

Mainstreaming HIV-AIDs Programs with City-City Partnership between Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh and Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Project Name: City-City Partnership of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh with Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India
Client Name: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Family Health International (FHI)
Country: India
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Project Brief

UMC aims at helping city governments provide better health and living conditions to people. For this, UMC facilitates partnerships between cities in India and abroad for sharing of successful initiatives. UMC's flagship campaign under its Urban Health Initiatives is the HIV/AIDS response program. Under this program, the cities of Ahmedabad and Vishakhapatnam joined hands to bring about a positive change on HIV/AIDS prevention. With support from UMC, Ahmedabad helped Vishakhapatnam integrate, mainstream and implement strategies within its City Development Strategies. UMC's efforts included, with TMC's help, documenting case studies of city governments undertaking HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. City governments were involved by facilitating their access to new measure taken on the front. As the partnership progressed, the link between the two cities grew stronger. The cities still continue their partnership against HIV/AIDS even after the stipulated partnership period. UMC provided support to enhance capacities of Vishakhapatnam to integrate, mainstream and implement HIV/AIDS program within the City Development Strategy.



Detailed Description of the Actual Services Provided by UMC

On April 6, 2006, in Ahmedabad, representatives of both cities joined hands as part of their first technical exchange in developing interventions towards HIV/AIDS prevention. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) decided to become the Host City to Greater Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), the Learner City. Ahmedabad municipal authority initiated HIV/AIDS programs while the Vishakhapatnam City Development Strategy identified it as an emerging problem and demonstrated willingness to work towards its prevention. With support from AMC, UMC, Ahmedabad AIDS Control Society, Vishakhapatnam launched the Vishakhapatnam AIDS Control Society (VACS) on June 13, 2006. The setting up of the Vishakhapatnam AIDS



Control Society (VACS) was the first time ever in India that an AIDS control society was launched with initiative of a city government. The achieving moment for VACS came when the GVMC allotted it a budget of Rs 30 lakh for 2007-08. This was the first time that a city government had made fund allocations for an AIDS control society from its annual budget. The Greater Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, in coordination with Vishakhapatnam AIDS Control Society (VACS) is continuing to spread the message on HIV/AIDS.



As per suggestions by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, VACS compiled data about the city and carried out a survey on AIDS awareness in urban slums. This helped VACS select target areas, devise strategies and make plans on implementing them. The initiatives have showed results. VACS's recommendation for pension for widows of HIV positive men has been sanctioned for life time with help of Urban Community Development, GVMC.



The initiatives have been successful in drawing public attention. More and more people are coming forward for voluntary HIV testing. Also, pre-marital testing is being promoted. Looking at the initial successes of the efforts, Ahmedabad and Vishakhapatnam decided that the program would and should not end after the designated six-month period of UMC/USAID/FHI support. To enhance the capacities of the cities to work towards their goal, UMC documented case studies of city governments undertaking HIV/AIDS prevention programs. It helped city government council's access experiences and learning. It also helped strengthen partnership and the capacity of Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation.



Documenting case studies of city governments undertaking HIV/AIDS prevention programs

- UMC conducted a rapid assessment of about 15 cities to do a preliminary listing of initiatives that city governments have undertaken towards HIV/AIDS prevention.
- A detailed case study documentation of select 5-10 interventions from across 4 cities.
- UMC prepared a video documentation of pre-selected initiatives to be screened at "experience sharing" workshop and distributed to Indian city government leaders.

Identifying and facilitating sharing and transfer of learning to city government councils

- UMC conducted a dissemination workshop at Vishakhapatnam to share the documented case studies with concerned stakeholders including city government, state government, hospital, NGO officials who were involved in implementing the interventions.
- UMC also organized a study tour of selected officials from Vishakhapatnam to selected case study sites. This helped Vishakhapatnam officials to identify case studies for replication in their own city.
- A pilot exchange program between Learner City Vishakhapatnam with Host City Ahmedabad, which has demonstrated successful HIV/AIDS prevention programs was set up. The program bridged ongoing interventions among stakeholders and sought to achieve better multi-stakeholder coordination.
- Strengthening the capacity of Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation to develop HIV/AIDS program
- The partnered cities entered into an agreement to provide specific short-term technical assistance.
- A task force consisting of key stakeholders, senior urban planners and task managers was set up in Vishakhapatnam. There were exchange visits from the Learner City to the Host City and vice-versa to work on specific areas that could be implemented within specific deadlines.
- There are a number of ongoing intervention programs providing training and assistance to NGOs and local governments in these states; UMC looked for opportunities to complement and supplement such ongoing activities. These partnerships built capacity of the Learner City to design and initiate relevant HIV/AIDS programs and to find mechanisms of funding the same.
- The cities have committed to continue their partnership aiming towards more sustainable interventions against HIV/AIDS.