to support the TG/MSM population (40.83%); and positive write-ups in the media on regular basis (31.67%).

- The project provided “Dry Ration” kit to the community members with 17 items along with re-usable bag for providing to the needy (i.e.,) 14 items as a part of dry ration including rice, groceries, etc and 3 items of sanitizer / health kit. In response to the question on the receipt of “Dry Ration” kit, 80.83% of the respondents has received and benefited. Almost all of them opined that, the materials’ quality are good, useful and 97.94% of them opined that the quantity is sufficient. Overall, the “Dry Ration” kit is found to be very much acceptable and helpful considering the good quality, quantity and providing the required materials.
- Suggestions provided by respondents for promoting safe preventive measures, improving quality of life and planning for future by young community members are given in ranking order based on the percentage (i.e.,):
 - Develop videos or self-learning materials to enable young community members to read and understand (in the absence of unreached) – 84.17%
 - Undertake social media campaigns to identify young community members – 76.67%
 - Promote awareness and knowledge and skills at initial stage itself – 67.50%
 - Training the Gurus / Amma to understand the young community members and guide accordingly – 61.67%
 - Encourage and involve all CBOs to undertake systematic efforts in identifying young communities and provide services – 60.00%
 - Provide counselling on career guidance and employment opportunities – to enable them to be away from begging and sex – 55.83%
 - Undertake HIV/AIDS prevention through virtual methods – to reach the unreached – 52.50%
 - Develop helpline for TG/MSM – this may be useful for young communities also will benefit – 44.17%
 - Educate parents, parent-teacher associations and school teachers to accept – 40.00%
 - Introduce schemes for families accepting the trans as a part of the family – 25.83%
 - Linkage with organizations preparing the skills for employment – 18.33%

These suggestions will be of useful for further consideration for initiating interventions focusing on young community members.

- 60.83% of the respondents received benefits through welfare schemes with the support and guidance of DOSTs. In addition, 10.83% of them are in the process of availing and awaiting for the approvals. Overall, 71.66% (86 respondents) of them have benefited through welfare schemes through the initiatives of the project.
- Amongst the 86 respondents, shared the information on the list of benefits received and the same is given in ranking which includes:

1. Free bus pass - 95.35%	9. Linked with insurance as a part of existing bank accounts - 31.40%
2. Covid relief funds provided by the govt (Rs. 2,000 x 2 times) - 94.19%	10. Old age pension (for 40+) - 24.42%
3. Health kit for Covid-19 - 90.70%	11. Free legal aid - 22.09%
4. Referral, accompanied visits and guiding for availing medical services - 50.00%	12. Ration card (including new and corrections) - 20.93%
5. Aadhar card (new, changes in the existing card) – ID proof - 47.67%	13. Employment opportunities - 18.60%
6. Chief Minister’s free Medical Insurance ID card - 41.86%	14. Training / guidance for income generation - 12.79%
7. Membership card for TG welfare board - 34.88%	15. Guidance and referral for SRS at govt hospital - 6.98%
8. Opening of SB account in bank for initiating savings - 31.40%	16. Free land / house Patta and related - 4.65%
	17. Re-enrolment for initiating ART (among dropouts) - 2.33%

These benefits includes guidance and support extended by DOST for availing ID cards, health benefits, Covid relief benefits, opening of bank account, employment opportunities, old age pension and other benefits. Many of these benefits will be of continuous in nature for availing benefits in routine manner. The above data also indicates some of the individuals have benefited through more than one welfare scheme.

- Almost 85% of the respondents recommended for replication of this project in other areas. This data also proves that, the project has demonstrated acceptability among the community members and felt the need for replicating in other areas for their own community members to benefit.
- 80.83% of the respondents are willing to share the benefits received with fellow community members for improvement.
- Respondents' suggestions on additional information / aspects to be provided for TG/MSM communities in future and the responses received are provided in ranking which includes:
 - Continue the existing program to other areas
 - Capacity building of CBOs on HIV Plus related activities (comprehensive health care of TGs)
 - More self-learning / videos for use in the social media campaign (health consciousness, self-care, health seeking behaviour, personality development, career development options, success stories, etc)
 - Developing social media creative team for developing creatives on thematic messages and create awareness
 - Helpline for TGs – by involving Psychiatrists / Counsellors
 - Establish a website / APP for TGs to access all information under one roof (one stop shop)
 - Establishing state level resource center for TG/MSM community as one stop shop
 - Career guidance for young and other TG/MSM
 - Intervention in schools
 - Focus on young communities
 - Handbook on welfare schemes updated
 - Preparing for consistent improvement of savings among TGs across the state

The study findings observed in the quantitative study is also correlates with the qualitative study findings. By reviewing both qualitative and quantitative study findings, it is very much observed that, the project has more accepted considering the strategic approaches and contributed for achieving the project priorities and beyond the project deliverables.

4.2. Key achievements of the project - highlights

Details / activities	Nos.
Project team:	
No. of CBOs involved in implementation	12
No. of DOSTs engaged, capacitated and involved in the project	30
No. of TG/MSMs reached directly by the project	600
BCC Materials:	
Audio Song	1
Handbook	1
E-Posters	9
Video songs + community video song	10
U=U Campaign Videos	8
Tool development:	
No. of Quality-of-Life Index Tool (QoLIT) for HIV positive TG/MSM community with 32 questions as a model	1
Capacity building:	
Sensitized Health Care Providers	31
Sensitized mental health doctors and counsellors	22
Sensitized lawyers (young aspirants, including community preferred lawyers)	150
Capacity building of CBOs and Board members (12 CBOs and 36 board of members)	48
“Barefoot Counselling” training (30 DOSTs and 24 CBO members)	54
Achievements:	
No. of one-to-one provided to community members (including repeated interactions)	600
No. of persons provided with “Barefoot Counselling”	1,103
Psycho-social support provided	2,234
Promoted self-care management	564
Referral to health check-up including availing treatment	122
Distributed dry ration – directly by the project	511
Livelihood support	556
Nutritional support	989
Hygiene kits provided	605
Community members benefitting through the helplines (promoted by the project)	1,011
Referral and linkages:	
Referral and linkage for social protection	777
Linkage with ongoing TI program:	
Re-enrolment of community members in the TI program (linkage with TI program)	41
Young communities have been linked with STI/HIV/AIDS program	22
Resources mobilized / leveraged:	
Distribution of masks	
N95 – by the project (leveraging)	4,000
Three-layered masks (leveraging)	3,000
Approximate leveraging of resources	Rs. 1,80,000
Distribution of ration and food packets by leveraging resources by the CBOs for community members	970

Details / activities	Nos.
Approximate amount leveraged	Rs. 4,86,500
Hygiene kits mobilized and provided by CBOs	3,247
Approximate amount leveraged	Rs. 1,94,820
Social Media Campaign Reach:	
Facebook reach	33,500
Facebook likes	470
YouTube views	877
YouTube likes	71
YouTube subscribers	58
WhatsApp groups	37,910
Third gender community reached	3,800
No. of HIV Positives reached through personal interactions after viewing campaign	118

4.3. Summary on the achievements and effectiveness

Based on the secondary review, qualitative study conducted, and quantitative data analysis undertaken, summarizing the key accomplishments and achievements of the project:

- This project ensured Community Engagement and Community Mobilization efforts at every stage of the project by ensuring community consultation, capacity building of CBOs / DOSTs, enhancing their competencies, etc.
- The identification and engagement of community member as DOST (FRIEND) has greater acceptance and contributed for reaching the target groups and achieving the desired results. This approach is also a sustainable and cost-effective model. These DOSTs' roles and responsibilities are well-defined and identified DOST through a specific community-initiated guidelines. DOSTs has undertaken IPC activities on one-to-one and through virtual methods.
- The project focused on the improving the QoL of TG/MSM communities on 10 core messages / areas covering all aspects and addressing comprehensive needs of TG/MSM communities and it is observed that, first time TG/MSM communities are provided with such comprehensive services with the focus on beyond HIV.
- The project has adapted comprehensive strategies, innovative approaches, coordination with all key stakeholders at all levels, ensure community engagement and community mobilization initiatives, addressed the comprehensive needs of the community members including focusing on young communities and preparing for ageing with dignity, etc.
- The project has undertaken systematic and need based initiatives in young lawyers and other stakeholders for ensuring partnerships, linkage with services and ensuring sustained efforts. This intervention has also enhanced the capacities of 48 CBO / board members including 12 CBOs and 36 board of members on handling QoL related activities using strategic approaches.
- The project contributed for developing a need based and pioneering QoL Index Tool for HIV positive TG/MSM community members.
- Strategic and systematic efforts have been undertaken to promote mental health by addressing mental health issues through capacity building, including counsellors in the intervention area, linkage with these professionals for availing services, providing Barefoot Counselling, providing psycho-social support, etc. This approach and efforts has greater acceptance.

- The project has also promoted a dedicated helpline and thus contributed for community friendly guidance / counselling and benefited by 1,011 community members. In addition, DOSTs and CBOs also has promoted other helplines for availing need-based services.
- This intervention and the initiatives of DOST has resulted in identification of young community members, guiding them and contributing for re-enrolment of 41 community members in the TI program and 22 young community members have been linked with STI/HIV/AIDS program. This effort has been possible through an engagement of community consultation, engagement of DOSTs and the ongoing strategic efforts undertaken.
- As a part of this project, based on the community needs, developed BCC materials for awareness creation and use in social media campaign / tech-enabled communication initiatives which includes: 1 audio song, 1 handbook, 9 e-posters, 9 video songs, 1 community video song and 8 U=U campaign videos by involving celebrities, community members, community consultants, etc. These efforts has contributed for Facebook reach of 33,500 and WhatsApp reach of 37,910. In addition to the primary target groups of 600, overall, the social media campaign initiatives has contributed for reaching 3,800 TG community members. The project has reached the TG/MSM communities beyond the target groups and created a momentum on improving the QoL. The e-posters and videos developed will be of permanent resource materials by use by any CBOs in the state and the same also can be dubbed and used across the country.
- As per the findings of the baseline, the project integrated and promoted the self-care management among 564 TG/MSM community members. This initiative has inculcated the habits of personal hygiene, nutritional practices, timely taking foods, etc.
- The CBO and the DOST has undertaken efforts on the guidance of the project team and mobilized food packets, groceries, hygiene kit and other resources for about Rs. 7,41,320/-. These efforts has been undertaken with the guidance of project team. Through this process, capacitated and motivated the CBOs and DOSTs on resource mobilization initiatives. The project has also undertaken efforts in leveraging resources for about Rs. 1,20,000/- for supporting and addressing the Covid-19 prevention initiatives.
- The project has adapted 12 M's - contributors for the success of the project which includes: Methodical approaches; Mobilization of community participation and its networks; Marginalized friendly approaches; Mingle / meet with stakeholders (Networking); Minimal Period; Minimal Resources (Human + Finance); Managed Innovative Communications / social media; Managed Project Risks; Maximum Coverage / results through DOST; Mutual / Multi-Level Learning; Maintainable (Sustainable); Leverage Resources; Referral and Linkages; Messages through DOST – Community Communication Agent; and Making it possible through DOST.
- The project has achieved the desired results in the midst of Covid-19. Some of the factors contributed for the successful implementation of the project such as: Experienced Program Team; DOST (Community friendly volunteer); Community Engagement and Community friendly approaches; Community Friendly messages, materials & medium; Community centric approaches / program areas, new program areas (U=U, Ageing with Dignity, young TG/MSMs); Capacity building of initiatives of CBOs and DOSTs; Best use of free time during Covid for awareness; Social media campaign; Trusted partnership of VHS-CBO and DOSTs; Motivation of DOSTs at every stage for learning and sharing; Mentoring and strategic monitoring; Personal needs than common needs (QoL health focus than HIV focus) – beyond HIV/AIDS; Use of social media groups at all levels; and Covering all age group target specific

Based on the quantitative data analysis, the following observations / findings has been observed on the usefulness and effectiveness of the intervention:

- Overall, the quantitative data analysis denotes that the project has reached intended target groups and almost all of them are aware of the project activities, participated and benefited through the project activities. The introduction of DOST (community volunteer) is found to be more acceptable, sustainable and the community members are willing to avail benefits on continuous basis beyond the lifetime of the project. In addition, majority of the respondents have expressed that, TRANS Life Project functions are useful and acceptable.
- Majority of the community members participated, availed services and benefited through all the 10 core messages / areas of the project. More than 95% of the respondents has acceptance on information provided focusing on QoL improvement as beyond HIV/AIDS messages. Similarly, this project has also contributed for enhancing the QoL of self. The respondents has greater acceptance for majority of the key approaches adapted including IPC (physical and virtual), counselling, social media campaign, e-posters / materials, videos and songs, training programs, referral and linkages, health services, etc. The project has undertaken U=U campaign as a first time in India and 93.33% of the respondents has reported as useful, the approaches adapted for campaign is also very useful and maximum respondents recommended for replicating such U=U campaigns in other areas.
- This project has also focused and improved the competencies of TG/MSM communities and some of the competencies developed among the community members will include communication skill, managing social media campaigns, capacity building of community members to serve as a DOST, producing videos, sensitizing and networking with key stakeholders, reaching the community members even during the lock down periods, developing Tik Tok by community members, manage performances, learning, managing conflicts and stress, overcoming mental health illness, etc.
- Majority of them expressed that, stigma is not existing and very minimal % of people reported as to an extent / mostly existing and this shows there is an ongoing effort of the community initiatives and the intervention of the project in addressing the stigma and discrimination.
- The project has undertaken systematic efforts for providing Dry Ration Kit to the community members and almost all of them have opined that, quality and quantity of the Dry Ration Kit was good, much useful and provided required materials. This has helped in addressing the basic requirements of the TG/MSM community during the Covid situation.
- The community members suggesting to promote the safe preventive measures and improving the QoL of young community members are: developing self-learning materials for young communities, undertake social media campaign, promote awareness, knowledge and skills at initial stage, training of Gurus and Ammas to guide the young community members, capacitate and motivate CBOs to guide young community members, provide guidance and counselling for choosing salaried profession (beyond begging and sex), develop helpline for young communities, educate parents, parent-teacher associations and school teachers to accept adolescent TGs while at school and orientation of gender identity, introduce schemes for families to accept trans community members, undertake HIV/AIDS prevention through virtual methods, networking and encouraging CBOs to provide systematic services to the young community members.
- More than 70% of them respondents received the welfare schemes with the guidance of DOSTs and intervention of the project and some of the welfare schemes availed will include: Aadhar card, TG Welfare Board membership card, ration card, free bus pass,

medical insurance ID card, opening of SB bank account, linkage with insurance and old age pension, availing Covid relief funds / medical services, re-enrollment initiatives for ensuring ART adherence, Covid-19 health kit, employment opportunities and guidance for income generation programs, free legal aid, availing free patta, referral for SRS at GH, and other services. This project has developed capacities of the DOST and CBOs in guiding the community members for availing social protection by eliminating middlemen, brokers, etc.

- While there is a greater acceptance for this project intervention initiatives and benefited, some of the community members suggested on the need for additional information / aspects to be provided to TG/MSM communities which includes focus on young communities, intervention in schools, helpline for TGs, career guidance, capacity building of CBOs on HIV Plus activities, more self-learning / videos for social media, consistency of savings, website / APP for TGs, continue in other areas, State Resource Center for TG/MSM community, social media creative team, handbook on welfare schemes, etc.

4.4. Best Practices

As a part of the End of Evaluation, the team has interacted with the community members, conducted qualitative and quantitative study, undertaken secondary review, etc. Through the process, the following best practices demonstrated by the project has been identified:

- Use of tech-enabled / social media campaign among the TG/MSM community is well accepted and contribute for maximum reach.
- Ensuring Community Engagement and Community Mobilization at every stage of the project results in achieving the desired results with minimal resources in a sustainable way.
- Developing pool of resources including e-posters, videos, audio songs, theme songs, etc are very much accepted and contributed for creating awareness.
- Sensitizing community preferred non-health professionals by the CBO and DOST is an acceptable approach and contribute for referral and linkages.
- Engagement of DOSTs (community volunteers – friend) is acceptable in all form at all levels among the community members. This DOST has more acceptance and recognition than the peer educators.
- Developing and capacitating local community member as “well informed person for referral and linkage with services including availing social protection” is found very effective and it avoids the middlemen, brokers, etc and results in maximum community members benefiting through various welfare and health schemes.
- Intervention among the young community members and preparing for career to opt for salaried professions through a coordinated effort.
- Dedicated helpline for TG/MSM community and managed by professionals with community understanding is found more acceptable and replicable.
- Ongoing capacity building of CBOs on resource mobilization contributes for leveraging local resources towards sustained initiatives.
- Utilization of virtual platforms for capacity building of community members considering the maximum mobile phone, internet and social media usage by the TG/MSM community members.
- Developing competencies of TG/MSM communities on need based.
- U=U campaign through social media is more effective and engagement of community members and non-community members including celebrities is contributing for higher reach, more viewership and retention.

4.5. Recommendations

- *Replication of VHS-Gilead TRANS Life Project in other districts.*
- *Translate / sub-titling the existing e-posters and videos for use in other states.*
- *Intervention for young communities at state level using technologies.*
- *Establishing state digital repository for TGs / state information and support center for TG/MSM communities (along with repository of information, schemes, best practices, community consultant details, etc).*
- *Digital tech-enabled communication:*
 - *State creative team for developing creatives for use in social media campaign.*
 - *Social media campaign on thematic series.*
 - *Developing APP with information on resources available, services schemes, self-counselling, awareness videos, etc.*
 - *Develop self-learning materials and made available in the web platform.*
- *Mental health helpline with the counsellor at state level (MH and career guidance).*
- *Career guidance for continuing education by young communities, preparing for salaried jobs for young TG/MSM.*
- *Training for Gurus for guiding the young TG/MSM beyond routine / regular activities.*
- *Capacity building of CBOs in the state on QoL improvement to the entire state.*
- *Continue to promote self-care management among community members.*
- *Campaign mode initiatives for linking with services and schemes for 100% of community members (social protection).*
- *Documentation of best practices on empowerment of TG/MSM community and dissemination.*
- *Educate parents, parent-teacher associations and teachers on gender identity and developing positive attitude about TG/MSM communities.*
- *Networking of trained DOSTs for continuing the efforts and ongoing mentoring and technical support.*
- *Establishing a state level trust for coordinating the TG/MSM community needs with the provision of fixed deposit for generating income for continuing the activities by core team (based on the OVC trust established in the state).*
- *Organizing state level convention once in two years for facilitating experience sharing, identifying community priorities and evolve roadmap.*

4.6. Conclusion

Overall, the project has contributed for the improvement of QoL of TG/MSM communities in seven districts of Tamilnadu by primarily addressing 600 community members including young community members. This project has contributed for building the competencies of TG/MSM PLWHIV communities in improving physical, mental and social well-being, improving access to multi-disciplinary care services and reducing stigma & discrimination of the community members. Overall, the project contributed for achieving the project goal and its objectives through strategic efforts and contributions. The learnings and best practices may be disseminated with CBO networks and other organizations involved in implementing programs for TG/MSM communities. The same project with the value addition considering the suggestions emerged from the community may be replicated / scaled up in other districts within the state and in the country.

References

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