

**NACO Evaluation
of
STRC Kerala and Lakshadweep**

Facilitated by: PRAXIS - Institute for Participatory Practices

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| AIDS | Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome |
| ANC | Ante Natal Clinic |
| ANM | Auxiliary Nurse Midwife |
| ASHA | Accredited Social Health Activities |
| AWW | Aaganwadi Worker |
| BMGF | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation |
| BCC | Behaviour Change Communication |
| CBO | Community Based Organisation |
| CSW | Commercial Sex Worker |
| DFID | Department For International Development |
| FSW | Female Sex Worker |
| HIV | Human Immuno-deficiency Virus |
| HLFPPT | Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust |
| HRD | Human Resources Development |
| HRG | High Risk Group |
| ICT | Integrated Counseling & Testing |
| IDU | Injected Drug User |
| IEC | Information, Education and Communication |
| KILA | Kerala Institute for Local Administration |
| KSACS | Kerala State Aids Control Society |
| ORW | Outreach Worker |
| PE | Peer Educator |
| PLOP | Peer-led Outreach Planning |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PRI | Panchayat Raj Institution |
| TNA | Training Needs Assessment |

Executive summary

In view of strengthening the implementation of the HIV/AIDS programme in the country, the National Aids Control Organisation (NACO) has institutionalized State Training Resource Centres (STRCs) in several states; precisely, 14 so far.

SOMA, which is an organization with over 10 years of experience in management services for the social sector, found this initiative interesting and – in association with the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), whose strength is capacity building – proposed to NACO to provide the institutional platform for the STRC in Kerala and Lakshadweep (STRC KL & LD), which became operational in August 2008.

This report documents the findings of a 3-day visit conducted by a Praxis team with the objective of reviewing the activities carried out by STRC over the first year of functioning, assessing its performance, identifying room for improvement and formulating suggestions, if appropriate.

The methodology used for the present evaluation has, by enlarged, been developed by NACO focusing on three major areas of assessment, namely:

1. Programme delivery
2. Organisational capacity
3. Financial management

Most of the information required has been gathered through interaction with the STRC team, Faculty Members and partner NGO representatives as well as review of the respective documents. In particular, individual interviews were carried out with a selected sample of faculty members while a focus group discussion took place with some of the TI project representatives randomly selected.

Overall, the evaluation team has found that the programme performance of STRC for its first year of functioning is up to the expectations of NACO/SACS. In some areas (in particular, trainings and organizational capacity), scope for further improvement was highlighted and respective suggestions were provided throughout the report.

Below is a summary of the most salient points organised per assessment area.

1. Programme delivery

Till now, STRC has selected 25 faculty members who cover all the training topics included in the training plan of the past year. These resource persons are master trainers trained by NACO for the state and – through interviews – the evaluation team could verify that they are familiar with training techniques and well versed with NACP III and TIs.

Between August 2008 and July 2009, STRC KL & LD conducted a total of 34 training programmes, covering 14 training categories and involving 68 batches. Most of the training programmes include a field component, which differs depending on the topic and profile of participants.

As also confirmed by the interaction with some of the implementing NGO representatives, the quality of the services provided by STRC, in general, and of the training programmes, in particular, is good, well appreciated by the recipients and molded according to their needs. However, a regular system of follow-up/mentoring after the training has been found lacking and necessary to improve the effectiveness of the current capacity building effort. This is in consideration of the fact that field level interaction is one of the best ways to assess the degree of understanding of the trained TI staff and that there is a high turnover at the NGO level. In the same perspective, STRC has recently proposed to set up a mentoring system that should provide on-the-spot and regular support to the trainees.

During the implementation of the first year work plan, STRC has faced several difficulties. Some of the most critical are as follows:

- Availing of the qualified resource persons as per the training calendar. Some of the trainings were to happen simultaneously while the number of the selected trainers was limited. Moreover, the cost-opportunity paid to them as per KSACS directions (i.e. INR 500 per session up to a maximum of 3 sessions) is not competitive; hence resource persons prefer engaging in other work.
- The delay in the disbursement of funds from NACO is a serious constraint for STRC, for which reason certain planned activities (like, for instance, launching the website) have been frozen.

2. Organisational capacity

As part of its institutional support, SOMA hosts STRC in its office located in Trivandrum. Similarly, a space in KILA is offered to one of the training officers.

Since its inception, the total number of staff members in STRC has remained five and no turn-over has taken place.

SOMA and NACO provided the initial induction training to the recruited STRC members focusing on the respective job descriptions, capacity building and design of training programme, components of the TI programme and attitudinal changes towards the core groups.

In regard to record keeping, the only register maintained is the movement register, which is updated by the assistant training officer. Concerning leave requests, no leave form exists at the moment.

STRC Kerala has monthly staff meetings that are compulsory for all team members. Although a monthly performance review takes place monthly and action plans are developed accordingly, these are not recorded in the minutes.

Team members of STRC feel that the working environment is very informal and open, for which they can discuss with the management any problem faced and be sure that they will receive adequate support and direction.

In light of all the above, the evaluation team has provided the following suggestions:

- STRC should have an attendance register, which is required by the contract with NACO. Staff traveling could mention the outstation period upon their return
- It is recommended that a system to keep track of staff leaves is put in place
- All fixed assets related to STRC should be insured by STRC (insurance coverage)
- Monthly staff meetings should document revisions of the previous action plans.

3. Financial management

The review of the financial documents does not reveal any non-utilisation or deviance as such. The only problem faced is the delay of the quarterly disbursements by NACO. For instance, over a year, the STRC has received only around 50% of the agreed budget. In regard to the money released by KSACS, it has been observed that the latter does not provide written information on whether and what amount of the budget is approved against the plan submitted quarterly by STRC.

The finance process observed is satisfactory and meets with the basic standards required. However, some practices can be slightly further improved and systematized. As a result, the evaluation team has suggested the following:

- STRC should have an attendance register, which is required by the contact with NACO. Staff traveling could mention the outstation period upon their return
- It is recommended that a system to keep track of staff leaves is put in place by STRC
- All fixed assets related to STRC should be insured by STRC (insurance coverage)
- Monthly staff meetings should document revisions of the previous action plans
- KSACS should give STRC work orders and receipts for expense vouchers submitted.
- NACO should release money on time.
- STRC should think of introducing ceilings on the withdrawing capacity of the authorized signatories

During the exit conference held with STRC, additional suggestions emerged that NACO and KSACS may want to keep in mind for a betterment of the programme.

1. NACO could conduct refresher programmes (2 days) for STRC teams on training methods, new guidelines, etc. separate from the review meetings.
2. Region/ state specific methodologies (such as web based training, mentoring, onsite training, etc.) should be encouraged and supported, keeping the minimum deliverable content intact. This should be done while the training modules are being prepared. Once the modules are prepared, it will be harder to accommodate changes, modifications and customisation.
3. For capacity building and sharing between resource persons, there could be quarterly orientation/ refresher training (2days) of resource persons. This would help them with updating/ sharing skills and learn about new guidelines, etc. However, SACS is unwilling to pay honorarium to the resource persons. This then becomes difficult for resource persons since there is an opportunity cost. What STRC proposed is payment of 2/3rd the daily rate (Rs.1000/- instead of Rs.1500/-)
4. Follow up visits are very difficult since there are only 3 – 4 people and 52 TIs. The ratio of TO to TI should be made at least 1:15 for any meaningful follow up to happen
5. NACO could look into broadening the scope of STRCs so as to mainstream some of the initiatives beyond TIs. An example in the context of STRC KL & LD is the programme with PRIs. In this regard, the partnership with KILA plays a pivotal role in the design of the modules, linkages with Gram Panchayats, access to their State and district level infrastructures.

1. Background

1.1 State Training and Research Centre Evaluation

National AIDS Control Programme Phase III (NACP III) is focused on saturating the coverage of core and bridge population through targeted intervention (TI) programme. To standardize systems and procedures, operational guidelines have been developed on all categories of Targeted Intervention (TI) proposals namely, Men having Sex with Men (MSM), Female Sex Workers (FSW), Injecting Drug Users (IDU), Migrants and Truckers.

In order to ensure standardised and quality trainings to different categories of staff working with NGOs/CBOs on TI's with a mandate to develop a sustainable and institutionalised centre for the capacity building of partner organizations for TI's, gather learning through additional research and develop pedagogy of learning for TI scale up, National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) has decided to institutionalize the training and capacity building process through the creation of State Training and Resource Centres (STRCs) across the country. Currently, 14 STRCs have been constituted.

In order to evaluate the performance and quality of the STRCs upon completion of their first functioning year, NACO approached PRAXIS so as to carry out an evaluation of 9 STRCs. In particular, this report documents the performance assessment of STRC Kerala and Lakshadweep.

1.2 Evaluation Methodology

The core of this evaluation methodology has been developed by NACO. As per this structure, three major areas of assessment are focused upon, namely programme delivery, organizational capacity and financial management. Within each broad category, specific aspects of the STRC functioning systems as well as quality of activities and outcomes are considered. Indicators are provided for each aspect on the basis of the initial ToR for STRCs and subsequent revisions.

Most of the information required has been gathered through interaction with the STRC team, Faculty Members and partner NGO representatives as well as review of the respective documents. In particular, individual interviews were carried out with a selected sample of faculty members while a focus group discussion took place with some of the TI project representatives randomly selected.

The assessment visit lasted 3 days. An exit interview with the STRC Programme Manager was held on the last day so as to share the main findings and incorporate STRC staff feedback on the same.

2. Three-day Evaluation Schedule

Following are the evaluation schedules, which reflect the activities carried out during the 3-day visit. The same have been fine-tuned in consultation with the STRC team so as to ensure minimum disruption in their work plan.

| Day 1 Evaluator 1 | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Time | Activity | Members |
| 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. | Introduction of the team and sharing of evaluation schedule and agenda (Discuss information on the fact sheet) | Evaluation team and STRC team |
| 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. | STRC staff shared different presentations on their activities (namely, progress report, support to non-TI programmes, Annual Activity Plan 09-10 and STRC profile & activities) | Evaluation team and STRC team |
| 1:30-2:30 | Lunch | |
| 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 | Discussions and Documentation Review on Programme Delivery | Two Training Officers and Evaluator 1 |
| Day 2 | | |
| Time | Activity | Members |
| 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. | Discussions and Documentation Review on Programme Delivery Continued | Training Coordinator, Training Officers and Evaluator 1 |
| 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. | Lunch | |
| 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. | FGD with representatives of NGOs trained by STRC | NGO representatives and Evaluator 1 |
| 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm | Phone interview with selected faculty members | Faculty member and Evaluator 1 |
| Day 3 | | |
| Time | Activity | Members |
| 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 | Face-to-face interview with selected faculty members | Faculty members and Evaluator |
| 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. | Clarification of doubts with the STRC members on specific information collected | Training Coordinator, Training Officer and Evaluation team |
| 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 | Lunch | |
| 2:30 to 4:00 pm | Debriefing and sharing of the evaluation experience | NGO Staff, STRC team and Evaluation team |

| Day 1 | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Evaluator 2 | | |
| Time | Activity | Members |
| 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. | Introduction of the team and sharing of evaluation schedule and agenda (Discuss information on the fact sheet) | Evaluation team and STRC team |
| 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. | STRC staff shared different presentations on their activities (namely, progress report, support to non-TI programmes, Annual Activity Plan 09-10 and STRC profile & activities) | Evaluation team and STRC team |
| 1:30 - 2:30 | Lunch | |
| 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. | Discussions on Finance, accounting and organizational capacity | Admin and Accounts Officer, 1 Training Officer, Evaluator 2 |
| Day 2 | | |
| Time | Activity | Members |
| 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. | Documentation review related to Finance and Organizational Capacity. | Admin and Accounts Officer, 1 Training Officer, Evaluator 2 |
| 1:30-2:30 | Lunch | |
| 2:30 to 6:00 p.m. | Documentation review related to Finance and Organizational Capacity. | Admin and Accounts Officer, 1 Training Officer, Evaluator 2 |
| Day 3 | | |
| Time | Activity | Members |
| 10 a.m. to 12:00 noon | Clarification of doubts related to organizational capacity and finance with the concerned STRC members | Admin and Accounts Officer, 1 Training Officer, Evaluator 2 |
| 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. | Lunch | |
| 2:30 to 4:00 pm | Debriefing and sharing of the evaluation experience | NGO Staff, STRC team and Evaluation team |

3. Key Findings

In this chapter are reported the key findings gathered by the team vis-à-vis the three areas of assessment, namely programme delivery, organizational capacity and financial management. General information on the STRC was also collected, generating the following profile.

3.1 STRC Fact Sheet

3.1.1 Basic Details

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of the STRC | STRC Kerala – Lakshadweep |
| Name of the Implementing Partner | SOMA –KILA |
| States/ UTs Covered | Kerala, Lakshadweep |
| Number of Districts covered | 14 in Kerala and 10 islands in Lakshadweep |
| Date of Contract with NACO | July 08 |
| Date on which started functioning | 08 th August 2008 |
| Number of TI partners covered | 52 projects implemented by 44 partners |
| Location of STRC: | Trivandrum (Kerala) |

3.1.2 Organization Structure and Composition

The present team constitutes of:

- 1 training manager/training coordinator, who looks into the overall supervision and quality of the programme;
- 2 training officers, who coordinate the training programme and provide input to the manager for the development of the annual plan of activities;
- 1 assistant training officer, who supports the training officers by identifying the required resource persons and providing the needed administrative and financial support;
- 1 support staff member, who mainly provides logistic support for the project activities (e.g. training, field visits, etc).

| Designation | Number |
|----------------------|---|
| Training Coordinator | 1 |
| Training Officers | 3 (one of which is Assistant Training Officer) |
| Admin and finance | 1 |
| Faculty Members | 25 |
| Total | 30 |

3.1.3 Details of the Academic Committees formed by STRC

| # | Name of the committee members | Representation | When joined |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Mr. Dennis Joseph | Chairperson of the committee (KSACS) | 25 th June 09 |
| 2 | Dr. Prasannakumar | TSU | 25 th June 09 |
| 3 | Dr. Manju Nair | Public health expert | 25 th June 09 |
| 4 | Dr. Jasseer | Academician | 25 th June 09 |
| 5 | Mr. Jayachandran | KSACS | 25 th June 09 |
| 6 | Mr. Arif | LACS | 25 th June 09 |
| 7 | Dr. Retna Raj | Training institute | 25 th June 09 |
| 8 | Mr. Anish K.R | Academician | 25 th June 09 |
| 9 | Mr. Manoj Sebastian | Development consultant | 25 th June 09 |
| 10 | Mr. Balachandran | Established NGO/TI | 25 th June 09 |
| 11 | Mr. Balu | PLHA activist | 25 th June 09 |
| 12 | Mr. Joy | Community member | 25 th June 09 |
| 13 | Mr. Rajeev | Community member | 25 th June 09 |
| 14 | Ms. Sudha | Community member | 25 th June 09 |

3.2 Programme Delivery

a) Identification and Capacity Building of Faculty

The faculty members are chosen from the resource pool formed through the empanelment process by KSACS. The selection is done jointly by STRC, KSACS & TSU. The criterion is the person's expertise in the topics for the training. Till now, STRC has selected 25 faculty members who cover all the training topics included in the training plan of the past year.

The faculty members are master trainers trained by NACO for the state. Moreover, they are well versed with NACP III and TIs. Trainings to faculty members are therefore provided only when the topic is a new concept like for example Peer-led Outreach Planning (PLOP).

Before the training, faculties for that particular training are provided with reference materials and other resources like power point presentations etc.

Through the review of a sample of 10% of the total CVs present in the faculty list, it emerges that the professionals selected have many years of working experience in the HIV/AIDS sector as well as TI programmes and are very familiar with the NACO systems and guidelines. In addition, five different faculty members were interviewed and it was observed that all are very well versed with the objectives and deliverables of the TI programme. They also appear to be updated on and have a good understanding of the NACP III (see also annexure 1).

b) Trainings by STRC

STRC has identified resource persons to train Peer Educators. The selection of the respective resource persons took place in consultation with KSACS, drawing from the resource pool created by KSACS.

The capacity of PEs has actually been built through various forms:

- Peer-led Outreach Programme (2),
- Exposure (2)
- Immersion programme (1)

With particular regard to the PLOP, the process followed was to train mentors and co-facilitators. The latter had been selected among counsellors and ORWs on the basis of their communication and facilitation skills. Subsequently, mentors and co-facilitators facilitated a field level training programme of TI staff members, which included PEs, too. One of the immediate outcomes was the development of outreach plans by each PE, which were later consolidated into a broader project level plan. Therefore, it can be said that the contribution of such initiative to the capacity building of PEs and their inclusion into the outreach planning process has been valuable. However, as the STRC staff and some of the mentors themselves affirmed, there exists a gap in the accompaniment of the next steps of this process. In other words, there has not been neither regular, close follow-up of the plan implementation nor subsequent, adequate mentoring of the PEs. Some of the reasons adduced were that mentors are not adequately remunerated (as of now, their daily fee is INR 500) and that there is a high turnover among the project staff. Praxis team feels that there may also be other concurring reasons, which are linked to the sustainability of this process. As one of the mentors also suggested (by chance part of the sample of faculty members interviewed), it could be vital creating mentors within the NGOs itself.

The annual work plan for 2008-09 was the result of a process initiated by KSACS and TSU. A training calendar was prepared and proposed to STRC that, in turn, revised the same and provided feedback. For the annual work plan of 2009-10, the process started within STRC, which – in discussion with TSU – drafted a capacity needs frame. The same was adjusted into the plan proposed by NACO. Similarly, the outcomes of ongoing Training Needs Assessment will feed into the final annual work plan.

Between August 2008 and July 2009, STRC KL & LD conducted a total of 34 training programmes, covering 14 training categories and involving 68 batches (for more details, see annexure 2). The main challenges faced by the STRC in implementing the above training plan are as follows:

- Availing of the qualified resource persons as per the training calendar. Some of the trainings were to happen simultaneously while the number of the selected trainers was limited. Moreover, the cost-opportunity paid to them as per KSACS directions (i.e. INR 500 per session up to a maximum of 3 sessions) is not competitive; hence resource persons prefer engaging in other work.
- STRC experimented with success the utilisation of TIs staff as resource persons. However, this practice had to stop due to the need of the TIs staff to prioritise their time in favour of the programme.
- The number of Induction Training programmes was too high. Moreover, it should be done separately for each TI staff unit (PM, ORWs, PEs, etc).
- In some cases, the resource person – who is generally very familiar with TI programmes, NACO system and/or HIV/AIDS issues - does not update him/herself on the latest in the sector. This may generate confusion among participants in case questions in the subject matter arise and the trainer responds on the basis of old information (particularly, in regard to NACO guidelines). The presence of a co-facilitator from STRC acts as a corrective system.
- With connection to the previous point, STRC feels it should be promptly informed on whatever change introduced by NACO during its technical meetings (like, for instance, the concept of “contact”).
- During the monthly review meetings of SACS, STRCs do not have the adequate space to explain why specific activities did not take place and/or were implemented differently.

The Training Needs Assessment for 2009 -10 is currently ongoing. Data collection is almost over as fifty out of fifty-two projects have already been visited (as of 21st of July 09). STRC has developed a template for the capacity building needs assessment of the project partners in Kerala. The TNA process is divided into mainly two phases. As a first step, STRC sends a series of forms related to the organizational profile, which are filled by the organization itself before the visit. Subsequently, a team of two STRC members meet with each category of project staff (i.e. counselors, PM, ORWs and PEs) so as to understand what capacities have already been built and what have not, aspirations of the staff in this regard and the preferred learning methodology. A particular section of the interview is devoted to capture how familiar each staff category is with the use of ICT. This kind of information is meant to orient STRC on how and whether to develop online training opportunities and TNA.

As said, the analysis of the TNA has not started yet. However, the interviewed STRC staff has been able to outline the following trends, upon request of the evaluation team:

- More capacity building is needed in regard to documentation skills (aimed at knowledge creation and management) as well as facilitation and communication skills
- One of the most preferred learning methodology is onsite training
- Mentoring support seems also to be particularly appreciated by the NGO staff

In terms of feedback of the TNA into the training modules, last year's TNA was conducted on a small scale and STRC was able to incorporate only part of the outcomes into the training calendar given that the latter had already been prepared by NACO/SACS.

Sites for training field visit are selected by STRC in consultation with KSACS and TSU. Beyond these, four projects have been identified as learning sites. These are:

1. Jawahar, FSW project, Allapuzha
2. Sangamitra, FSW project, Thrissur
3. MCF, MSM project, Kozhikode
4. Chola, FSW project, Kannur

Most of the training programmes include a field component, which differs depending on the topic and profile of participants. It can be simply an interaction with field staff (used in the induction training), a classic field visit to one of the projects selected and/or learning sites (e.g. in the social marketing training, a visit to the manufacturing factories was arranged) or exposure visits and immersions. These latter forms of practical experience are particularly used in the case of training for PEs and transitioning CBOs.

Pre and post training evaluation in its classic methodology - i.e. participants filling the same questionnaire before and after the training - is conducted for the induction training only. In all other types of training, participants are asked their expectations at the beginning and their feedback (verbally) at the end. The outcome of both processes is documented in the respective training reports.

In some cases, STRC has also conducted follow-up visits. However, this is not possible for all trainings due to the elevated number of projects and limited availability of STRC staff members.

The participants' feedback feeds into the training module. An example of this is the induction module, which has been modified several times in light of the trainees' response (change of quality/quantity of the hand-outs, flow of sessions and shift of focus from basics to documentation aspects).

In general, the evaluation team finds this mixture of feedback techniques valid and would like to suggest to STRC to introduce also written feedback forms. In this way, participants may be able to express their opinion more freely.

All trainings are documented in the form of written reports, which are timely submitted to NACO. For some topics, full-fledge manuals have been produced. These are as follows:

1. Manual for Induction training
2. Manual for Outreach training on Harm Reduction
3. Handbook on Program Transition to CBOs- Capacity Building for Community Mentors (translated)
4. Manual for PPP model of STI service delivery to HRGs

Both manuals and training reports do not incorporate best practices that may have emerged during the discussion with participants. This is because STRC finds more effective documenting best practices through separate meetings rather than during the training as it is difficult to go in-depth into any of the aspects. In this view, STRC has developed a manual on how to capture and document best practice among projects.

All training materials and some of the training manuals produced by STRC have been translated into Malayalam. A number of translators was chosen among the pool of resource persons with TI background and two translators were finally selected on the basis of their work performance. One of the criteria to test the clarity of the translation is the feedback from ORWs.

A suggestion, which comes from some of the NGO representatives met (see annexure 3), is to arrange translated materials in Bengali, Oriya and Hindi particularly for those projects working with migrants.

All TI partners have been visited and their capacity to apply the learning measured but not always immediately after the training. In many cases, an assessment of the training impact is carried out during a field visit organised for other purposes like, for instance, during the visit for TNA. On the basis of these findings, modules may be subject to changes. Some examples are the replacement of one resource person for the induction programme of migrants and truckers (due to language limitations) and the time increase for the session on sex and sexuality, which is part of the induction training.

A general observation to this regard is that a closer monitoring is needed. This is in consideration of the fact that field level interaction is one of the best ways to assess the degree of understanding of the trained TI staff and that there is a high turnover within the NGO staff. In the same perspective, STRC has recently proposed to set up a mentoring system that should provide on-the-spot and regular support to the trainees.

c) Academic Committee and Programme Planning

Following the contract revision operated by NACO around January 2009, arrangements were made by STRC to constitute an Academic Committee, which met for the first time on 25th June 2009 so as to review the past action plan (2008 – 09) and approve the one for the next year (2009 - 10). Currently, 14 members are part of the AC representing different categories as per NACO guidelines (i.e. academicians, trainers, representatives from established NGOs imparting training, social workers, representatives of the community, TI partners and one representative from SACS – see also the list provided under paragraph 3.1.3). Besides the NACO guidelines, STRC has adopted the following criteria in order to select suitable and reliable members:

- relative geographical proximity
- concrete time availability
- willingness.

In regard to the selection of the community representatives, STRC has been careful of choosing individuals from Trivandrum itself, belonging to the 3 different core groups (MSM, SW and IDU) and with a proactive attitude. As a result, the community representatives turned out to be very talkative and outgoing, which makes their presence in the committee an added value.

In the last meeting, the level of participation was very high. Only 3 members were absent. Moreover, members have been very supportive and cooperative throughout the process of constitution of the Academic Committee.

The main contribution to the discussion was from trainers, community members and representatives of KSACS. For instance, they are the ones who supported and approved the proposal of having in-house project trainings. Funds will be provided by KSACS and routed through STRC.

As part of the outcomes of this meeting, the annual work plan was approved by the Academic Committee (on 25th June 2009) and thereafter submitted to NACO/SACS. STRC, in consultation with TSU, took the responsibility of developing the present work plan and prioritizing the categories of personnel to be trained in line with the suggested plan by NACO.

Besides approving the new work plan, the AC has also reviewed and assessed the training programme completed in the past year. The main observations in this regard were to organize more project based/onsite trainings and strengthen the follow-up system. The next assessment meeting will be held in three months time in conformity to the quarterly meeting system set for the Academic Committee.

Learning sites and projects with best practices are proposed by TSU during the monthly coordination meeting with STRC. The latter takes note of the suggested projects and, through follow-up visits, shortlist them on the basis of certain characteristics, such as originality, sustainability and level of success in terms of community participation. Consultants are then hired to assess the needs of the project so as to become a learning site and start the documentation of the process (as per the guidelines set in the “Best practice document template” produced by STRC). As of now, this process is at the assessment stage. STRC plans to identify suitable consultants to help them with the development of the projects selected as learning sites and the capacity building of their teams in this direction.

d) Documentation and Reporting

STRC has set up a resource centre in their current office (SOMA premises) in Trivandrum. One of the training officers takes care of the maintenance and upkeep of the documentation. STRC is currently planning to open an additional resource centre in the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), which is located in Thrissur. This should facilitate the access of the same for the TI staff given that most of the projects are based in the northern part of Kerala. For this reason, as of now, the most frequent users of the documentation centre are students of Social Work departments. In the effort of making the materials more accessible to TI partners, STRC is also exploring the viability and effectiveness of creating a resource centre online. Anyway, till now, all the kits and relevant manuals have been circulated among the NGOs via email.

STRC has also developed a website, which has not been launched yet due to the delay of funds from NACO. The current design and contents are the results of a collective effort of STRC staff, along with the technical support of Invis multimedia, which is a specialized organization in this area and service provider of KSACS, too. A space dedicated to each partner NGO is also available where their profile and activities will get

uploaded. Once the website will go alive, the same training officer responsible for the documentation centre will take care of updating the contents.

As of now, STRC has not felt the need to create its own newsletter given that news pertaining to their work are usually incorporated in and diffused through other renown newsletters, namely the ones of KILA and KSACS.

Monthly and quarterly reports to NACO and KSACS have been so far submitted as per schedule.

With regard to the capacity building of partner NGOs in proposal writing, one workshop was organised from 27-29 April 2009. The initiative was taken by KSACS and TSU in view of the necessity to develop a joint proposal. The role of STRC was to design the workshop programme and provide extended mentoring to the NGOs for 2 days after the workshop.

In the course of its first year of functioning, STRC has identified areas for field research, which could not be conducted due to lack of funds for the same. The above mentioned identified areas of interest are as follows:

- Understanding of the increasing trend of IDUs in bordering districts like Palakkad (see concept note enclosed as annexure 4)
- NGO in-house research on specific and contextualized practices and phenomena

e) Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation team has found that the programme delivery of STRC for its first year of functioning is up to the expectations of NACO/SACS. In some areas (particularly, training), scope for further improvement was highlighted and respective suggestions were provided throughout the report. Below are some of the issues identified.

- NACO should release money on time. It is very difficult for STRC to manage without funds for such a long time.
- NACO could conduct refresher programmes (2 days) for STRC teams on training methods, new guidelines, etc. separate from the review meetings.
- Region/ state specific methodologies (such as web based training, mentoring, onsite training, etc.) should be allowed, keeping the minimum deliverable content intact. This should be done while the training modules are being prepared. Once the modules are prepared, it will be tough to accommodate changes, modifications, customisation.
- For capacity building and sharing between resource persons, there could be quarterly orientation/ refresher training (2days) of resource persons. This would help them with updating/ sharing skills and learn about new guidelines, etc. However, SACS is unwilling to pay honorarium to the resource persons. This then becomes difficult for resource persons since there is an opportunity cost. What SOMA proposed is payment of 2/3rd the daily rate (Rs.1000/- instead of Rs.1500/-)
- Follow up visits are very difficult since there are only 3-4 people and 52 TIs. The ratio of TO to TI should be made at least 1:15 for any meaningful follow up to happen.

- NACO could look into broadening the scope of STRCs so as to mainstream some of the initiatives beyond TIs. An example in the context of STRC KL & LD is the programme with PRIs.

3.3 Organisational Capacity

a) Office setup

STRC Kerala does not have any rent agreement given that the current structure utilized belongs to SOMA. The latter pays the rent for the building and accomplishes with the statutory payment obligations (like water, electricity and municipal taxes).

It has been found that fixed assets (like desktops and digital camera) bought from the NACO budget are not insured.

b) Recruitment and induction

The recruitment procedure followed to hire the current STRC staff members started with a list of requirements provided by NACO vis-à-vis each professional profile. SOMA has then looked for suitable candidates who would meet such requirements. Most of the selected CVs were of people already working with SOMA or who used to work with the same. After screening the CVs, NACO approved all candidates. In case of future recruitment, STRC will follow the current practice of SOMA, which consists in advertising vacancies, short-listing CVs and creating a panel for interviews. STRC follows SOMA HR manual.

SOMA and NACO provided the initial induction training to the recruited STRC members focusing on the respective job descriptions, capacity building and design of training programme, components of the TI programme and attitudinal changes towards the core groups. In case of new recruitment, STRC members will be responsible for the induction programme. As of now, STRC Kerala has not faced any staff turn-over.

All staff members are very clear with their job description and there is no overlapping of tasks.

b) Record keeping and Procedures

The only register maintained is the movement register, which is maintained by the assistant training officer. There is no attendance register given that the working hours are flexible as long as the work is completed on time.

In regard to leave requests of short duration, staff members send a common email to the other group members who highlight whether any work has to be taken care of while on leave. In case of long leaves, the matter is discussed in the monthly meetings. No leave form exists at the moment.

c) Staff meetings

STRC Kerala has monthly staff meetings that are compulsory for all team members. The primary agenda of these meetings is related to programme issues, such as updating on status of the current activities and development of the action plan for the next month. Minutes of each meeting are regularly recorded in a register. From the minutes, it also emerges that, although a monthly performance review takes place monthly and action plans are developed accordingly, these are not recorded in the minutes. The Training Coordinator provides guidance on the issues discussed, whenever required.

d) Governance and Leadership

Staff members describe the working environment in STRC Kerala as very informal and open. For this reason, each team members feels that s/he can discuss with the management any problem faced and receives adequate support and direction. Critical decisions related to the programme are taken during the staff meetings and all members have a say in the decision-making process. For instance, training officers decided alone upon the stay of a participant outside the designated training venue given that his family was with him and that this was not allowed in the same premises.

e) Conclusions

- STRC should have an attendance register, which is required by the contact with NACO. Staff traveling could mention the outstation period upon their return
- It is recommended that a system to keep track of staff leaves is put in place by STRC
- All fixed assets related to STRC should be insured by STRC (insurance coverage)
- Monthly staff meetings should document revisions of the previous action plans.

3.4 Financial management

a) Budget Utilisation

The review of the financial documents does not reveal any non-utilisation or deviance as such. The only problem faced is the delay of the quarterly disbursements by NACO. For instance, over a year, the STRC has received only around 50% of the agreed budget. To this regard, the STRC staff suggests to have only 2 disbursements in a year so as to decrease the probabilities of delay.

In regard to the money released by KSACS, it has been observed that the latter does not provide written information on whether and what amount of the budget is approved against the plan submitted quarterly by STRC. This practice generates unnecessary complications for the financial monitoring of STRC. It is therefore suggested that KSACS issues a work order every time STRC submits its budget and activity plan.

b) Financial Process

STRC avails of a separate bank account with two signatories; one from the STRC team and another one from SOMA. STRC keeps net bank statements and therefore does not use bank passbook.

The reconciliation statement has been verified and it has been found in line with the same statement.

For bank drawing, the procedure of double signatories is followed and there is no withdrawing limit.

The system of payment followed for the expenses related to the NACO line items has proper vouchers, which are supported by bills. All the original bills related to KSACS funded activities are submitted to KSACS and no photocopies of the same are kept. The evaluation team has therefore contacted the person in charge in KSACS and assured that even this category of expenses is properly managed with vouchers and supporting bills.

All vouchers related to NACO and KSACS are printed and numbered manually in a serial sequence.

As said, STRC submits to KSACS quarterly financial and activity plans, based on which projects expenses are incurred without need of further approval.

Most of the payments are made through cheques while the reimbursement of staff travel bills is made in cash. However, for payment in cash there is a ceiling of INR 2,000.

In case of cancellation of bills/receipts on payment, proper general procedures are followed.

Statements of expenditures are submitted to KSACS on time (within 1 week upon completion of each training programme) and in the prescribed format. The evaluation has not identified any mismatch between the SOEs and the corresponding records.

As mentioned earlier, the withdrawing capacity of the authorized signatories is unlimited.

The current practice followed for the advance requisition regards mainly travel advance requests. The required amount is finalized in *ad hoc* meetings, which are held before any training programme. There is no written request form, which is used. Instead, staff members are given the agreed amount in cash and sign for the same in a receipt form/voucher detailing the line items against which the advance is given. Upon completion of the training, the staff submits the expenditure details and the respective receipts are cancelled.

c) Conclusions

Overall, the financial management of STRC meets with the basic standards required. However, there is scope for improvement. Some critical bottlenecks that should be address at the earliest are highlighted below:

- KSACS does not give receipts for vouchers received from STRC, nor do they inform them on the budget approved. KSACS should give STRC work orders and receipts for expense vouchers submitted
- NACO should release money on time. It is very difficult for the organisation to manage without funds for such a long time
- STRC should think of introducing ceilings on the withdrawing capacity of the authorized signatories

Interview no. 1 of STRC Resource Person

(Anish Kunnumpurathu Raghavan Pillai)

1. What are your earlier experiences of training for targeted intervention?

I've been associated with TI projects as field project coordinator and later on involved in several project as resource person (counseling and sexual health). As past of the PSU, I've also been involved in the review of the peer education process in sexual health projects and evaluation of TI projects.

2. According to you what are few musts for a good training?

The training has to be needed by the recipients; the training curriculum has to be tailor made; the learning methodology has to include multiple tools and be interactive; the timing of the training has to be right and follow-up after the training has to be made.

3. How do you plan for any training (Need identification, planning, execution)

STRC provides the information on the training topic as well as schedule and guidelines sent by NACO. I then revisit the NACP III guidelines as per need.

4. How many training you have received after joining STRC.

One, on PLOP, because this was a new initiative.

5. How your training needs were identified.

As I said, at that time, PLOP had just been introduced and therefore I –along with other resource persons were introduced to this new subject.

6. What are the most important skill sets for being a good trainer?

Experience, knowledge (both in terms of educational background and knowledge of the subject in question) and skills like facilitation and communication.

7. What are major thrust areas in NACP III?

8. How do you think you can play a major role in the entire Programme?

Being an academician, I can surely provide more support with regard to curriculum development.

9. For Programme management point of view how important is capacity building?

Very important because even if most of the programme staff have extensive field experience, they need to be customize to the TI context (guidelines, formats and skills to manage such programme).

Interview no. 2 of STRC Resource Person

(Binu George)

10. What are your earlier experiences of training for targeted intervention?

More than 10 years of experience in TI project implementation as Project Manager; Member of the Partner's Resource Team developed by SMA for conducting training for the TI staff members; Master Trainer of NACO (SMI) for training of TI staff; Resource person in various programmes of SMA/PSCI/TSU/KSACS

11. According to you what are few musts for a good training?

Proper needs assessment; setting goals, objectives and training methodology; proper logistic arrangements; resource person with adequate communication, facilitation and presentation skills; preparation of resource materials

12. How do you plan for any training ?

Identifying the need and scope of the training; preparing presentations and selecting the training methodology accordingly.

13. How many training you have received after joining STRC?

No, I have not received any formal training from STRC but they have always supported me with the necessary reference materials and individual guidance. When the PLOP took place, I was not available.

14. How were your training needs identified?

N.A.

15. What are the most important skill sets for being a good trainer?

Updated knowledge; communication and presentation skills; facilitation

16. What are major thrust areas in NACP III?

Saturated coverage and 100% identification and contact through proper outreach planning; ensuring the service uptake viz. condom, STI, PIC; developing a proper enabled environment; community mobilization and its strengthening.

17. How do you think you can play a major role in the entire Programme?

As a trainer I am supporting the entire programme to develop efficient human resources for the implementation of the TI projects

18. For Programme management point of view how important is capacity building?

The success of any programme depends upon its field level implementing team. If the team does not have the knowledge, skill and attitude necessary, this will certainly affect the quality of the programme and achievement of its objectives.

Interview no. 3 of STRC Resource Person

(S. Vinod Kumar)

19. What are your earlier experiences of training for targeted intervention?

I was associated with TI programmes from 1998 to 2006 as project director. Then associated with SMA/PSU/TSU as a trainer and resource person at various levels. I have also worked as consultant with APSACS and PSACS.

20. According to you what are few musts for a good training?

Needs assessment; modules and hand-outs; environment, planning and preparation

21. How do you plan for any training?

Contents evaluation and review, literature review, preparation of the sessions

22. How many training you have received after joining STRC?

Nil. But I have been provided with adequate module guidance and hand-outs. I was a resource person for the PLOP training.

23. How were your training needs identified?

N.A.

24. What are the most important skill sets for being a good trainer?

Knowledge (both theoretical and applied); communication skills (verbal and non-verbal)

25. What are major thrust areas in NACP III?

Community mobilization; halt and reverse the epidemic by 2012

26. How do you think you can play a major role in the entire Programme?

Being a resource person, I contribute to providing the necessary capacity building to the TI team. I can also scientifically develop strategies and concepts at grassroots level.

27. For Programme management point of view how important is capacity building?

Without sufficient capacity building of the team, none of the programmes can sustain. Need based and onsite training could enhance the quality of service delivery. Training should also be imparted with the adequate reference material. There is also a need to ensure the follow-up of the activities after the training.

Interview no. 4 of STRC Resource Person

(Babu J. Kariampally)

28. What are your earlier experiences of training for targeted intervention?

Since 2002, I've been a resource person for SMA/PSU/TSU/SACS and have been organizing and facilitating induction training for the new recruits in the TI projects.

I am also a Master Trainer of NACO/KSACS since 2007.

29. According to you what are few musts for a good training?

Good understanding about the topic, the target group and the profile of the trainees; assessment of the training needs of the participants; setting up the training goals, objectives and methodology; preparation of training module; selection and orientation of the resource persons; arrangement of the logistics.

30. How do you plan for any training?

Identifying the need and scope of the training; formulating methodology and activities; selection of the venue and arrangement of logistics.

31. How many training you have received after joining STRC?

I have not received any training since joining STRC

32. How were your training needs identified?

N.A.

33. What are the most important skill sets for being a good trainer?

Updated knowledge on the topic; good communication skills (verbal and not verbal); participatory facilitation

34. What are major thrust areas in NACP III?

Community mobilization and maximum coverage of the core groups.

35. How do you think you can play a major role in the entire Programme?

I can play a major role in the entire programme by providing standardized quality training to the personnel involved in the TI projects.

36. For Programme management point of view how important is capacity building?

Ensuring standardized and quality training is very important in the capacity building process. This is one of the enabling factors for the attainment of the project goals.

Interview no. 5 of STRC Resource Person

(Sonia Ratheesh)

37. What are your earlier experiences of training for targeted intervention?

I have been a partnership officer in the Support Unit of KSACS and in this capacity I was in charge of 15 projects. Among my responsibilities, training was one of them. As a consultant with KSACS, I've been mentoring TI staff on various aspects of the project.

38. According to you what are few musts for a good training?

Clear understanding of the target population; gap (learning) analysis and learning needs assessment; programme planning of resource persons and materials; conducive atmosphere and timing; sessions should be interactive and leave space for collection of feedback.

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39. How do you plan for any training?

In case I am among the resource persons, I ensure that I collect essential details from the agency that hires me such that I could cater to the requirements of the agency as well as the target population.

40. How many training you have received after joining STRC?

Nil. During the PLOP training, I was one of the resource persons

41. How were your training needs identified?

N.A.

42. What are the most important skill sets for being a good trainer?

Keep yourself updated on the topic; communication and listening skills; ability to adapt according to the situation; modulation of sound/tone; approachable.

43. What are major thrust areas in NACP III?

The aims and objectives of the NACPIII itself is its main thrust area, i.e. halting and reverse HIV/AIDS using four-pronged strategies. This involves bringing all the stakeholder under the same umbrella of understanding the programme.

44. How do you think you can play a major role in the entire Programme?

Being an outsider in the context of actual implementation helps one in looking at the programme objectively. This, in turn, helps give suggestions for the improvement of the project performance.

45. For Programme management point of view how important is capacity building?

Peer-led outreach Planning is an excellent concept which could bring about a revolutionary change in the context of TI, if implemented to the fullest. But this needs to be done by the outreach unit (PEs & OWs) of the TI for yielding optimum results. Unless one understands actually what it means and how to implement it, it remains a concept.

Building the capacity of each one of the members in the outreach unit help them understand it, internalize it, use it to the need if the TI and bring out the expected outcomes. OGA is an example of the same.

Details of Trainings Conducted

September 2008- July 2009

| No | Name of Training | Dates | Participants | |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| | | | Category | Number |
| 1 | PLOP – Mentors Orientation | 2 September 2008 | Mentors | 12 |
| 2. | PLOP- TOT for cofacilitators | 6 - 9 September 2008 | Counsellors & ORWs | 40 |
| 3. | PLOP- One day training for mentors & cofacilitators | 27 September 2008 | Mentors & Cofacilitators | 52 |
| 4. | PLOP - Field level training in 36 Batches | 29 September-11 November 2008 | Counsellors, ORWs, PEs | 1147 |
| 5. | Induction training – New staff Batch 1 | 23-26 October 2008 | Project staff | 35 |
| 6. | Induction training – New staff Batch 2 | 23-26 October 2008 | Project staff | 34 |
| 7. | Induction training – New staff Batch 3 | 23-26 October 2008 | Project staff | 34 |
| 8. | Induction training – New staff Batch 4 | 28 – 31 October 2008 | Project staff | 30 |
| 9. | Induction training – New staff Batch 5 | 28 – 31 October 2008 | Project staff | 30 |
| 10. | Induction training – New staff Batch 6 | 28 – 31 October 2008 | Project staff | 33 |
| 11. | Induction New IDU projects | 28 October – 1 November 2008 | Project team | 21 |
| 12. | Induction New Migrant projects | 28 October – 1 November 2008 | Project team | 22 |
| 13. | Financial Management | 10-12 November 2008 | Accountants | 35 |
| 14. | Exposure visit – FSW projects – Batch 1 | 11- 17 November 2008 | Project staff | 36 |
| 15. | Exposure visit – FSW projects – Batch 2 | 12-16 November 2008 | Project staff | 30 |
| 16. | Exposure visit – MSM projects – Batch 3 | 12-16 November 2008 | Project staff | 35 |
| 17. | NACP III Vision Building | 12 November 2008 | Project Directors | 33 |
| 18. | Exposure visit – FSW projects – Batch 4 | 24-30 November 2008 | Project staff | 36 |
| 19. | Exposure visits – FSW projects – Batch 5 | 24-28 November 2008 | Project staff | 32 |

| No | Name of Training | Dates | Participants | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------|
| | | | Category | Number |
| 20. | Exposure visits – MSM projects – Batch 6 | 24- 28 November 2008 | Project staff | 37 |
| 21. | Induction training – New staff Batch 7 | 16-19 November 2008 | Project staff | 34 |
| 22. | Prison Welfare Officers training | 27 November 2008 | Prison welfare officers and ICTC counsellors | 24 |
| 23. | Exposure visit – IDU project | 5-14 December 2008 | Project staff | 29 |
| 24. | Condom Social Marketing | 5-6 January 2008 | Project managers, Counsellors & ORWs | 40 |
| 25. | Outreach Training on Harm Reduction- Batch 1 | 3-6 February 2009 | Project Team | 29 |
| 26. | Outreach Training on Harm Reduction- Batch 2 | 4-7 February 2009 | Project Team | 28 |
| 27. | Induction training – New staff Batch 8 | 25-28 February 2009 | Project staff | 26 |
| 28. | Induction New Truckers & Migrant projects | 25-28 February 2009 | Project Team | 47 |
| 29. | Programme Transition to CBOs- Capacity Building for Community Mentors | 03-05 March 2009 | PD, Managers, Counsellors and community members | 31 |
| 30 | Induction New staff-9 th batch | 16 to 19 March 2009 | Project team | 38 |
| 31 | Proposal development workshop | 27-29 th April 2009 | PD, PM, FPC | 75 |
| 32 | Training on PPP model for STI/RTI service delivery to HRGs- Batch 1 | 26-27 June 2009 | PM, Counsellor, ANM, M&E | 43 |
| 33 | Training on PPP model for STI/RTI service delivery to HRGs- Batch 2 | 29-30 June 09 | PM, Counsellor, ANM, M&E | 46 |
| 34 | Training on PPP model for STI/RTI service delivery to HRGs- Batch 3 | 1-2 July 2009 | PM, Counsellor, ANM, M&E | 65 |
| Types of training | | 14 | Batches | 68 |

| No | Types of Training | No:of batches |
|-----------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | PLOP | 39 |
| 2. | Induction- New Staff | 9 |
| 3. | Induction New IDU Projects | 1 |
| 4. | Induction New Migrant & Truckers | 1 |
| 5. | Exposure visit – FSW Projects | 3 |
| | Exposure visit – MSM Projects | 3 |
| 6. | Exposure visit - IDU Projects | 1 |
| 7. | Financial management | 1 |
| 8. | NACP III - Vision building | 1 |
| 9. | Condom Social Marketing | 1 |
| 10. | Prison Welfare Officers Training | 1 |
| 11. | Outreach training on Harm reduction | 2 |
| 12. | Programme Transition to CBOs- Capacity Building for Community Mentors | 1 |
| 13. | Proposal development workshop | 1 |
| 14 | Training on PPP model for STI/RTI service delivery to HRGs | 3 |
| | Total no. of batches | 68 |

Palakkad HIV/AIDS scenario – the current situation and possible response

1. Background

Palakkad is one of the C category districts (Less than 1% ANC prevalence in all sites during last 3 years with less than 5% in all HRG sites, with known hot spots - Migrants, truckers, large aggregation of factory workers, tourist etc) identified by NACO. But the recently reported HIV incidents in the district show that the risk factors in the district have gone up and vulnerability increased.

The studies (sexual health needs assessment study – conducted by the then SMA) done in 2000 also had revealed the facts that reported cases of HIV were very high in the border areas like Gopalapuram and Meenakshipuram. Though measures had been taken to address the issue, it couldn't come out with the desired results.

There are many factors related to this and one among them is the absence of a comprehensive programme specific to address the risk and vulnerability issues of the border areas of Palakkad district.

2. Present scenario

The discussions with the PLHIV networks and ICTC counselors revealed that, though the registered members of the network is 520, there are more than 1000 PLHIVs in the district. It is also shared that about 300 PLHIVs are registered in ART centers with in three months time. In ICTC 9 cases were tested positive out of 40 people who came to the ICTC in one month. The risk and vulnerability of HIV infection are reported to be very high.

Most of the cases are reported in Chittoor block of the district, which is a border area, consisting of 6 Panchayats. Some details of the Panchayats are given below.

2.1 Demographic details of Chittoor Block

| | Area | House holds | T | M | FM | Density | Sex ratio | Literacy |
|---------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|----------|
| Eruthempathy | 38.99 | 4403 | 17815 | 8791 | 9024 | 457 | 457 | 69 |
| Kozhinjampara | 48.84 | 6426 | 28699 | 14240 | 14459 | 588 | 1015 | 74.96 |
| Nallepilly | 35.66 | 6933 | 32044 | 15566 | 16478 | 899 | 1059 | 74.52 |
| Pattanchery | 28.44 | 5121 | 24375 | 12140 | 12595 | 870 | 1037 | 76.40 |
| Perumatty | 62.65 | 6609 | 29500 | 14611 | 14889 | 471 | 1019 | 68.73 |
| Vadakarapathy | 52.4 | 5995 | 25717 | 12800 | 12917 | 491 | 1009 | 70.87 |

3. High risk factors and key issues reported in the area

3.1 In and out migration

Since it is a border area, in migration and out migration are very common. Both males and females from Pollachi side come to Palakkad area for daily wages job including agriculture jobs. People from Chittoor block go to Tamil Nadu for textile industry work. It is found that the females in batches have been taken to Tamil Nadu on contract basis (for a period of 2 years). In addition people from other states including northern state, come to Palakkad for steel industry work.

3.2 Religious believes

Tamil culture is dominant in the area and people follow most of the Tamil social norms and value systems. From the discussions with the people in the area it is understood that, the male population believe that it is a religious norm to have sex in the night. Sex with any one is acceptable to prove one's male identity.

3.3 Gender imbalance

The male population has dominance over female population. The female population always suffers any atrocities from the males. The females believe that it is their responsibility and duty to obey anything said by their husbands. They have also accepted multiple sexual relations of their husbands as a general norm.

3.4 Illiteracy and communication problems

Though the official reports show almost 70% literacy rate in the border Panchayats, most of the people met are illiterate. The service providers also report that illiteracy among the clients is very high and they find it very difficult to make them understand about the issues. The local language issues also affect the service delivery part.

The IEC materials available on HIV/AIDS are also not enough, to address the needs of the clients, who come for the services.

3.5 Nature of occupation and sexual behaviour

The male population in the area are mainly engaged with driving profession and they travel frequently. Some of them are employed in the agriculture sector and other daily wage jobs. Women also go for construction work and small-scale agriculture labour. It is also reported that occasionally these people also engage in part-time sex work with their employers or co-workers for immediate benefits.

In addition the prevalence of multi-partner sex in these border areas are reported to be high irrespective of the nature of groups (youths, middle aged, women etc.).

3.6 Low risk and vulnerability perception

One of the major issue or problem with the people in the area is that, the risk perception is very low. They see HIV as a simple disease like fever or headache. They also feel that it may not create any problem for them.

The community leaders also hesitate to accept the fact and consider that it is a problem out side their Panchayat.

4. Key geographical areas

Some of the risky areas where the HIV incidents are reported to be very high are

Gopalapuram
Meenakshipuram
Anchammile
Velamthavalam
Perumatti
Pattancheri
Vadakarapathi
Vandithavalam

5. Services available

Palakkad has 7 ICTC Centers, 1 STI Clinic, 1 ART Center, 1 Blood Bank, 3 SURAKSHA Projects and 1 Care center

6. Suggested programme

A comprehensive PRI based programme is suggested to address the issues. Initially it can be an operational research focusing on Chittor block and covering the border Panchayats.

A coordinated effort, which can give stake to all types of organizations in the area, may be more effective for this programme. The focus should on multiple level structures covering various groups in the area. The programme should be able to provide both the prevention and care services to the needy. At the same time linkages and networking also shall be done with the programme delivery centers across the border.

A structure for the programme and detailed methodology for the operational research need to be developed in consultation with various stakeholders.