

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Signed on

29<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2013

Between

Department of Youth Affairs,  
Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

&

Department of AIDS Control  
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

Government of India

## **INTRODUCTION**

India has one of the largest numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world. Given the prevalence rate of 0.27 percent, 21 lakh people are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in the country<sup>1</sup>. HIV is driven by a number of socio-economic factors; therefore, health interventions alone are not sufficient to address causes and consequences of the epidemic. It requires a multi-sectoral response. Mainstreaming approaches to HIV have increasingly gained ground with the realization that the non-health sector can play an important and meaningful role in reducing vulnerability to HIV and mitigating its impact on those infected and affected.

Department of AIDS Control and Department of Youth Affairs are hereinafter referred to together as “the parties”

### **Article 1**

#### **1 DEPARTMENT OF AIDS CONTROL**

- 1.1 Department of AIDS Control (DAC) is the nodal agency for coordinating response with respect to Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in India. Department of AIDS Control has initiated several measures towards mainstreaming and partnership with relevant Ministries.
- 1.2 The National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) is implemented through 38 State AIDS Control Societies (SACS)/Municipal AIDS Control Societies in States and Union Territories. NACP places utmost importance to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS by a) enhancing coverage and reach of information on sexually transmitted infection (STI)/HIV prevention and services b) Integrating services through existing health infrastructure available in Ministries/Departments and its Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and c) facilitating social entitlements and schemes for social protection of people infected and affected with HIV/AIDS.

### **Article 2**

#### **2. DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS**

- 2.1 The Government recognizes youth as the single most important segment of the population in the context of future socio-economic development and growth. Several important schemes and

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<sup>1</sup> HSS NACO, 2011

programmes have been launched for the benefit of youth in the country during last five years. The Youth, i.e. those falling within the age group of 15-35 years constitutes nearly 40% of the total population of India. This group which is the most vibrant and dynamic segment of the country's population constitutes potentially its most valuable human resource.

The Department of Youth Affairs pursues the twin objectives of personality building and nation building, i.e. developing the personality of youth and involving them in various nation-building activities. The role of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports is to act as a facilitator and catalytic agent. The Department works through large network of NSS and NYKS

- 2.2 **National Service Scheme (NSS)** : NSS has more than 3.2 million student volunteers on its roll spread over 298 Universities and 42 (+2) Senior Secondary Councils and Directorate of Vocational Education all over the country with primary focus on the development of personality of students through community service. The activities of NSS are wide ranging covering National Integration Camp, Blood Donation, Plantation, Immunization Shramdaan, Disaster Management & Adventure Programmes.
- 2.3 **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)**: NYKS the largest grassroots level organization aims to channelizes the power of youth who are in the age group of 13-35 years on the principles of voluntarism, self-help and community participation. Youth Clubs are village based organizations working for community development and youth empowerment. The basic objective for creation of youth clubs is to render community support through developmental initiatives involving activities with particular focus on youth empowerment.

### Article 3

#### 3. RATIONALE FOR MAINSTREAMING HIV AND AIDS

- 3.1 Youth as a group is considered more vulnerable to HIV due to low awareness, risk taking behavior and tendency to experiment. Youth lays foundation for responsible sexual behaviors in adult life. The youth in India comprises 25 percent of the country's population. As per HSS (year 2011) data, HIV prevalence among young population (15-24 yrs) is 0.11%. Stable declining trends in HIV prevalence among the young population (15-24 yrs) are noted in most of the states. However, rising trends are noted in some states including Jharkhand, Odisha, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

- 3.2 Reaching Out of school: Youth who have never attended school or have no formal education or have dropped out of school constitute the special group of 'out of school youth' vulnerable to STI/HIV infection. The female among the out of school youth may be subjected to early marriage, sexual abuse and trafficking. The Draft "Out Of School" Youth Strategy under NACP aims to create awareness of HIV/AIDS among the out-of-school youth and to build negotiation skills to empower them as responsible young adults to take informed decisions on safe sexual behaviour and substance abuse. Department of Youth Affairs can help Department of AIDS Control in rolling out this strategy.
- 3.3 Reaching Young Women: Young girls and women are at an increased risk of contracting HIV due to prevalent practice of early marriage. As observed, HIV prevalence among the adult males is 1.5 times more than adult females; but in young population, HIV prevalence is equal among both the sexes at 0.11%. This specifically points out to the need to reach the young women in more focused manner and empower this group with negotiation skills for safe sexual behavior and delay in marriage.
- 3.4 Reaching Migrant youth: The latest HIV Sentinel Surveillance clearly points out the relation between migration/ mobility and higher vulnerability to STI/ HIV infection. As per NSSO report on "Migration in India" 2007-2008 64th Round (July 2007 – June 2008) approximately 50% of the migrants in the country are in the age groups of 15-29 yrs. This makes it imperative for NACP to reach the young population with HIV prevention information and services.

#### **Article 4**

#### **4. SCOPE OF MAINSTREAMING HIV**

- 4.1 Youth constitute the most vulnerable group for HIV/AIDS due to lack of awareness, lack of access to services and tendency for sexual experimentation, peer influence, etc. Reducing sexual transmission of HIV to 50% by 2015 requires scaled-up access to comprehensive information and non judgmental services for young men and women. The reach of the Department of Youth Affairs through NSS and NYKS is huge and this could be used as the

platform to reach them to provide STI/HIV related information and services. They can be instrumental in

- Integrating adequate focus on HIV/AIDS in the Draft National Policy for Youth, 2012
- Integrating HIV/AIDS in the training manuals and modules of NYKS and NSS
- Ensuring training of all the functionaries of NSS and NYKS on HIV/AIDS to reach out to youth across the country and enhance their access to counselling and testing services.
- Promote blood donation among the youth across the country through wide network of NSS and NYKS in the country
- Facilitate accessibility of youth to STI/HIV related services provided under NACP

**Now, therefore, in consideration of the foregoing rationale and scope, the Department of Youth Affairs and Department of AIDS Control mutually agree to cooperate and collaborate with the overall goal of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in the schemes and programmes of Department of Youth Affairs for accelerating the reversal and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS**

#### **Article 5**

##### **5. OBJECTIVES OF THE MOU**

- 5.1 To prevent the spread of HIV infection among the youth through inclusion of youth specific HIV information and services.
- 5.2 To reduce the vulnerability of special category of young women and migrants
- 5.3 To enhance the capacity of policy planners, researchers and trainers in the institutions under the control of Department of Youth Affairs to address the issue of HIV/AIDS
- 5.4 To ensure that there is no stigma and discrimination against PLHIV and MARPs in the services under the control of Department of Youth Affairs.
- 5.5 Conceptualizing and planning special projects for youth in high risk states and districts

## **Article 6**

### **6. KEY DELIVERABLES**

- 6.1 Issue of directive from Department of Youth Affairs to NSS and NYKS for supporting HIV/AIDS prevention activity in collaboration with State AIDS Control Society in respective States.
- 6.2 Deputation of a nodal officer from Department of Youth Affairs to coordinate HIV activities with Department of AIDS Control .
- 6.3 Reduction of Stigma and Discrimination against vulnerable population and persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS

## **Article 7**

### **7.1 ROLE OF DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS**

#### **7.1.1 Information, Education and Communication**

- Creating awareness on prevention and services of STI/ HIV/AIDS, promotion of safe sexual behaviour and against substance abuse among the youth through network of NSS and NYKS.
- Inclusion of information on STI/HIV prevention & services in all printed materials of Department of Youth Affairs used for dissemination.
- Integration of HIV related risk reduction activities during the regular youth mobilisation campaigns.
- Promotion of blood donation among youth across the country through wide network of NSS and NYKS in the country
- Reaching out to youth under Special Projects e.g. "Awareness and Education for the Prevention of Drug Abuse & Alcoholism in the States of Punjab and Manipur" and linking them to Opioid Substitution Therapy
- Observation of World AIDS Day, Voluntary Blood Donation Day, Voluntary Blood Donor Day.

### **7.1.2. Trainings**

- Integrating HIV/AIDS in the training manuals and modules of NYKS and NSS.
- Building capacities of Volunteers of NYKS & NSS who are identified as master trainers & peer educators at the district level to strengthen HIV/AIDS intervention.

### **7.1.3 Mobilization**

- Facilitating accessibility of youth to STI/HIV related services.
- Facilitating access to schemes and entitlements for social protection of PLHIV.

### **7.1.4 Information sharing**

- Sharing of information on HIV/AIDS activities with Department of AIDS Control or State AIDS Control Society in States.
- Reflection of activities on HIV/AIDS carried out by Department of Youth Affairs in annual report and Ministry's website.
- Provision of sharing of web links of Department of Youth Affairs in Department of AIDS Control portal for sharing of information and vice-versa.

## **7.2 ROLE OF DEPARTMENT OF AIDS CONTROL**

- 7.2.1 Share National protocol and guidelines for prevention, care and support of HIV/AIDS.
- 7.2.2 Provide technical support by sharing prototype of IEC materials for awareness generation activities.
- 7.2.3 Provide technical support to Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in integrating concerns related to HIV/AIDS in the National policy guidelines and relevant schemes.
- 7.2.4 Provide technical support to Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in integrating HIV/AIDS in the training modules of each category of personnel.

## Article 8

### 8. EXECUTION OF MOU

- 8.1 Parties will set up a joint working group for drawing up an action plan for implementation of partnership.
- 8.2 This working group may constitute of heads of relevant divisions in Department of Youth Affairs & Department of AIDS Control
- 8.3 Parties would identify nodal officer for implementation and monitoring the progress under each of the scheme/ Programme
- 8.4 Parties agree to collaborate and work closely for fulfilment of objectives set in the MOU
- 8.5 Both the parties would consult each other and review the progress for implementing objectives of this MOU on biannually basis
- 8.6 This MOU will be operative with effect from the date of 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 and any alteration / modifications can be carried out with the consent of both parties.

The parties herein have appended their respective signatures the day and the year above stated.

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF  
DEPARTMENT OF AIDS CONTROL



SHRI LOV VERMA  
SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF AIDS CONTROL  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY  
WELFARE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF  
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS



SHRI RAJEEV GUPTA  
SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS  
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND  
SPORTS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



## List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DAC	Department of AIDS Control
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSS	HIV Sentinel Surveillance
ICTCs	Integrated Counselling and Testing Centres
IDUs	Injecting drug users
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
MARPs	Most at-risk Populations
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
NACO	National AIDS Control Organisation
NACP	National AIDS Control Programme
NSS	National Service Scheme
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
NYKS	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
SACS	State AIDS Control Societies
STI	Sexually transmitted infection