



ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022

South India AIDS Action Programme
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Executive Summary

It was yet another year of continued work on our vision, mission and objectives. The COVID19 pandemic continued to pose many challenges, however we went beyond the hurdles to fulfil our commitment to the vulnerable communities of sex workers, sexual minorities and adolescents who are invariably and disproportionately affected by any crisis situation. Our activities this year were more or less based on the emerging needs and issues of the pandemic. Additionally, the originally planned activities also faced a setback, though we managed to keep afloat and make optimal use of the opportunities that these unprecedented rough waves brought .

We thank our supporters and donors for sending money swiftly and generously during these needy hours, as also our team members who worked tirelessly and daringly to reach the maximum number of people.

In 2021-22, our mission to contribute to SDGs took another step forward, however SDG 2(improve nutrition) took primacy over other SDGs and was addressed actively throughout the pandemic by distributing dry ration kits and other essential items to keep people afloat. We made sure that we first reach out to the neglected and vulnerable communities of sex workers and sexual minorities which usually fall on the blind spot of Government facilities and community driven actions. The sex workers are usually under debt, and one of the worst affected work types due to the peculiarity of this pandemic. SDG 1 (Combat Poverty) was fulfilled by ensuring through our adolescent mental health programme that a local cadre of subject specialists and experts for career guidance, vocational and employment generation is built to gear them up for after school life. SDG 1 and SDG 8 (Enable Safe and Remunerative Work Options) were also fulfilled through our sex worker programme as we continually advocate for the rights of the female sex workers so that they are not discriminated on the basis of their work and can make a living out of sex work as any other and with out fear of stigma and violence.

SDG 2 (Improve Nutrition) closely connected with SDG 1(Combat Poverty) and SDG 4 (Improve Academic Performance) fulfilled through adolescent friendly community centers actively engaging children from the community and responding to their academic needs as well as psycho-social needs while they stayed away from school life during the pandemic. The life skills sessions for the adolescents aimed multidimensionally at nutrition, sexuality, emotional needs, gender equality, positive relationships and resolving conflict without violence among other themes. Emergence of trained child spokespersons provided a moment to rejoice again in the possibilities which youth and teamwork bring.

The reintegration program for institutionalized children scaled up to phase 3, helped children to reunite with their families or foster care families, while assessment of the children who lost their parents to COVID19 and had to live with their kin gave us insights into their world that would help to firm up the public system and voluntary sector for such eventualities.

LGBTQ program also spread its wings again post lockdown and resumed their engagement with the youth in colleges and institutes to advocate and create a critical mass of young professionals who are informed and aware of the LGBTQ discourse and likely to use this lense as they step into their professional lives.

The year ended with uncertainties, nonetheless with a stronger belief that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel, we just need to keep walking.

2021-22 Projects Details

1. **Project name:** Improving adolescent mental health in low income urban settlements in Chennai

Project Period: April 2021 to March 2022

Themes: Multidimensional approach towards Adolescents Mental Health and Well being

Objectives: 1. To generate evidence to design culturally appropriate, age specific and peer led interventions to address mental health needs of adolescents, a low resource settlement. 2. To build a cadre of adolescent spokesperson in the community;

3. To improve mental health and resilience of adolescents through skill building provision of psychosocial services and linkages with existing services; 4. To build a base of trained volunteers and subject experts to act as mentors to adolescents; 5. To build a supportive environment in the family and community for adolescents; 6. To build community led intervention for adolescent mental health.

Interventions:

The intervention followed a bottom-up approach and was a community based, adolescent friendly, non-medical model, explicitly addressing mental health needs through promotional, preventive and curative systems. Secondly, this intervention attempted to go beyond individuals and households to places where adolescents hangout. The interventions in this project were crafted drawing heavily from the 'capabilities approach', where work together with key stakeholders to strengthen capabilities of each and address core themes. In children, the project envisaged strengthening of capabilities related to emotional well-being and seeking support for emotional wellbeing, no use of drugs, sexuality and sexual health, boredom, avoid peer pressure and take responsible action, making healthy choices, resolving conflicts, social capital, using community resources, self-esteem and confidence, communication, positive relationships. Simultaneously, the project worked together with key stakeholders to strengthen their capabilities that would positively impact the adolescents' mental health. Overall seven activities were planned for the year, however two were replaced by other activities due to COVID-19 (discussed below). The project began with a desk review to critically analyse and gain a contextual understanding about issues. This followed by resource mapping activity which found a great gap in resources for adolescent mental health. A resource utilization draft plan was developed to ensure better and appropriate resource allocation for interventions. Children identified to build a cadre of spokespersons to promote peer support systems, positive role models and to advocate for adolescent issues with policy makers. Community-based adolescent friendly centers were set up to provide counselling services and promote psychosocial support for adolescents and their parents. Linkages with existing public mental health services to promote access. A team of volunteers/subject experts trained to build the social capital and mentoring support. Two activities for psychosocial environment strengthening activities to promote extracurricular activities and develop age appropriate IEC material for social media were dropped due to Covid-19 second wave, and funds for a Rapid assessment of children in kinship care due to Covid-19 in Tamil Nadu and for preparing Annual Report of the Child Protection Services of UNICEF office for Tamil Nadu and Kerala for the year 2021 using the monies earlier allocated for Technical Consultant Honorarium.

Impact: The findings of the desk review provided clarity in shaping the interventions like creating adolescent friendly spaces, both for positive mental health and addressing distress; use of local language in defining distress and recovery; firm grounding in the contextual socio-cultural underpinnings by the service providers for aptness of intervention; leveraging on the inherent potentials of the communities to articulate their economic and socio cultural realities and use of health services to inform specific and contextually relevant programme activities. Through resource mapping activity, some children were found discontinuing school post the pandemic or children who have never attended school. For these children, this centre in the community was used as a safe space to learn and attend remedial classes facilitated by the project team members. Out of 50 identified as Child SpokesPerson, 32 are trained and share a functional rapport with each other. Children and parents have started accessing the CFCC (Child Friendly Counselling services at the programme centers). 20 individuals have reached out to access counselling services from the program officers for varied themes. Majority of the sessions have been with children, while only 1 session was facilitated with a parent who had voluntarily approached the counselling centre for psychological support. Linkages between children seeking psychosocial support and PHCs have been established. The online platform provided academic learning support, connecting adolescent volunteers from US to community children helping in developing a sense of friendship with children their age from across the globe and instilling a sense of hope and belonging. One-on-one sessions served multiple purposes of identifying existing resources in the community, mapping out the unique challenges and opportunities in the lives of adolescents and opening windows towards identifying counselling needs; in creating a community of enrolled children across residential blocks; to reflect on their own biases and challenge each other on topics such as gender equality; understanding self; skills on problem solving, anger management, effectively communicating opinions, sharing reflecting etc were imparted.

Donor: Unicef

Primary Stakeholders/Beneficiaries: Children and adolescents in the age group 8-18 years, their parents, community members, healthcare providers.

2. Project title: Rapid Assessment of Children in Kinship Care Due To Covid-19 in Tamil Nadu

Project period: October 2021 to December 2021

Themes: Alternative care, orphaned due to pandemic, health and well-being of children, kinship care and caregivers capacity.

Objectives: The overall objective of the rapid assessment is to examine the status of children orphaned due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Tamil Nadu.

Intervention: South India AIDS Action Programme worked with the DSD and UNICEF to conduct a rapid assessment of the health and wellbeing of the children who lost their primary caregivers due to pandemic and placed under kinship care; as well as the capacity of caregivers to meet the needs of such children. The assessment covered 73 children (equally from boys and girls), 67% being under the age of 15 years and 57% living in the same house, now with relatives, as when their parents were alive. 52 caregivers of these children in 6 districts across Tamil Nadu were also assessed. Specific areas assessed included children's access to basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, education and extracurricular activities, their safety and security, health and sense of well-being, and access to social entitlements and other support systems. Caregivers' capacities were assessed in terms of health, financial stability, impact of Covid-19 on care provision, access to social entitlements and need for support. We also aimed to identify gaps and challenges in kinship care provision and policies for strengthening care provision in the state. Data was collected using cross-sectional questionnaire surveys. Separate questionnaires were developed for children and caregivers.

Impact: The study resulted in forwarding issues and finding specific recommendations, categorized separately for the Children, the Caregivers and the Child Protection System. The recommendations were made in matters related to Child Safety, Education and Extracurricular activities, access to social entitlements, health and wellbeing of children specifically for children. Recommendation for employment support, access to social entitlements, access to sponsorships, health and wellbeing of caregivers and COVID-19 specific support made to caregivers. Some recommendations for the Child Protection System also emerged based on the findings of the study that led to the child protection authorities to conduct due diligence for all the children in kinship care.

Donor: UNICEF

Primary Stakeholders: re-institutionalized children, families/ caregivers of re-institutionalized children, Department of Social defence (GoTN)

3. Project title: Reintegration of Children in Institutional Care Settings and Preventing Re-institutionalization

Project period: Phase 3 – Scale up-March 2021 to March 2022

Themes: Children in difficult circumstances, long term institutional care, Juvenile Justice System, deinstitutionalization and reintegration in families and communities, end to institutional care systems.

Objectives:

- To support the roll-out of the 5-year action plan and promote alternative care and de-institutionalization in Tamil Nadu
- Developing Social and Behaviour Change Communication materials, assessment tools and monitoring and evaluation tools and building capacities of Child Protection Functionaries
- Establishing a cadre of child protection functionaries delivering alternative care to children in institutional care
- Establishing a mechanism for linkages to foster family strengthening services to promote alternative care system in the state
- Building impact tracking systems and providing evidence based successful reintegration strategies for scaling up.

Interventions: The scale-up phase 3, (March 2021 – March 2022) of the project built upon the learnings from the previous Phase 1 and 2 and was implemented by SIAAP in collaboration with the DSD and UNICEF in 14 CCIs from a select 7 districts in Tamil Nadu. Seven districts were selected based on HDI of the districts and number of institutionalized children (boys and girls) and prioritized for reintegration of 15 children per district summed up to 105. District specific roadmaps were developed for implementation including allocation of human resources with specific roles and responsibilities and determining targets by forms of care (reintegration and foster care) and gender.

Protection Officer (Non-Institutional Care) under the supervision of the DCPU was to play the role of Case Manager and assisted by two social workers as case workers. The roles and responsibilities of Case Manager and Case Workers were finalised in consultation with the DSD. Social and behavioural communication materials, monitoring and evaluation tools, reporting formats and reporting tools were developed such as modules on basic counselling and facilitation skills with special reference to working with parents of children in institutional care. Sensitization materials such as perspective building on the importance of family care, impact of long term institutionalisation, policies and legislations emphasizing family based care, steps and processes in reintegration and foster care provision, writing quality ICPS, crisis intervention and monitoring children sent to families due to Covid-19 pandemic situation were also developed to build capacities of CCI staff, District Child protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee, Village Level Child Protection Committees and other allied agencies for effective implementation of reintegration and alternative care at the district level. Counselling training and facilitation skill materials were developed to train CMs and CWs informed with evidence from neuroscience. An 18 indicator MIS format to track the reintegrated cases was developed and used by the case managers for monthly reports on cases. A Feasibility Assessment Format to assess the different dimensions of the families was developed to be used pre placement. Building capacities of Child Protection Functionaries through 8 sessions on family based care perspective building, adverse effects of institutionalization; strategic planning for reintegration and deinstitutionalization; thirdly on case management strategy were under taken. Sensitization on steps and process of reintegration and alternative care; basic counselling and facilitation skills for PO (NIC) and social workers; sensitization on monitoring children sent home due to Covid-19; capacity building on individual care planning etc. were successfully accomplished. Interventions were planned around building consensus and commitment among stakeholders and strengthen linkages with related agencies and ensure convergence. Child Protection Functionary were assisted to create a database of prioritized children, explore conditions to thrive in the family (SIR and ICP based), initiate contact and assessment with families, prepare children and families, reintegration, and post reintegration follow-up. Refresher training for DCPU counsellors of prioritized districts and onsite support supervision to strengthen psychosocial services for reintegrated children and their families. Establish effective monitoring and evaluation system to track and report progress of the intervention by establishing Project Management Committee and conducting meetings on schedule

Impact:

Donor: UNICEF

Primary stakeholders/ beneficiaries: Children in institutional care and their families, care givers and child protection functionaries.

4. Project Title : Malarkal – A Million Blossoming: Integrated approach to strengthening health, gender safety, and employment preparedness of adolescent girls in urban slums

Project Period: 2017 – on going (This section is for the period April 2021 to March 2022)

Themes: Multidimensional approach towards Adolescents Mental Health and Well being

Objectives: The objective of the initiative is strengthening agency of approximately 5000 adolescents (3840 adolescent girls and 960 adolescent boys) in an urban slum in Chennai city through building capabilities related to life skills, nutrition, sex and reproductive health, mental health and employability among primary and secondary stakeholders in a period of 3 years.

Interventions : In continuation with the programme since 2017 this year, all the houses in the community were enumerated to list the household members and community and school counsellors were exposed to the basic and advanced counselling skill training, adolescent training topics, perspective building process and facilitation skills. Nearly, 117% (2830/2500) of adolescents were identified and recruited from the community (1953 against 1800) and schools (877 against 700). About 76% of the target for number of interactive sessions with adolescents has been achieved with 99% in the community and 22% in schools. About 4 counselling centres were established as against the planned target of 3 centers. Established an excel based MIS to track the progress and also developed 9 inventories to track the participants and activities. All targets for number of adolescents recruited in the programme, workshops to finalise and prioritise training topics, counselling services for adolescents and their parents, organising PAC meetings, self-defence sessions, modules for adolescents and parents and perspective building sessions with parents have been achieved. double the targets for counselling adolescents have been achieved both in the community as well as in schools. The targets for ensuring access to sports sessions for adolescents, capacity building of service providers, and training sessions for adolescents in schools have been initiated. The first two phases of the mass events to mark the launch of the project were executed successfully. However, the targets for ensuring access to services, training for service providers such as Anganwadi Workers, TN Urban Habitat Development Board and Police Officers, organising Project Management Committee Meetings, baseline and longitudinal assessment, and printing of the modules are yet to be achieved. Programme manager position is yet to be filled.

Impact: Our Data indicates that over 50% of the adolescents receiving counselling had reported improved levels of confidence in handling psychosocial problems. Over 70% attendance was achieved in sports and self-defence sessions. Greater proportion (130%) of parents availed counselling services than targeted . Although small in number, all the children referred, accessed the health and other services.

80% of the adolescents attending training report correct knowledge on the topics covered and exhibit desirable attitudes to the issues concerned. Around 50% parent’s expressed favourable attitude towards adolescents. At least 10% of adolescents accessed SRH services. SIAAP provided counselling services to more number of adolescents and parents than what was proposed.

Donor: APPI

Primary Stakeholders/Beneficiaries: Adolescent girls, their parents, their neighbourhood communities and schools, Anganwadi Workers, TN Urban Habitat Development Board and Police Officers

5. Project title: APPI Covid-19 emergency response

Project period:

Themes:

Objectives:

Intervention: During second wave of Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown, SIAAP conducted need assessment in the field to understand the situation of the people in Tsunami Quarters in Ernavur where SIAAP has an Adolescent health program and female sex workers of Vadamalar Federation in 6 districts such as Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Theni, Tiruvannamalai and Villupram. The vast majority of the people in Tsunami Quarters we spoke with were daily wagers, who have been unable to go to work due lockdown. Based on the recommendations of Parent Advisory Committee and Board Members of Vadamalar Federation about these the covid-19 emergency grants received from APPI, SIAAP teams reached out to 492 families in Tsunami Quarters and 308 female sex workers with dry ration kit worth Rs.1500/- per family.

Impact: Overall, 800 families- 492 families in Tsunami Quarters and 308 female sex workers, were covered and about 3200 beneficiaries were supported through this intervention, which ensure three meals a day for all their family members. Distribution of relief materials to the communities where SIAAP works, increased visibility of work, also furthered trust and recognition of the communities and opened-up new possibilities.

Donor: APPI

Primary Stakeholders: families of adolescents enrolled in the programme, Sex worker members of Vadamalar federation, single mothers, people with no ration cards,

6. Project title: Strengthening Access to SRHR and Wellbeing among Female Sex Workers community in 3 states of India.

Themes:

- Gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation/cutting, domestic and sexual violence
- Access to SRHR services for poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups including persons living with disabilities or with HIV/AIDS
- Challenging stigma and discrimination, including for LGBTI groups

Project period: 15 Sep 2021 to 14 Mar 2022 and 15 Mar 2022 to 14 Sep 2022

Interventions: Due to pandemic and heavy flooding in the region, the project activities had a slow start, delays and had to be re-commenced from January 2022. Activities towards completion included the pleasure positive approach, project operations and delivery, and CBO strengthening. Ongoing work included advocacy training, SRHR training, online platforms, crisis intervention, IEC material & curriculum development and COVID study. Work is yet to begin for strengthening the coalition.

Focus group discussions with CBO members of Tamil Nadu conducted, covering range of issues around the pleasure in sex work, specifically, meaning of pleasure, experiencing pleasure with partners and clients, negotiating pleasure, reducing discomfort, inhibitors to pleasure and relationship between pleasure and safer sex

Overall, we learnt that FSWs do experience and enjoy pleasure with clients and partners even if sex work is performed primarily for an income, are able to describe fluently how pleasure feels in their bodies and experience and enjoy orgasms and are also able to clearly articulate what clients find pleasurable. We also learnt that fear and inhibitions in regards to sex work are mainly caused by time constraints, police harassment, client/ partner intoxication and client's disregard towards women's pleasure. In regards to safe sex, we found that safe sex does inhibit pleasure overall, but it is also interesting to note that safe sex is essential for women to enjoy pleasure in their interactions; they are very cautious in regards to safe sex and have learnt to integrate it into their pleasure experience. Women participated freely and enthusiastically in the discussions.

CBO strengthening activities included monthly meetings, and exercises to build agency and ownership. The meeting agenda included enquiries about current working conditions, review of decisions and forward action points from previous meetings, presentation of key issues/ gathering information on specific issues faced by the CBO etc. Key issues that were highlighted during monthly meetings included police brutality, reduced income due to COVID-19, inability to pay school/ college tuition fees of children, etc. An important activity was to transfer responsibility as well as monies to CBOs for key activities and decisions (Appendix 3). Leadership and advocacy training have been initiated for peer leaders. Board members across all 3 states are now familiar with video conferencing online (Appendix 4). Crisis intervention teams are in place across all three states. Organizational capacity building efforts have been successfully undertaken across all three states. In Tamil Nadu, a project operational delivery plan was created via capacity building exercises designed for program officers, training on organizational capacity building has also been conducted across all the 3 states.

Overall, progress on the project continues to be uneven thanks to COVID illness/fatigue among staff and SWs, unexpected staff turnover, and entrenched resistance among policy makers and providers to support SWs. Engagement with key stakeholders for acceptance is delayed because of ongoing revisions to incorporate details about relevant policies, existing services, national and regional evidence, after feedback from stakeholders. Advocacy for SRHR by SWs: Advocacy training curriculum is ready and in use. About 378 SWs (target 150) are sensitized on SRH as a human rights issue, 236 trained peers (target 30) are advocating for access to quality SRHR services, and have undertaken 42 advocacy actions (target 18). Regular monthly CBO meetings have helped to assess performance, and plan ongoing actions. An MoU has been signed with the Vadamalar Federation of SWs to promote efficiency and accountability. Increased number of new users of SRHR services: Draft training modules on a lifecycle approach to SRH are ready. About 616 SWs (target 600) are sensitized on issues related to Safer sex, Abortion, Breast and Cervical cancers, IPV, Pleasure Positive Approach, and Mental Health. Sensitization on (9) other topics will be completed in the next period. Pre and post workshop evaluations have been dropped because of time constraints. About 480 SWs (target 60) accessed SRH related services in this period. The pleasure positive approach is not integrated into the training, and we do not plan to measure outcomes at this time. Increased number of new users of SRHR services: A total of 20 Crisis Intervention teams have been established, SOP developed, and 66 issues addressed. Main crisis areas relate to police arrests/detention, violence by intimate partners/clients/family members, and evictions due to discrimination and/or inability to pay rent - Organizational and Digital Capacity building: Engagement with most stakeholders is online, but we are yet to develop safety protocols and SOP. Capacity building for financial and project management is partially complete. We have dropped plans to develop online platforms for CBOs since they seem unfeasible at this time.

Covid Indicator: Surveys on post Covid impact on FSWs are complete . SW narratives are yet to be collated and shared with stakeholders.

Impact:

Devastations caused by COVID-19 continue and India's economy has suffered. As a result, income levels and employment have fallen across the board. This has impacted the income of FSWs as well. Simultaneously, the state has intensified takeover of traditional brothel areas, especially in Pune, Mumbai, and Nagpur among other places. The brothel areas are located in high real estate, which has led to a concerted politically backed takeover of these areas. This has placed considerable stress on FSWs who have migrated to neighboring towns and/or back to their own villages. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were affected by floods towards the end of last year, impoverishing FSWs in these states. As a result, field based activities have been affected. During the pandemic and flood crisis situations, the help desk (FGHR funded project), was instrumental in organizing emergency food, ration, cash and other essential supplies, along with procurement of identification documents to access government aid. Extensive efforts from Help Desk Peers, project team and CBO leaders were taken to operationalize the GFATM COVID-19 relief grant for key populations. Dry ration kits were distributed to 500 FSWs in Tamil Nadu in Dec 2021. Efforts towards strengthening digital capacities and providing stipends for access to communication platforms helped sex workers to discuss issues and to seek support. Protests were undertaken at the national level against brothel area takeovers.

Primary beneficiaries/ stakeholders: Female sex workers, LGBT,PLWHA,Survivors of violence and others children of sex workers.

Donor: Amplify Change

7. **Project Title: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Increasing Resilience of Women Sex Workers in India During the COVID Pandemic Project**

Themes: Improved resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to information regarding disease control and treatment and reduction of vulnerabilities in the face of COVID-19

Project period: December 2020 to November 2021

Objectives: This project aims to assist sex workers to leverage and access social protection safety nets, access better health outcomes, legal assistance by strengthening community based organisations who are members of the National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) in operating help desks at the district level.

Interventions: In 4 districts of Tamil Nadu such as Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, Madurai and Theni help desk were established and operate in small office space and in case the local collective doesn't have an office space, the help desk is operated by the peer through her mobile. Each help desk is operated by one peer sex worker trained in the criteria for opening bank accounts, social protection schemes etc. The help desks support the sex workers in opening zero bank accounts, accessing eligible social protection schemes through e literacy, facilitating coordination with required departments, and ongoing follow-up, ensuring access to legal services. Since the initiation of the project from November 2020 till February 2021, peers recruited for the Help Desk actively engaged in conducting baseline assessment (on accessibility to basic identification documents issued by the government, to social entitlements and to social welfare programmes) of the state and central governments) and facilitated access to the same through accompanied referral to several government departments and offices.

Impact:

Impact of transparency based practices nurtured and exhibited through hand holding by SIAAP have culminated in vadamalar federation adopting the same practices while selecting the peers for the Help Desk through a transparent and unbiased process with an external community member in the interview panel.

Resurgence of pandemic in 2021 and Tamil Nadu State assembly elections negatively impacted access to social entitlements and health care services linkage building intervention as the project functionaries were able to carry out the tasks with respect to protecting and promoting rights of sex workers to access to social entitlements and social protection schemes and health care services for ailments other than Covid-19.

Donor: The Fund for Global Human Rights

Primary stakeholders/ beneficiaries: Women Sex Workers

Project Title: Advocacy to Prevent Discrimination of LGBTQI Communities**Project Period:** 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2022**Themes:** Advocacy for LGBTQI communities**Objectives:** To strengthen and empower members of the LGBTQI community, facilitation of support groups for social workers and community leaders to include LGBTQI community members and women in sex work to create awareness, prevent discrimination, and promote understanding, facilitate communities to come together and work toward inclusive policies, to address issues within the subgroups of LGBTQI community.**Interventions:**

This year we focussed on resuming work with colleges and educational institutions and the unique strategy adapted was to offer customized modules on understanding LGBTQI for students of different disciplines namely, law, medicine, social work, etc. Additionally, we conducted several sessions with the LGBTQI community to address the issues of different subgroups to address homophobia in transgender communities and to address transphobia in gay and bisexual groups. Many community members who attended sessions in Trichy and Coimbatore shared that they learnt about the intersex identities during the sessions for the first time. Disruption of lives and livelihoods of LGBTQ and sex workers continued after the lifting of restrictions due to the sudden and draconian lockdowns that have left LGBTQI and sex worker communities impoverished and hopeless. SIAAP/ Nirangal continued to handle crisis situations faced by queer individuals and offered them peer counselling support with referrals to professional mental health practitioners as needed.

Impact: One of the very successful programs was the gender and sexuality awareness program at Saveetha School of Law, Chennai, in April 2022. Since then, their students have offered to help pro bono for legal support to LGBTQI community during crisis situations. The Institute's management has also agreed to engage with SIAAP/Nirangal to conduct such sensitization programs regularly. Another highlight was program with the Department of Physiology, Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College and Hospital, Perambalur, in July 2022. The staff and management appreciated the customized two-day module for sensitization program that included scientific discussion about sex, sex characteristics, and gender. Personal experience sharing of LGBTQI community members, reference to standard protocols like those of World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), case studies and reflections of participants through participatory theater activities. We are confident that the future lawyers, advocates, doctors and health professionals who attended our programs will not only adapt inclusive practices in their own work but also advocate for them in their professional circles.

Organizing Pride parade along with community groups and local collectives in Coimbatore on 18 June. As a follow up to the judgement of S Sushma¹ Honorable Justice Anand Venkatesh of the Madras High Court had directed the media to ensure use of accurate and respectful terminology while reporting about LGBTQI. In response, the Tamil Nadu government has this year, in a historic first, published a glossary for LGBTQI terminology. Further, the Tamil Nadu government has also amended the Subordinate Police Officers' Conduct Rules to specifically prohibit police from harassing LGBTQI community members or those working for the welfare of the community. In yet another positive development, while ruling on a case about maternity benefits for unmarried women, Honorable Justice Chandrachud and Bopanna have ruled that families include queer families (Deepika Singh versus Central Administrative Tribunal and Others). This has also received very positive media coverage, In an order relating to the Budhadev Karmaskar Vs. The State of West Bengal, the honorable justices of the Supreme Court have affirmed the rights of sex workers and their children to rations and other benefits from the government, and this has also received widespread positive media coverage. The Supreme Court had set up a panel to give

recommendations on how sex workers can live a life of dignity according to the rights given under the Constitution. SIAAP was a member of the SC panel. Our team also worked together with the management, faculty, and students of Dr. Ambedkar Arts College, Vyasarpadi, Chennai, to establish an Inclusive Club.

Donor: American Jewish Welfare Society**Primary stakeholders/beneficiaries:** Social workers, Community leaders, LGBTQIA+ community members and their partners and family members, sex workers

¹ S Sushma Vs TN Govt

8. Project title: General operating support for the LGBTI Program

Project period: 1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023

Themes: Strengthen and empower members of the LGBTIQ community

Objectives:

- Advancing equal rights for LGBTIQ people and to achieve significant legal, policy and cultural change towards equal rights for LGBTIQ people
- To bring changes in public understanding of LGBTIQ issues and communities and/or new narratives by and about historically oppressed people within LGBTIQ communities
- Building stronger relationships, alliances, and partnerships to advance LGBTI rights
- Strengthening crisis response team and burnout prevention among social workers

Intervention: With the end of the most draconian lockdown restrictions, we slowly resumed our regular programs. Initially, it was a challenge to work with colleges and educational institutions as even after the end of lockdown restrictions, they were caught up with finishing the syllabus and the threat of another sudden lockdown was still around the corner. Eventually, we were able to renew our work with the institutions that we had engaged with in the past and also managed to make inroads into new colleges and universities to conduct awareness and sensitization programs and also collaborate on volunteering, internships, and research. During the course of the year, we also strengthened our existing alliances like those with the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artists Association (TNPWAA) and Sterling Playback Theatre and established new alliances with groups and collectives working on the environment, workers unions, religion and faith based groups, theatre groups, etc.

Impact: In March 2022, we collaborated with a Bangalore based organization named Aneka to organize a state level consultation on religion, gender and sexuality. The participants included Rev. S. D. Dev Jyothi Kumar – Program Executive, Ecumenical Solidarity for HIV and AIDS (ESHA) project, Fr. Thomas Ninan – General Coordinator Ecumenical Solidarity for HIV and AIDS (ESHA), Tashi Choedup – Queer Buddhist Monast, Mr. Sikkandar – State Secretary of Jamat Islamic Hind, Since then we have been in continued follow up with Churches and religious groups to work toward inclusive spaces for the LGBTIQ community.

As a result of our continued engagement with Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artists Association (TNPWAA), the Tamil Book “Khairathi 377” by M. Anandan was released in the Coimbatore book fair in July 2022. The author particularly thanked our team members for patiently answering his questions when he had attended our sensitization program several years ago and appreciated us for approaching the issues of LGBTIQ community from a scientific perspective. This book is of particular significance to the public discourse of gender and sexual diversity as it is the first such collection of diverse stories from across the LGBTIQ spectrum in Tamil language.

We also organized in-depth full day sensitization programs for students of social work in Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, in September 2022. We facilitated a similar program for students of Women’s Studies in Bharathidasan University, Trichy, in the same month. These programs included presentation of scientific terminology about sex, sex characteristics, and gender, activities for participants to reflect on their own gender biases and stereotypes, sharing by community members, discussion on application of principles of social work, and use of theatre and arts to allow participants to process the learning and share their reflections. Our team members have been trained in theatrical forms like playback theatre and the theatre of the oppressed and used aspects of these to make the sessions lively and impactful. Toward the end of the year 2022, some of the team members also attended a theatre of the oppressed training in Vanagam, Karur district. This was also an opportunity to network with various other movements including those working on labour rights, environment and theater and arts. We plan to leverage on these contacts to further strengthen our alliances with other progressive groups.

Donor: Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

Primary stakeholders/beneficiaries: Queer community members, social workers, children and adolescents from underserved communities, sex workers.

9. Project title: Support of Formation and Functioning of Sex workers' State level federation Vadamalar

Project period: April 2021 to March 22

Themes: Collectivization; Visibility; Peer Support; Crisis Management (framed by kakul since it was not available)

Objectives: Hand Holding the sex workers state level collective

Intervention: The federation office was set up in Madurai. The mobiles phones of the federation members were recharged to ensure round the clock connectivity amongst members, with SIAAP Sex Worker Project functionaries and Management.. Financial support was provided to deal with court cases related to sex work for 5 CBOs and to deal with violence by police and brothel.

Impact: As a result of having an office the Vadamalar Federation was able to conduct monthly meetings and pay for the office rent, support sex workers to deal with violence police and brothels, pay for Monthly Honorarium of federation leaders to encourage their active role and for remuneration of their time during the handholding period.

Donor: European Union unused funds from previous year

Primary Stakeholder: sex workers, Sex worker CBOs and Sex workers federation.

10. Other Activities

Covid-19 - Grief and Bereavement Helpline for Adolescent Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (IVR format)

Along with the Department for Social Defence and UNICEF, we set up a helpline to provide interactive voice response (IVR) using a virtual toll free number (8587 944 782) for mental and psychosocial support to young people and their family members in Tamil Nadu. It was inaugurated by the Director of DSD. Tmt. S. Valarmathi (I.A.S.), the Director, Directorate of Social Defence delivered the keynote address highlighting the stressful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives and how adolescents are facing challenges that can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. The helpline was operational for 3 months of intensive need hour during the second wave of Covid-19.

This helpline provided overarching psychosocial support to callers especially on grief and bereavement. Module based training was conducted for SIAAP counsellors on highly specific issues of use of IVR, grief and loss, death and dying, self-enquiry. Equipped with these modules and counselling skills counsellor provided grief and bereavement counselling to callers in Tamil, Malayalam and English languages, on voice and video call modes. Additionally, 5 posters in three languages mentioned above were made and shared on social media platforms to publicize the helpline. An SOP was developed for the IVR operations. The IVR was served by Servetel, a service provider. The helpline provided a free, confidential, non-judgemental and Queer affirmative space for _____ callers of which _____ were adolescents. Previous years European Union balance funds were used for operating the IVR.

Shyamala participated in Vihaan Project World AIDS Day session (This document was blank)

Extending support to LEAD India Young Leaders Environment Service in Action (YLESA) programme: A team from SIAAP including the programme director and programme officers conducted two sessions on sex and sexuality and mental health for the Youth participants from LEAD fellowship programme. The organization was impressed with SIAAP's commitment to the cause of building social capital and its expertise on core issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, and has expressed interest to engage SIAAP in its future youth leadership programme as well.

Covid19 relief : In July 2021 during the devastating second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, SIAAP distributed dry ration kits to support 479 sex workers in six districts. 478 beneficiaries are benefited from the relief. 9 CBOs in Vadamalar federation involved in the distribution work. Distribution work was carried out by CBO leaders and second line leaders. Each dry ration kit costs 1500/- This relief work was funded by Mariwala health Initiative and APPI.