



## YUVACHAITANYAM 2007

### *Young People's Initiative*

### ***A fest for the youth to commemorate, the Peer Educators of the Young People's Initiative project***

We are all familiar with the HIV/AIDS situation in Africa, but it is horrifying to know the extent and prevalence of HIV/AIDS in India. From the first case in 1986, the number of HIV/AIDS infected people has now risen to over 50 lakhs. ***A distressing fact is that 40 per cent of the young people of Andhra Pradesh in the age group of 15 to 29 are infected with the virus*** – a percentage higher than any other state and majority of these infections are believed to result through the sexual route of transmission. As the people in this age group are also the most economically productive group of the population, HIV has serious economic ramifications.

The response to the epidemic is multi faceted addressing high risk groups, general and bridge population. However, the focus is on the high risk groups. As the epidemic has transformed from concentrated to a general epidemic, the efforts are in place to address the general epidemic. Still, there are pockets of uncovered vulnerable populations specifically the youth in the age groups of 15 – 24 years who are sexually active and a considerable proportion in the current scenario. Although there are programs addressing children, the programs are not covering all of them e.g. out of school children. On the other hand, the major lacunae in the programs are follow up, availability and accessibility of services – specifically youth friendly services and a conducive environment.

### ***Young People's Initiative***

**UNICEF**, in accordance with **APSACS** and **LEPRA Society** took up intervention strategies to fight against the dreadful and developmental issue of HIV/AIDS among young and vulnerable children. Thus was born the, ***Young People's Initiative (YPI) Project*** in collaboration with LEPRA Society and its four partners.

The disturbing figures of the young falling prey to HIV/AIDS and their vulnerability to be infected and affected set in motion YPI project which was initiated in mid 2006, with the aim to mitigate the burden of HIV/AIDS in the State of A.P and thereby to safeguard young people. The HIV Division of **LEPRA Society** is the lead technical support organization for this initiative in A.P. The project is being implemented through four NGOs, in the three districts of A.P; Hyderabad Guntur and Medak.

The **goal of the YPI** is to “Encourage all young people (15-24 years) to have accurate knowledge; practice safe behaviour related to HIV-AIDS and have access to youth friendly services, by the year 2007”. The project focuses on achieving sustained behaviour change among the youth through:

- Peer education
- Building strong linkages and
- Creating youth friendly services/ environment
- Enhancing/ creating support structures
- Strengthening existing services

The 4 interventions in AP over the past 10 months have made a fair impact on the young population **reaching out to almost 7,000 young adults** through a band of well trained, nearly **600 out-of school youth -peer educators**.

#### **Reaching out.....**

- Provided services to 7000 youth
- 600 youth trained as peer educators and spreading the message among their peer group on HIV/AIDS
- 1500 youth participated in cultural shows spread awareness among 5000 people on HIV/AIDS and STIs
- Through 48 mobile exhibitions 1765 youth were made aware
- 285 cases were counselled on HIV & STI issues

**Smt. Panabaka Lakshmi, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare has consented to be the Chief Guest on this occasion** and motivate the youth to lead a responsible life. **Shri S Chandrashekhar, Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh; Shri Asok Kumar, Project Director Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society, Shri. M. Chandravardhan, District Collector Hyderabad and officials from UNICEF would also grace the occasion.**

### ***Reaching Out.....***

Taking into consideration the tremendous potential the youth have for prevention of HIV/AIDS among the youth population a one day youth festival - ***Yuvachaitanyam*** is planned to be organized for the youth coming from all the interventions across the state. The proposed festival will provide an opportunity for the youth and peer educators from three project areas to convene with one another, share their experiences and concerns. It will also provide platform for fun, will develop a sense of solidarity and it would accelerate the involvement of youth in HIV prevention programmes.



The fest will also identify the scope and contributions of youth towards the overall strategies of HIV prevention of the country thus contributing to the nation's progress and growth, there would be mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS activities in youth services, it will provide an opportunity to the youth to be part of the fun and frolic, we could address the issues of the youth to the government for a possible policy favouring young adults. This will also lay a platform to showcase the interventions with the youth for out side world with adequate media coverage and realize the importance of their involvement in a project like 'Young Peoples Initiative'. Further, for the NGO partners it will provide an opportunity to showcase their best practices, encourage there talented peer educators, interact with the young adults and their peer educators and learn from every ones experiences.

There would be more than **thousand youth** participating in this fest which would be a day long programme. The whole day will be devoted to addressing HIV/AIDS in various ways through entertainment-oriented thematic programmes (by select peer educators from among the total six hundred and others), competitions and presence of politicians and celebrities (sports persons and actors). Holistic health care will also be provided on the occasion.

With help[ form various contributors we have been able to organize the event. On the occasion we would felicitate these youth who despite being from poor economic background, being illiterate/semi-literate have volunteered and are contributing to their best level in preventing the spread of HIV among their peer group.



Thank you for taking the time out to read this concept note on Yuvachaitanyam a stride towards reaching to the youth and helping them become more responsible towards life.