Joint UN Programme on HIV Prevention and Care in north-east India

**Millennium Development Goal:**
Goal 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

**Targets:**
Halt by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

**Relevant India Development Goal:**
The goal of the National AIDS Control Programme Phase III (NACP - III) is to halt and reverse the HIV epidemic in India by 2011

**Background**
In north-east India, the number of people living with HIV has been increasing steadily and the epidemic has spread to all sections of the society. Furthermore, there is evidence to show that transmission of HIV is shifting from injecting drug use to sexual intercourse. While progress has been made, disseminating information and services to prevent the spread of HIV in rural and remote areas remains a challenge. The United Nations and the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) have developed a programme in four states of north-east India to help control the epidemic in the region. Launched in 2007, the project aims to improve the quality of existing response to HIV, and ensure that prevention and care services reach a maximum number of people.

The joint project involves four UN agencies - UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF and UNODC. UNAIDS provides expertise on using strategic information to plan and build capacities of State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) to implement and monitor the response to HIV epidemic. UNDP supports capacity development of state and non-state actors from non-health sectors to mitigate the impact of HIV. UNICEF strengthens care and support services for women and children. UNODC works primarily with youth to provide preventive services. The programme demonstrates a strong partnership between the Government of India, the UN system, the Government of Australia and the Government of Sweden.

**Objectives**
To improve capacities of different health and non-health government ministries, state-level AIDS control societies, affected communities and other stakeholders in north-east India to address the HIV epidemic.

**Project Information**

**Area:** HIV and Development

**Budget:** US$ 1.54 million

**Duration:** 2007-2013

**Implementing Partner(s):** NACO

**Other Partner(s):**
North-East Regional Office (NERO)
State AIDS Control Societies (SACS)

**Location(s):**
Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland
Results so far

- Upscale of livelihood pilot for PLHIVs across all districts of Manipur with support from the central government. As part of the pilot with the Manipur Industrial Development Corporation, PLHIVs trained in two districts have availed of microenterprise loans from local banks and accessed government-supported livelihood schemes.

- Stronger engagement with faith-based organizations by partnering with the Church in spreading awareness about HIV and HIV-related issues. Several Churches have allocated budgets for HIV-related activities. This has led to a realization of the potential of faith-based organizations in acting as catalysts for PLHIVs, and lending a voice for better access to treatment, care, and support services such as access to justice, protection of human rights and social protection.

- Establishment of a corpus fund by close to 60 legislator forums in Meghalaya has enabled support for PLHIVs in the state. This support fund has been a result of advocacy efforts.

- Development of a social protection strategy for PLHIVs in north-east that outlines a course of action to adopt measures to improve instruments for social protection of PLHIVs and improve access to existing schemes by broadening the inclusion criteria to include PLHIVs. State government departments have been seeking technical support to replicate efforts in four states of the region, thus, resulting in enhanced capacity of non-health ministries in upscaling HIV responses.

- Enhanced capacities of PLHIV networks through support aimed at capacity building in areas such as governance, strategy and leadership, administration, human resource management, knowledge and skills, advocacy and communication, finance and associated skills. This has enabled a greater role for PLHIV networks in the region.

Looking to the Future

- Demonstrated livelihood strategy that can be adapted, replicated and upscaled in other states of the region.

- Empowered PLHIV community and models to demonstrate improved access to social protection for infected and affected population, especially women and children.

- Empowered PLHIV community in terms of capacity and leadership development and engagement with the National Programme in areas of policy advocacy, planning, implementation and monitoring.

- Comprehensive and synergized HIV response from faith-based organizations towards issues of HIV and AIDS.

- Demonstrated effective strategy for the reduction of HIV-related stigma in healthcare settings.

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