



Case study – India

Provision of training for caregivers and neighbours of people living with HIV

Challenge

The HIV and AIDS epidemic arrived in India in 1986, and it now has one of the largest populations in the world of people living with the virus. In the past ten years the number of new cases has fallen by 50%, but there are still millions of Indian people with the disease who require care and treatment.

Caregivers, in the home or in the community, have a responsibility for the health and wellbeing of the neighbour or family member that they are caring for, and often lack training and support.

Catalyst

In 2008 VSO carried out national advocacy research in India, which resulted in the 'Walking the Talk' global report on women's rights and access to HIV services. This incited national organisation Child In Need India (CINI) to launch a pilot project to support primary caregivers.

By providing capacity building to caregivers and people living with HIV and AIDS CINI, in partnership with VSO India, aimed to ensure better quality services for those who receive care in the home. Initially 25 families, each consisting of one infected person and two primary care-givers participated in a two-day training programme and a one-day refresher course six months later. In total 36 primary care givers (including nine children) and 26 people living with HIV were trained in home-based care, management of opportunistic Infections (OIs), nutrition and meditation.

Results

CINI general clinic reported that 95% of people living with HIV gained weight within three months and their immune systems had strengthened since their last medical check-up. There has been a remarkable increase in attendance levels of people living with HIV and their family members for regular health check-ups. Two families of people living with HIV went for voluntary testing to confirm their HIV positive status, demonstrating increased awareness among the family members. Increasingly, men are taking on care-giving responsibilities, which is a trend that CINI hopes will continue to grow, creating a more supportive environment in families of people living with HIV.

In addition to capacity building for the caregivers the project also improved the self-esteem of the participants living with HIV. One young woman, Heera Bibi, found out she was HIV positive when she was 19 and already suffering



from symptoms of ill-health. The training she and her family received as part of the CINI project showed her how to cope with her treatment and showed her parents how they could offer emotional support and healthcare. Heera's health soon stabilised and the whole family is better-equipped to provide the care she needs in the home.

This experimental approach to HIV and AIDS care-giving opened up the possibility of further projects to improve the equality of care given in the home.

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Read the full 'Walking the Talk' report:

[http://www.vso.org.uk/Images/Walking_the_Talk_\(English_version\)_tcm79-21032.pdf](http://www.vso.org.uk/Images/Walking_the_Talk_(English_version)_tcm79-21032.pdf)