

VAMP 2012-2013

VAMP has accomplished a number of things this year. For one thing, there has been more of an importance given to the children of sex workers. VAMP has worked especially with mothers to emphasize the importance of education, even at a young age.

- a. Another focus of VAMP has been the emphasis on voluntary HIV testing. They believe that the state's enforcement of mandatory testing for HIV is a human rights violation. VAMP believes in creating awareness for those who are willing to do the test, and keep all their records confidential.

VAMP has tried to create a positive environment in which HIV testing takes place, instead of a stigmatized one, and has pushed for testing in existing government health setups. Beforehand, it was difficult for sex workers to access the health system, despite the fact that there are supposed to be free health clinics and medications for all.

- b. Additionally, VAMP continues to focus on social entitlements under government welfare schemes. For example, last year, most entitlements were only available to mainstream society. VAMP subsequently disseminated information, and now VAMP women have increased access to government schemes, including gaining access to bank accounts. VAMP has also done a lot of advocacy work with state level policymakers, including members of the Legislative Assembly, social welfare boards, civil hospitals, and the health secretariat. They advocated to get rid of compulsory identification papers and documentation in accessing government schemes. These include caste certificates and family name.
- c. VAMP Plus has also done a lot of advocacy work with local medical officials to get testing facilities and sonography machines in Sangli. Beforehand, they were only available in Miraj, but VAMP fought against this and said that it was the government's responsibility to have these facilities in Sangli. VAMP also ensured that there were sufficient supplies of medicine in Sangli, and made the government accountable if there were not.
- d. Furthermore, VAMP members Minakshi and Kiran went to Delhi and Mumbai to present to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

Programs Activities during 2012-2013

VAMP

Peer Education and Targeted

Intervention

Supplementary Education

Advocacy

Network

Protests and rallies

Work with migrant and
transport workers

VAMP Plus

Local Advocacy

Network

Collectivization

VAMP has continued to run its targeted intervention programs, with more focus on technical programs and documentation. All of the program staff has been familiarized with this approach, and has gone through a series of trainings. Importantly, community members themselves run this program.

Targeted Intervention

District	TI	Active Population	PLHA 11-12	Target for ICTC 12-13	Target Achieved as on March 13	Due for April 13	% ICTC	Total PLHA
Sangli	Miraj TI	886	101	785	619	166	78.85	113
	Sangli TI	1031	148	883	717	166	81.20	193
Satara	VAMP TI	507	49	458	379	79	82.75	55

VAMP also holds weekly community meetings, and runs VAMP Plus, a support and information group for HIV-positive people. The benefits include getting the necessary medications to people otherwise reluctant to get it. There was also a case of breakage of condom among sex workers, and Kiran went to the hospital to talk with doctors, who said

that we don't have storage of medicines. So, Kiran met with head of department and ultimately got concessions.

On 1st December, VAMP and MUSKAN participated in the World AIDS Day rally organized by Civil Hospital in Sangli in collaboration with District Collector's office. Holding hands with government showed their solidarity with the government in fighting AIDS. This was also an opportunity to mainstream the issues sex workers face. Furthermore, there was a Pension parishad in Delhi (national level) and Mumbai (state level) to gain access to pensions for workers from the unorganized sector. More than 3000 older women and men who needed to get this pension scheme from the government attended the meeting.

Also, in June 2013, one VAMP member, Sangeeta, participated in an online forum with participants from all over the world. The online forum posted questions about multigenerational organizing, and Sangeeta was able to contribute the benefits and challenges of VAMP's approach towards organizing multiple generations.

Importantly, one way in which SANGRAM helps VAMP fight against state violence is through meetings with activists groups. For example, the meeting of sex workers in Pune in November 2012 helped collectivize sex workers across the state of Maharashtra and share experiences of violence, as well as understand how to deal with these experiences. This meeting was held in collaboration with Masum a women's organization and CFAR an advocacy organization to influence poets, writers and intellectuals from the town of Pune.

Sex Worker Freedom Festival
VAMP participated in the Sex Worker Freedom Festival in July 2012, as an alternative to the International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC. VAMP performed a theatrical show, based on the journey of the lives of sex workers. This show was acted by sex workers themselves and by their children. It aimed to help open dialogue with mainstream society about the stigmatization and harassment sex workers and their children face from society, police, and family, among others. They emphasized the collectivization process as helping empower sex workers.

Caste Certificates for Children of Devadasis

On November 29, 2012, members of VAMP went to Mumbai to raise the issue of caste certificates for children of devadasis. Currently, it is very difficult for children of sex workers to access government welfare schemes because they lack their father's legal history and proofs of residency. This is causing many students difficulty in continuing school.

This was the first meeting directly between community members and high-level government officials. The purpose was to get government officials to understand these restrictions in accessing welfare schemes, and try to mainstream issues of marginalized

communities. It was an important development to have this experience-sharing session, and to give a platform for sex workers to share their personal stories. SANGRAM has asked the Chief Minister of Maharashtra Hon. Pritivraj Chavan for an appointment to discuss the same.

Work with transport and migrant workers

VAMP has continued its work with transport and migrant workers in North Karnataka. This includes creating awareness about HIV prevention through group discussions and training sessions. It also includes condom demonstrations and distributions, referrals to health systems, and PLHIV follow up visits.

VAMP Outreach in North Karnataka

Refer for TB: 18

Male: 8

Female: 10

Condom demonstrations: 27,480

Condom distribution: 1,621,428

Private doctor visits: 25

Private lab visits: 170

Government doctor Visit: 208

One to one session:

26,439

Male: 10,460

Female: 15,832

TG: 147

Total ART

Registration: 48

Male: 6

Female: 42

ART Started: 25

Male: 5

Female: 20

Community Meetings: 140

Total Outreach: 2079

Weekly staff meetings: 45

Number of attendees: 328

Monthly Planning & Review Meetings: 12

Number of Attendees: 286

New HIV+ Outreach: 50

Male: 4

Female: 46