

Muktaa HIV Helpline Summary Annual Report For The Period April 2006 to March 2007

Background

The only sustained service of its kind in Pune, MUKTAA HIV Helpline provides a secure medium through which people can receive answers to queries on HIV and AIDS. Citizens ask for information in private - questions they cannot discuss in their homes or with friends and relatives or even with their doctor. Launched on 2nd October 2005, Muktaa has handled nearly 10,000 calls as of 31st March 2007.

Our Dream: To provide all services required in relation to HIV/ AIDS to citizens of India

Our Vision: To make Muktaa the most impactful helpline for HIV/ AIDS in India

Our Principles:

1. A compassionate, non judgmental attitude
2. Accuracy of information
3. Highest ethical standards with respect to privacy and confidentiality

The Service

Three phone lines are available on which counselors provide information on HIV/ AIDS and STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases). Lines are open from 9:30 am to 8:30 pm Monday to Saturdays except on specified holidays.

As of 31st March 2007, Muktaa had received nearly 10,000 calls mostly from all over Maharashtra.

Salient Call Analysis

1. 10% calls from PLWHA (People Living With HIV/ AIDS)
2. 98% calls are from males. This is in line with the experience of other help lines.
3. Topics of interest

Transmission: 36%	Symptoms: 9%	STD: 5%
Prevention: 17%	Mother and child care: 9%	
Testing: 16%	Sexuality 7%	

4. Promotion

Newspaper ads: 61%	Posters on buses: 13%
Word of mouth: 21%	Other: 5%

5. Repeat Calls: 11%

Is Muktaa Making A Difference?

We, at Muktaa, believe so. Regular repeat calls informing us of the HIV test report or thank you calls, do indicate that phone counseling from Muktaa does lead to positive change in behaviour. From the nature of the calls, it does seem that our premise of anonymity is working. People do open up on the phone. Many are desperate to get advice or information. Some just want to talk to somebody to deal with their situation.

Learning So Far

1. Pune, and indeed Maharashtra, needs such a helpline quite badly. Citizens do not know enough about the disease.
2. In several cases there was anxiety about unsafe sex. However what is unsafe was not often clear to the caller. Citizens do not know enough about protective measures.
3. People want to know what will work for their specific situation. The issue is intricately commingled with social, cultural, legal and economic questions. A helpline works nicely by providing one-on-one advice that is relevant in the caller's context.
4. Where testing is done, often little or no counseling is done. Several callers have called in just to understand their test report.
5. Several desperate cases of HIV positives and families affected came to light. There is much that remains to be done to support such people.

Plan For The Period Apr 2007 to March 2008

Goals

1. 25,000 calls for the year
2. Increase the reach and visibility of the helpline

3. Create a platform for sustainability – tie up institutional funding

Financials (all figures in Indian Rupees)

	05-06	06-07*	07-08**
People			
Salaries	135,440	205,889	364,000
Training	21,168	7,399	5,000
Recruitment	14,965	0	10,000
Books and Periodicals	1,249	649	1,000
Promotion			
Advertisements	0	52,585	300,000
Materials	69,424	73,581	50,000
Travel, Local Conveyance	17,577	12,498	20,000
Postage	310	2,195	3,000
Press Conference	723	288	1,000
Office			
Telephone	14,728	22,974	25,000
Equipment	33,639	4,845	5,000
Property Tax	2,693	2,693	2,693
Office Expenses	4,500	13,330	20,000
Electricity	4,590	2,750	3,000
ART	0	63,745	75,000
MISC	0	12,736	15,000
	321,006	478,156	904,693

* Unaudited ** Budgeted

Conclusion

There has been some skepticism about HIV help lines due to several failed attempts by various organizations to setup a phone based service for HIV. Muktaa has shown that it is indeed a much needed service for India. However it is much more than simply putting people behind a phone line. Running a help line requires tons of planning and organization, skillful execution and great attention to details.

Who Runs Muktaa

Muktaa HIV Helpline was founded and is run by a group of volunteers under the aegis of Maitri Trust, a well known civil society action group based in Pune, India.

About MAITRI

In 1997, a group of citizens from Pune responded to child deaths due to malnutrition in Melghat (Amravati district, Maharashtra) as a local level emergency. The initial response was mainly to send volunteers to help needy children to secure health needs. Currently, the program has moved into a longer-term development interventions in three areas viz. primary health care, education and securing sustainable livelihoods. This group, called Melghat Mitra, went on to create Maitri Trust, a forum of volunteers and citizens who want to work in order to make their lives better. Today, Maitri provides mobilizational and organizational back up for citizen's initiatives. Maitri runs several projects apart from Melghat Mitra. Maitri in Emergencies group mobilizes volunteers for emergency relief work. MUKTAA works in HIV awareness. Another group works in the Konkan area with some of the most backward settlements in Maharashtra. Samvad conducts monthly lectures on topics of social interest.