



muktaa
Charitable Foundation
Beyond Barriers



THE YEAR IN REVIEW AT MUKTAA



April 2022 - March 2023



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Introduction

Hello,

We gather here, grounded in our understanding of history and hope. Today, we carry within us the people, stories and memories of our past, embracing the places they have taken us. We know the incremental steps we have taken, the progress we have made and the values we hold dear. We come together to celebrate the power of helping, hope-building and contributing to something bigger than ourselves.

But in this moment – we contemplate our future.

To shape the future, we turn our gaze inwards, for we hold the key to what tomorrow will look like. We ask ourselves where we are going, why and who will join us on this journey. To do what has to be done, again and again, to move things forward. To do the work of the world.

Trustees,
Muktaa Charitable Foundation



Executive Summary From The President's Desk



As a pioneering non-profit organisation, Muktaa Charitable Foundation (MCF) has been at the forefront of social welfare initiatives since 2005. With a strong focus on issues such as HIV/AIDS, TB, Hep B & C, addiction, sexual health awareness, gender sensitization and life skill education, MCF has made a significant impact on the lives of individuals and communities. Our commitment to social welfare has earned us recognition and support, including 80G and CSR status, as well as an FCRA license in the process of being renewed.

At the core of our work is the Samvad HIV/AIDS Helpline, our flagship project that has been running for over two decades in Bihar and Maharashtra. Through this helpline, we have provided assistance and counselling to over 4,00,000 callers, making it one of the largest helplines for HIV in India. The Samvad Helpline has garnered accolades for its exceptional service and dedication to supporting individuals affected by HIV/AIDS.





In line with our mission to address the holistic well-being of individuals, MCF has recently launched the Muktaa Mental Health Helpline. This initiative offers free, anonymous and professional mental health support to those experiencing emotional distress. Our trauma-informed, culturally responsive and empathetic care aims to alleviate mental health challenges prevalent in Indian populations.

In addition to our helplines, MCF actively engages in several other projects. Ankur focuses on systematic disclosure of HIV status to children living with HIV, while Shala Beyond Books provides life-skill education, including sexuality education, to school adolescents in Bihar and Maharashtra. No Addict offers addiction training for medical professionals, psychologists, counsellors and college students and Sakav-Bridging the Barriers works on gender sensitisation with a particular emphasis on college youth. We also undertake initiatives such as Anaemia Management, Samvad Corona Helpline (extended during the pandemic), First Aid for All and Webinars for Doctors Forum, which contribute to the improvement of healthcare and education for marginalized communities.

In our unwavering pursuit of social welfare, Muktaa Charitable Foundation stands as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change. Through our commitment to education, healthcare, social welfare, gender equality, skill development, child development and community development, we have left an indelible impact on the lives of individuals and communities. Our work is driven by a deep-rooted belief in the importance of equal opportunities and access to healthcare and well-being for all. Today, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the Annual Report of Muktaa Charitable Foundation for the year 2022-2023.

Dr Prakash Mahajan
President, Muktaa Charitable Foundation





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Our guiding principles

OUR MISSION

To lead the charge in building an innovative and high-quality public healthcare ecosystem, especially for the marginalized and vulnerable. We accomplish this through inclusive, community-centric interventions rooted in knowledge empowerment, needs-driven approaches and unobstructed access to quality services.

OUR VISION

India where all individuals thrive in safety, make informed decisions about their health and are empowered to participate in community wellbeing.





OUR OBJECTIVES

Prevention through awareness

To raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, mental health and sexual health issues by conducting educational programs, lecture series and awareness campaigns.

Last-mile access to quality treatment

To provide free, anonymous and evidence-based information, guidance, counselling support and referral linkages for healthcare access to all, regardless of their financial limitations.

Empowering communities

To act as a catalyst for community empowerment through holistic sexual health and life skill education, accessible physical and mental healthcare, gender equality and strengthening healthcare systems.

Fostering inclusivity and gender sensitivity

We strive to foster inclusivity of the marginalised and vulnerable by upholding dignity, choices and support.

Building capacity and lifelong learning

We prioritise the professional development of frontline healthcare providers through expert-led and practical training so they can deliver high-quality and legally updated services across various domains.





OUR CORE VALUES

Accessibility

People should not have to travel long distances to get essential healthcare.

Inclusion

The multiple forms of systemic and structural inequity, that compound to create unique physical and mental health challenges for the marginalised and vulnerable, must be addressed.

Equity

Good quality services should reach people in need, particularly those least likely or able to demand them.

Human rights

Healthcare services should empower individuals to make informed decisions about their well-being.

Compassionate, Non-Judgmental Attitude

Every individual's unique experiences deserve respect – creating a safe, supportive and heard environment for all.

Accuracy of Information

Access to evidence-based knowledge should make way for informed decision-making.

Respecting Privacy

Individuals should have the right to health care that respects and protects their sensitive information.





Tracing our history

1997-2005: LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR SERVICE

During their final year medical internship in 1997, Dr Madhu Oswal and Dr Rupa Agarwal were moved by the plight of young patients suffering from terminal illnesses. Unlike diseases that primarily affected older individuals, such as diabetes, hypertension, or late-stage cancers; these illnesses struck the youngest of families – leaving them unprepared for such premature deaths.

In 2001, under the banner of Maitri (Melghat Mitra) Trust, Muktaa Charitable Foundation embarked on a mission to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. We conducted a capacity-building lecture series for 1000+ doctors, engaging renowned experts like Dr Raman Gangakhedkar, Dr Sanjay Pujari and Dr Vinay Kulkarni. Dr Prakash Mahajan and Dr Madhu Oswal played crucial roles in managing these series. Despite limited funds, the team executed the sessions with determination and resourcefulness, covering doctors within and outside Pune.

By 2005, MCF felt the need to take a different approach to reach the individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. We wanted to raise public awareness using methods that hadn't been tapped into by the government and other NGOs.

2005: INTRODUCING SAMVAD HELPLINE

After six months of brainstorming, the team conceived the idea of a free helpline where individuals could seek guidance anonymously, free from judgement. For a pilot study, we published Dr Madhu Oswal's mobile number in a newspaper and the overwhelming response from callers for over a month confirmed the need for such a helpline in Pune.





On October 2nd 2005, MCF launched the Samvad Helpline with one counsellor, Radhika. Scientifically appropriate information on HIV testing, symptoms and side effects, coping mechanisms, government and private ART and treatment options and counselling support services was provided by trained counsellors.

MUKTAA: MAKING YOU KNOW AND TALK ABOUT AIDS

To ensure the highest quality of service, MCF recruited professional counsellors and provided comprehensive training. Dr Madhu Oswal, Dr Prakash Mahajan and Dr Rupa Agarwal shared the latest scientific knowledge about HIV/AIDS, while Mr Bindu Madhav Khire provided training on sexual health and developed queer-affirmative approaches for preventive and supportive counselling tailored to the high-risk LGBTQIA+ community. The core team of volunteers, including Dr Madhu Oswal, Dr Rupa Agarwal and Dr Anuradha Tarkunde, Ashwini Shinde, Sunita Gadre, Betty Anthony, Vrunda Patharkar, Kanchan, Parag Bhinge and K.C. Bhushan formed the backbone of MCF.

With Maitri Trust's support and guidance, MCF thrived in its initial years. However, by 2008, MCF felt the need to walk on its own path and it gradually separated from Maitri. Muktaa Charitable Foundation's helpline had a new identity – the Samvad HIV/AIDS Helpline.

Organically, the helpline's reach expanded beyond Pune. Calls poured in not only from Pune and nearby areas but from all over India. Our referral systems were regularly updated and expanded to fulfil the various psychosocial needs of callers.

2010: EXPANDING HELPLINE SERVICES TO BIHAR

In 2009, impressed by MCF's helpline work, Mr Pulak Prasad from Bihar proposed that we replicate the same venture there. The socioeconomic conditions, low literacy rates, large rural population and limited access to a comprehensive healthcare infrastructure of Bihar pose significant





challenges when seen in the light of the high HIV prevalence rate. These factors contribute to the need for an HIV helpline in Bihar, as it can provide critical support, guidance and information to individuals affected by HIV, raising awareness, promoting prevention and ensuring access to care in an underserved region. This is why MCF took the bold step of establishing a helpline in Patna in 2010.

Recognising the need for proficiency in local languages like Maithili, Bhojpuri and Magahi, MCF recruited Jitendra, Sudhir, Rakesh and Krishnamohan as counsellors from Bihar. They received rigorous and comprehensive training in Pune, before going back to handle calls in their home state. Parag Bhinge conducted regular supervision and monitoring visits to Bihar for setting the project up. The success of this endeavour further solidified MCF's commitment to expanding its reach. By the end of that year, we had included counselling related to STDs like Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C to our list of services provided.

2011-2012: ADDRESSING SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION

Soon, it became evident to the MCF team that simply providing counselling support for HIV/AIDS was not enough to lead to behaviour change, especially in cases involving substance abuse and addiction. This observation was supported by studies conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other countries' experiences. Building on the achievements of the Samvad Helpline, we expanded our services to include addiction awareness and prevention counselling.

To effectively carry out this expansion, Dr Madhu Oswal organised lecture series to equip doctors with the skills and knowledge to address and support complex addiction-related issues effectively in individuals who were at risk or struggling with substance abuse.

Doctors such as Dr Swapnil Deshmukh, Dr Nitin Abyankar, Dr Rohan Jahagirdar, Dr Bhalchandra Kalmegh, Dr Ashish Chouhan, Dr Rohan



Bartakke and Dr Dharav Shah, lent their support to conducting sessions in Mumbai's Ghatkopar and Juhu areas. Meanwhile, Dr Prakash Mahajan, Dr Rupa Agarwal and Dr Archana Chaughule continued to conduct sessions in Pune. Rotary Ghatkopar provided invaluable support for many of these initiatives, showcasing the strength of partnerships. With this, we added a linkage to provide a holistic approach to promote overall well-being and combat the adverse effects of substance abuse in the communities they served.

2012: COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR YOUTH WITH HIV

Comprehensive awareness and education are vital components of our mission to address the pressing needs of communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Recognising the significance of addiction awareness, prevention counselling and age-appropriate sexual health knowledge, the Ankur Project aimed at equipping HIV-affected/infected children and adolescents with the necessary age-specific information on HIV disclosure, adherence to ART medication and sexual and reproductive health. Through targeted interventions and partnerships with hospital chains under the leadership of Dr Rupa Agarwal, Ankur project ensured children were equipped with the necessary understanding to manage their HIV effectively to prevent the progression of the disease.

2015: SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS

Acknowledging the significance of sexual health awareness not only for HIV-affected children but for all adolescents, MCF focused on targeted interventions among students aged 13 to 16 in schools. Due to the stigma and reluctance surrounding conversations around sex, we found it difficult to get permission for sexual health awareness. Thus, MCF developed a training module for holistic growth, with themes based on WHO guidance.

While this project was initially run by volunteers, to further expand this project's reach, MCF incorporated a full-time team in 2023. This strategic expansion has enabled MCF to enhance our capacity, extend our impact





and provide comprehensive sexual health awareness and education to a larger number of students – contributing to the overall well-being and empowerment of adolescents in the communities we serve.

2019-2020: INCLUSIVITY WITH GENDER SENSITISATION

In its unwavering commitment to fostering a more inclusive and diverse society, MCF embarked on the Sakav Gender Sensitisation Project. Recognising the evolving need for equity and respect for gender minorities, MCF joined forces with esteemed experts and educational institutions to design comprehensive modules aimed at empowering college students with knowledge, understanding and empathy.

MCF collaborated with Dr Peeyush, Dr Manasi Phahade and Bindu Madhav Khire to devise a comprehensive 30-hour module for colleges – who could accrue valuable NAAC points through their participation. Partnering with the IQAC Cluster has proven instrumental in the effective execution of this project. We remain steadfast in addressing the unique challenges faced by gender minorities and advocating for their rights in the pursuit of a more inclusive and compassionate society.

2020: RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, MCF swiftly adapted its services to supplement the efforts of medical professionals and provide support to the community. We took the lead to conduct the first webinars and online lectures in Pune "Spread the Science, Not the Virus," tailored for general practitioners to effectively manage COVID-19 cases. These webinars served as a platform for disseminating evidence-based information and best practices in managing the pandemic.

MCF also extended the Samvad helpline's services to address the public's growing concerns and questions related to the COVID-19 virus. Trained helpline operators, in collaboration with medical experts, offered guidance on preventive measures, symptoms, testing and the importance of



vaccination. The helpline became a valuable resource for individuals living with HIV/AIDS who had additional comorbidity concerns due to their compromised immune systems. By stepping up for COVID-19 support, the Samvad Helpline distributed accurate information, reduced fears and promoted self-care in the community during this challenging time.

2021-2022: CAPACITY-BUILDING

MCF has consistently prioritised the professional development of primary healthcare providers so they can provide better care to the community for a wide range of health concerns. MCF's online lecture series provide high-quality scientific content that is trusted by the medical community. Dr Manasi Phahade, Jayashree Sonis and Dr Gayatri Thatte, among others, actively engage in bringing on experts for these monthly lectures.

MCF has also forged partnerships to support organisations like Pratham in evaluating their First Aid scientific content. MCF's team of doctors, including Dr Jyoti Shinde and Dr Snehal Neel, actively participate in continued expert support sessions for youth volunteers and First Aid trainers of Pratham, contributing their expertise and upholding the highest standards of discipline and professionalism. Through these initiatives, MCF continues enhancing healthcare delivery through various formal and non-formal healthcare providers.

In response to the need for medico-legal knowledge on safe medical practices among medical practitioners, we introduced monthly online lectures focused on medicolegal aid in collaboration with Dr Jayant Navarange, an esteemed medico-legal expert. The agenda is to give medical practitioners the necessary knowledge to navigate the complex intersection of medicine and the law, ultimately ensuring the provision of safe and ethical healthcare services.





2022-2023: INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTHCARE

After years of experience running a helpline and addressing various health-related issues, it became evident that these challenges not only affect physical well-being but also have profound implications for individuals' mental well-being.

Stigma, discrimination, illness disclosure, self-care, prevention strategies and the unique needs of individuals living with chronic conditions all contribute to the complex mental health landscape. Yet research and data indicate that there is a major scarcity of quality and affordable mental healthcare services.

MCF is answering the pressing need for innovative and cost-effective solutions to address the mental health needs of various populations by extending Samvad's services, to provide telephonic mental health counselling. Our primary goal is the creation of a platform and subsequent channels for anyone, especially marginalised and vulnerable populations – to access free, immediate, quality, anonymous mental healthcare support. With a team of psychology postgraduates manning the helpline, we are creating an accessible pathway to interacting with trained professionals who create a non-judgmental dignified listening space which is anonymous, private and confidential.

The program aims to build its awareness and outreach in such a way that various populations can reach out to the helpline – especially vulnerable or marginalised populations like adolescents, people with chronic illnesses, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals and communities, sex workers and individuals struggling with addictions and substance abuse to name a few.

2023: LOOKING AHEAD

With a dedicated team and a history of impactful initiatives, MCF continues to evolve and make a positive difference in the lives of those in need. Once the Mental Health Helpline processes have been set in Pune, we plan to





extend our Mental Health Helpline services to Bihar. We will continue to leverage our experience, partnerships and commitment to providing holistic care to vulnerable populations.



Linkages with Sustainable Development Goals

In the UN's vision for global development a plan of action was laid out to stimulate global action over the next 15 years on issues critical to humanity and the planet.

At Muktaa Charitable Foundation, we recognise the importance of aligning our efforts with the global agenda of sustainable development. Through our diverse range of projects and initiatives, we have contributed meaningfully to the following SDGs:





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Project 1 Samvad HIV/AIDS and Chronic Illnesses Helpline

Through the lived experiences of individuals with HIV, we gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they face and the importance of providing comprehensive support. These narratives reflect the resilience, courage and determination of service users as they navigate the complexities of their journeys. Their experiences serve as a reminder of the critical need for accessible and compassionate services that address not only the medical aspects but also the emotional, social and psychological well-being of those affected by HIV/AIDS. Service users' stories and feedback have a profound impact in shaping the work of the organisation. As we move forward, we remain committed to amplifying these voices, learning from their experiences and continually enhancing our programs to better serve and empower our service users

1. A 52-year-old businessman, who was HIV-positive for almost nine years and coping with a mental illness, called us from Patna, Bihar. Initially, his wife was supportive. But in the last year, his wife had filed a case accusing him of forced sexual abuse and dowry harassment. Eventually, she left him. Devastated by his family issues, he was contemplating ending his life. Through the call, the helpline counsellor patiently listened to his distress and offered support. They discussed administrative assistance and building hope around his relationship with his children and his own future. Despite facing immense mental pressure, the caller demonstrated remarkable adherence to his treatment. Through a 40-minute conversation, the counsellor successfully redirected his thoughts towards returning home. The caller found solace, felt a sense of relaxation and regained his ambition for life.

2. A railway staffer, 55 years of age, from Jehanabad, Bihar, reached out to us. He explained that his son had been studying in Kolkata and suddenly experienced severe abdominal pain.



Doctors discovered multiple abdominal problems. The caller expressed shock regarding the doctor's recommendation of an HIV test before proceeding with the operation. The counsellor engaged in a discussion to address the caller's concerns and misconceptions about HIV, including modes of transmission. Emotionally overwhelmed, the caller questioned why such a situation had befallen his child. The counsellor offered reassurance and managed to calm him down. Eventually, the caller agreed to have his son tested for HIV.

3. A 22-year-old individual contacted us seeking advice on living with HIV, since he and his pregnant wife were HIV-positive. The caller expressed deep concern for the well-being of his spouse and unborn child. With patience and empathy, the counsellor engaged in a conversation, providing information about living with HIV. The caller's worries persisted, particularly regarding the impact on their wife and the baby. The counsellor discussed the possibilities of parenting and dispelled myths about life expectancy. By the end of the call, the caller expressed gratitude, promising to reach out to the helpline again.

4. A 28-year-old married man, who had been taking ART medicines for two years, gave us a call. It was revealed that the caller had married without disclosing his HIV status to his wife or family. The counsellor asked a series of open and closed-ended questions, prompting the caller to consider the potential consequences of not informing his wife about his status and asking him to imagine how he would feel if his wife did the same to him. Through this dialogue, the counsellor aimed to emphasise the importance of disclosure and testing. Eventually, the caller agreed to disclose his HIV status to his wife and get her tested. He also vowed to practise prevention methods with his wife and encouraged her to contact the helpline if she had any questions or concerns about HIV.

Project Objectives

- * Address the fears, stigma and misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS in society
- * Provide accurate information, education and support related to HIV/AIDS to individuals seeking assistance
- * Offer counselling services to individuals and families for promoting adherence to treatment and quality of life
- * Facilitate access to medical care, resources and prevention strategies for HIV-positive individuals
- * Targeted intervention for prevention of Drug Addiction in high-risk groups through awareness, sensitisation and training programs
- * Prevention and control of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases



Project Brief

Post-1980, the highly contagious nature of HIV and the destined death associated with it resulted in panic among doctors and patients were deprived of much-needed medical care. The label "HIV positive" brought with it fears about death, social stigma, neglect by family. In Pune, the urgency for patients to receive medical treatment combined with a burning desire to help led to the inception of the Samvad HIV/AIDS helpline.

The project began with building the capacity of doctors to manage HIV – addressing their anxieties and with research-backed information on treatment methods and challenges of living with HIV. Soon it became evident that the general population also had many questions and misconceptions around HIV/AIDS, particularly due to societal taboos. It was integral to create an anonymous platform where the general public could reach out for accurate information about the signs, transmission methods, coping strategies, treatment options and way of living with chronic illnesses. The Samvad helpline was established in 2005 to provide free, anonymous, accessible and accurate support through telephonic counselling from trained HIV counsellors. In our efforts to target states in India that are highly vulnerable for increased rates of HIV, we decided to extend our services to Bihar in 2010, with local counsellors who could answer calls in Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magahi, Hindi and English.

Today, the Samvad helpline operates in Pune and Patna, staffed by 9 counsellors and callers reach out from Maharashtra, Bihar, UP, MP and other states from across India. Over the years, the helpline has become the largest HIV helpline in India. While the number of callers from Maharashtra reaching out for support has decreased since 2017 due to the laudable efforts of the government and NGOs, the Samvad helpline remains committed to serving society and has expanded its focus to address the rising issues of Hepatitis B and C, Tuberculosis, Oral Cancer, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, COVID-19, Drug Abuse and other chronic illnesses.



Outcomes and Impact this year

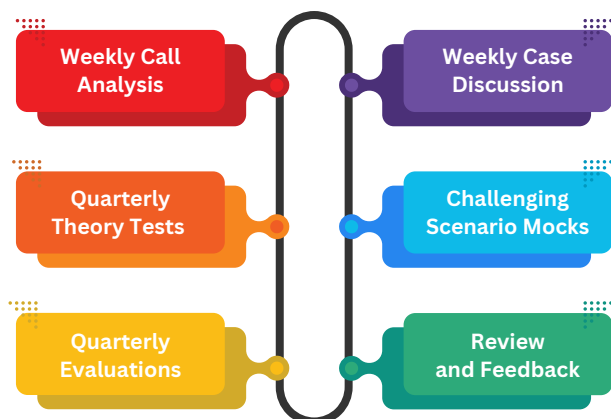
The core aspects of the operations of helplines like anonymity, confidentiality, holding one-off sessions, the sensitivity and stigmatising nature of calling concerns and the resources available do not lend themselves well to easily assess impact. To address this issue, we incorporate measures within our service provision to make up for the fact that impact measurement is not always feasible or possible.

Quality and consistency is ensured through careful recruitment of counsellors, intensive initial training, continuous training and supervision, specific protocols and standard operational procedures. External factors to assess the helpline's impact is the feedback shared by callers and callers reaching out for assistance more than once. In the upcoming year, we also plan to invest in research and developing frameworks to assess the outcomes and impact of our work.

A] MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF TRAINING

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PROVIDING QUALITY CARE

Periodically assess the knowledge and attitudes of helpline counsellors through quizzes, role plays and case discussions





B] QUANTITATIVE CALL ANALYSIS

- * The Bihar helpline received **30,894 calls** from all over India, which was double the 15,500 calls we got during COVID-19, showing the impact of our on-ground Sampark work
- * This brings the total number of called answered on Samvad, since its inception in 2005, to 4,80,894
- * Over the years, our sub-interventions for referrals, networking, partnerships and capacity-building have led to significantly reducing our economic costs and increasing our sustainability. For this year, our average cost for offering support to 1 individual was ₹134.32
- * Although we have stopped all promotional outreach activities for the Pune Samvad line, our decade-long previous outreach activities have led to us answering 147 calls in this year.
- * Calls from the distribution of cards/pamphlets, posters in hospitals, word of mouth and the internet have also doubled, demonstrating the effectiveness of the outreach platforms we have targeted last year
- * This year the female caller count has increased from ~30% in 2021-22 to ~40% in 2022-23, which is significant since women face greater intersectional barriers with respect to HIV
- * The highest number of calls (42.85%) were from callers between 26-40 years old and the then 27.95% calls were done by callers between 16-25 years old. This highlights that young and middle-aged adults continue to be vulnerable groups for HIV and require targeted awareness and prevention measures
- * 317 individuals have accessed our service more than once, reinforcing service users' satisfaction with our service
- * We are one of the only physical health helplines in India to offer a confidential callback service for increased service accessibility, truly zero cost service delivery and ensuring no call goes unanswered. In case a caller is unable to connect with a counsellor due to occupied lines, non-working hours or inability to pay telecom charges – callers have the option to request a callback. In this case, with the caller's consent we give them a callback and the telecom charges are borne by





us. Last year, we made 1314 callbacks

- * While the average call duration of a call is 16 minutes, a call can vary from 2 to 45 minutes

C] OUR OBSERVATIONS FROM HELPLINE SERVICE

On analysing data from our callers, these are the most frequently asked questions on the helpline:

How do diseases like HIV, Hepatitis B and C get transmitted?

Can I get HIV by staying with an HIV-infected person?

How long will it take for medication to completely cure HIV?

Is it dangerous for children to live and eat with an HIV patient?

Why should partners married to someone with HIV use condoms?

I have HIV. Can I apply for a government job?

Is it permissible for an HIV-infected individual to marry?

Can HIV be transmitted through masturbation?

Is there a risk of contracting HIV from sex workers?

Our counsellors answer these and other queries on disclosure, infection management, preventing from spreading, treatment adherence by using evidence-based information from World Health Organisation and community-specific training from HIV/AIDS experts.

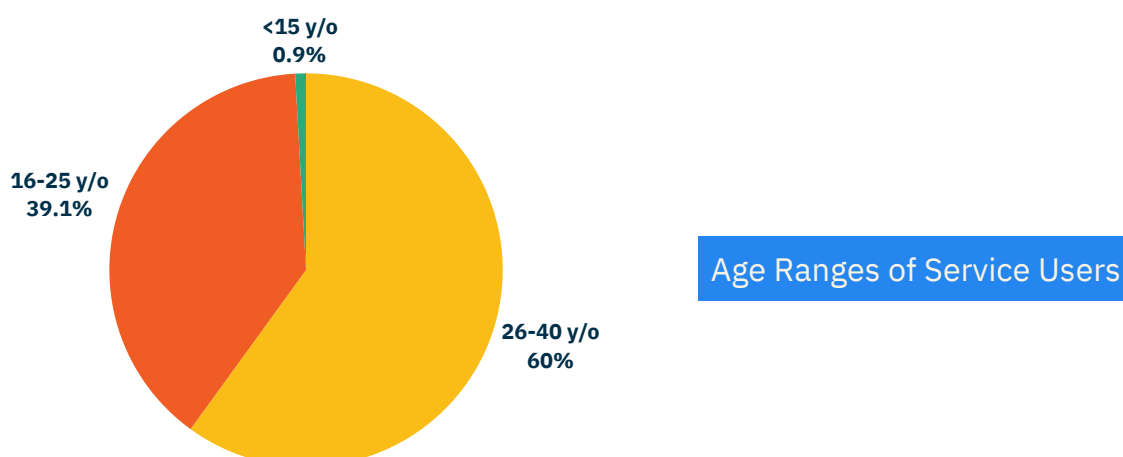
Monitoring the content and pattern of calls has provided valuable insights into the society at large. A noticeable difference in the educational



background of callers from Maharashtra and Bihar has been observed, with the majority of callers from Maharashtra being graduates and above, while callers from Bihar are illiterate or have received primary education. Our Sampark Outreach service has successfully made our helpline accessible to illiterate individuals by connecting them to treatment centres or providing support within their communities.

The declining stigma associated with HIV is evident as callers now engage in conversations without hesitation or inhibitions, which was not the case in previous years. Group calls from friends seeking information about HIV and safe sex methods, as well as calls from family members seeking guidance on caring for HIV-affected loved ones, reflect a positive shift in attitudes and a greater acceptance of the disease.

However, there are challenges that need to be addressed. In Bihar, free medicines are not available at government ART centres and poverty restricts access to quality treatment, care and support. There is also a shortage of genuine and ethical private doctors and hospitals for HIV, who take an inclusive approach to people living with HIV. With HIV no longer perceived as a fatal disease due to the widespread availability of antiretroviral drugs, there has been a rise in casual attitudes towards safe sex methods, necessitating continued education and awareness efforts. Furthermore, the shrinking funds for HIV control and treatment pose a significant concern, leading to the discontinuation of effective programs such as condom distribution and awareness activities in high-risk areas.





D] TREATMENT ADHERENCE TRACKING

We devised a 5-question set to sensitively track the adherence to treatment plans in individuals living with HIV/AIDS after seeking assistance from the helpline. The exploration is dynamic based on the caller's situation. In case a caller shares struggles with adherence, counsellors use problem-solving, psychoeducation and referrals for access to encourage the caller to adhere to their treatment.

E] REFERRAL LINKAGES FOR RESOURCE UTILISATION

Samvad collaborates with social sector services including governmental, non-governmental and private organisations, as well as individuals, groups, entities and stakeholders in a practical and meaningful way to provide holistic support and continuity of care to anyone who reaches out to us. We maintain a huge database of referrals and based on the caller's needs, we create linkages to HIV testing centres, ART centres, STD clinics, NGOs providing food and shelter and resources for income generation according to the need of the case.

F] NETWORKING AND COLLABORATIONS

We value establishing and maintaining connections with relevant stakeholders within and across different service sectors to expand the helpline's reach and impact. We aim to build on these connections to tap into existing networks accessed by our target populations for meaningful outreach, accessing diverse perspectives and building awareness and sensitisation.

Recognising the importance of networking and partnerships in enhancing its reach, service effectiveness and building a comprehensive support system for individuals in need, Samvad had focused on engaging with organisations in different sectors. The individuals and organisations mentioned have played a significant role in strengthening our networking, increasing our impact and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration. We are grateful for their valuable contributions.





- **Project Potential:** Their assistance in distributing our helpline outreach posters and cards, as well as actively informing people about the helpline, has been instrumental in increasing awareness.
- **Innovator in Health:** They have provided a learning exposure platform for our new counsellors, facilitating their professional development. Additionally, their network within the healthcare sector has greatly contributed to promoting the helpline.
- **Mantra for Change:** Mantra for Change has connected us with a school for our Shala sessions. This partnership has enabled us to reach and engage with a wider audience.
- **Dr Mohammad Ali:** His invaluable support has been pivotal in organising and conducting programs with the youth. His expertise and guidance have greatly enhanced our outreach efforts.
- **Members of Youth Dreamers:** Their involvement has been crucial in helping us understand and analyse the data collected. Their insights have provided us with a deeper understanding of the impact of our programs.

In addition, numerous other individuals and organisations have extended their support during district visits and fieldwork, assisting us in connecting with the target population and expanding our reach.





Outreach

We have been actively engaged in outreach efforts to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote the helpline. Here are some key initiatives that have significantly contributed to our these endeavours:

- ✱ **Online Poster-Making Competition:** On HIV/AIDS Day, we organised an online poster-making competition, with enthusiastic participation of 50 children from 10 schools. This event not only showcased the creative talents of the participants but also helped spread awareness among youth.
- ✱ **Awareness Rally:** In collaboration with Bread NGO, BSACS and the Kinnar Adhikar Manch, we jointly organised an awareness rally. Approximately 60 individuals participated in this impactful rally, which covered a distance of 1 km in Kankarbagh. The support and participation of these organisations and individuals demonstrated their commitment to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS.
- ✱ **Stalls at Gandhi Maidan:** With the assistance of BNP, we set up stalls at Gandhi Maidan, which were visited by BSACS officials. These stalls served as platforms for disseminating information, distributing resources and engaging with the public. This collaborative effort helped us reach a wider audience and connect with key stakeholders in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- ✱ **Participation in BDC Meeting:** We actively participated in the BDC meeting, where approximately 30 organisations were present. This platform provided us with an excellent opportunity to connect, network and explore potential collaborations with other organisations. Regular engagement with these organisations opens doors for future partnerships and collective impact.
- ✱ **Block-Level Promotional Work:** This year, we expanded our promotional efforts to the block level. Recognising the importance of targeting specific geographical areas, we are working closely with organisations operating at both the block and district levels. By





leveraging their expertise and resources, we aim to maximise our outreach and raise awareness about the helpline among a larger population.

- ✳ **Collaboration with ASHA Workers:** We have identified ASHA workers as key stakeholders in our awareness and outreach initiatives. We will conduct dedicated awareness sessions on HIV/AIDS and distribute helpline numbers to ASHA workers. This collaboration will enhance our reach and ensure that accurate information and support are provided to individuals at the grassroots level.

We view the success of our networking efforts not only in terms of increasing the number of calls received but also in our ability to engage and collaborate with a diverse range of organisations and individuals. Together, we strive to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS and create a more informed and supportive community.





Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Throughout our journey, we have faced challenges and learned valuable lessons. Monitoring the content and pattern of calls has provided valuable insights into the society at large. A noticeable difference in the educational background of callers from Maharashtra and Bihar has been observed, with the majority of callers from Maharashtra being graduates and above, while callers from Bihar are illiterate or have received primary education. Our Sampark Outreach service has successfully made our helpline accessible to illiterate individuals by connecting with them at treatment centres or providing support directly within their communities.

The declining stigma associated with HIV is evident as callers now engage in conversations without hesitation or inhibitions, which was not the case in previous years. Group calls from friends seeking information about HIV and safe sex methods, as well as calls from family members seeking guidance on caring for HIV-affected loved ones, reflect a positive shift in attitudes and a greater acceptance of the disease.

However, some of the key challenges to highlight are:

- ✳ Addressing the educational disparity among callers from different regions and tailoring our services to meet the diverse needs of our service users.
- ✳ Adapting to the changing landscape of HIV/AIDS, including the reduced stigma, emerging concerns and evolving treatment options.
- ✳ Managing the increasing call volumes, particularly at the Bihar helpline, by continuously expanding our counsellor team and optimising their 6-month training.





- ✱ Working through the shrinking funds for HIV control and treatment pose a significant concern, leading to the discontinuation of effective programs such as condom distribution and awareness activities in high-risk areas.
- ✱ Navigating the resource limitations in the field of HIV/AIDS control and treatment, requiring strategic partnerships and innovative approaches.
- ✱ Preventing the rising casual attitudes towards safe sex when HIV is no longer perceived as a fatal disease due to the widespread availability of antiretroviral drugs.

Lessons learned from these challenges include the importance of continuous learning and professional development for our counsellors, the need to have an intersectional approach to call taking and the significance of collaboration with stakeholders and non-governmental organisations across sectors to sustain and expand our programs.





Future Plans

While our ultimate goal is to eliminate the need for an HIV helpline, we acknowledge that the journey is far from over. We remain committed to serving society and have identified key areas for our future plans:

- * Strengthening our presence and impact in Bihar by expanding our counsellor team and outreach efforts
- * Continuing our focus on HIV prevention, treatment adherence and psychosocial support to individuals living with HIV/AIDS
- * Targeted prevention through comprehensive awareness programs and sensitisation initiatives
- * Building capacities of healthcare professionals in managing de-addiction, safe sex, sexual and reproductive health, life skill education for youth and treatment methods
- * Collaborating with government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to ensure comprehensive control, treatment and care for individuals with HIV

With all our past achievements, the SAMVAD HIV/AIDS helpline stands tall and remains dedicated to achieving even greater milestones in the future. Together, we strive towards a society free from the burden of HIV/AIDS and drug addiction.





Project 2

Muktaa Mental Health Helpline

Time and and again, our ongoing interventions have made it clear that mental health is a crucial area of concern for our target population that is often left unaddressed. The problems faced by our service users – whether it's the stress of living with a chronic illness, navigating complex healthcare systems, or social exclusion during adolescence – are inextricably linked with poor mental health.

The World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 4 people globally will experience a mental health struggle in their lifetime. Yet, only about 1 in 10 people with mental health issues in India receive adequate treatment, due to a lack of resources, stigma and a shortage of mental health professionals. The rest do not seek help until the issues become too difficult to manage. Despite this, we, alongside our service users, have experienced the gaps in adequate mental healthcare support and resources for those struggling with mental health problems.

Over nearly 2 decades, we have witnessed first-hand the transformative power of our interventions – rooted in psychoeducation, needs-led approaches and quality services – in enabling individuals to take control of their lives and overcome the challenges that they face. Research has shown that quality mental healthcare access can significantly improve the overall well-being and quality of life of our target populations – generating better physical health outcomes, improved social functioning and reduced risks of substance abuse, homelessness and suicide.

Echoing the recommendations of leading voices in the mental healthcare field like WHO, CRPD, SDGs and MHCA – Muktaa Charitable Foundation is answering the pressing need for



innovative and cost-effective solutions to address the mental health needs of various populations by starting a free telephonic mental health helpline.

Our primary goal is the creation of a platform and subsequent channels for anyone, especially marginalised and vulnerable populations – to access immediate, quality, anonymous mental healthcare support.



Project Objectives

- * To provide free, safe and evidence-based psychological support to anyone in emotional distress
- * To combat the stigma surrounding mental health by offering a mental health service that anyone can access from anywhere
- * To combine rights-based, community-based, brief solution-focused, client-centric, culturally-responsive, biopsychosocial and needs-led approaches to tailor an effective and efficient meta-method telephonic counselling approach that can answer the diverse needs of Indian populations
- * To empower marginalised and vulnerable populations by providing them with information on their human rights and access to available support resources
- * To establish referral linkages between individuals in need and affordable mental health services offered by governmental, non-governmental and private organisations, as well as individuals
- * To use awareness and sensitisation to build mental health literacy in stakeholders about the importance of mental health and provide education on the determinants, signs and prevention of mental health issues.
- * To offer capacity-building programs to cultivate a semi-skilled workforce in the field of mental healthcare service delivery



Project Brief

The free helpline service offers counselling support for all individuals going through mental struggles or emotional distress; along with information and service resources if needed. This is done while prioritising anonymity, confidentiality, intersectionality, quality and informed consent; alongside crisis intervention, emotional support and coping strategies.

We are the only mental health helpline in India to offer a confidential callback service. In case a caller is unable to connect with a counsellor due to occupied lines, non-working hours or inability to pay telecom charges – callers have the option to request a callback. In this case, with the caller's consent we give them a callback and the telecom charges are borne by us. This service increases service accessibility and ensures no call goes unanswered.

The helpline's counselling support is designed to address a wide range of issues from immediate crisis intervention and crisis follow-ups to non-emergency emotional support, informational guidance and coping resources. While the helpline operates on the principle that the first call may be the last call, frequently, we offer recurring support, if a client wishes. Our helpline prioritises marginalised and vulnerable populations (explored further in the section on Project's Target Populations).

Callers to Muktaa's telephonic counselling service can expect a supportive listening and holding space in Marathi, Hindi, or English from trained and experienced mental health professionals with at least a post-graduation in Psychology. The mental health practitioners will provide a safe space for callers to express their thoughts and emotions regarding their mental health and well being. We understand the caller's unique psychosocial needs, collaboratively explore the issue at hand and help create a personalised plan with risk management, coping strategies, information, or





referrals to additional support, if needed.

Seeking help looks different for everyone and each individual calls us with a unique issue. Broadly, the reasons for calling can fall into one of these categories:

Romantic Or Life-partner Relationship	Family and Relative struggles
Friendship and Social circles	Social and Cultural Pressure
Loss or Trauma	Human Rights
Mental Illness and Disorders	Physical Health
Academic and Educational	Economic and Financial
Legal	Violence
Crisis	Suicidal Ideation
Substance Abuse and Habitual Addiction	Gender and Sexuality
Sexual and Reproductive Health	Self Image and Esteem



Outcomes and Impact this year

Launching Muktaa Mental Health Helpline

New Project Timeline





After the project initiation phase between October 2021 to March 2022, the project entered its formulation and implementation phase in this financial year. This included:

- ✱ Developing Project Plan with intervention activities, timelines, responsibilities and budget allocation
- ✱ Infrastructure development
- ✱ Hiring and training project staff and volunteers on mental health awareness, counselling skills, and support services
- ✱ Creating awareness materials and develop informative materials about mental health and the project's services for distribution within the community
- ✱ Partnership with regional newspapers and radio stations for awareness and outreach
- ✱ Developing monitoring and evaluation systems
- ✱ Crafting protocols for various crisis and non-crisis calls
- ✱ Building referral directory
- ✱ Setting up feedback mechanisms valuing consent, confidentiality and rights
- ✱ Experimenting and assessing outcomes of outreach strategies

The helpline was soft-launched on 13th March, 2023 with 1 line open between 3-5 PM from Monday to Friday. We officially launched 2 lines between 12-8 PM from Monday to Saturday on 3rd April, 2023. By the end of Year 1, we plan to have 4 lines open between 12-8 PM from Monday to Saturday.

From our very first week of launching, we have received a steady influx of calls to the helpline. Between 13th and 31st March, we completed 24 counselling calls. Individuals call us for a variety of reasons. Some of the verbatims that callers reached out with were:

1. The caller reached out to the helpline feeling depressed, hopeless



and anxious due to the recent loss of his dream career. He was grieving the loss of his long-held aspiration and feeling uncertain about his future, as his family suggested pursuing a different career path. Additionally, he was experiencing distress over a strained relationship with his close friends, which left him feeling isolated and helpless. During the call, the helpline counsellor explored and psychoeducated the caller about this loss and collaboratively they identified that talking to his parents provided him some relief. The counsellor introduced him to a grounding technique to manage triggers and explained the connection between depressive thoughts, reduced activities and socialisation. The caller was encouraged to practise the grounding technique as homework and spend time with his parents to help regulate his emotions and break the cycle of negative thoughts.

- 2. A caller called seeking support for her health-related anxiety, which had intensified following an abortion. She constantly worried that she would develop some severe health conditions and it was causing her emotional distress. On the call, the counsellor listened and reflected on the client's feelings. After exploring the issue and providing a containing space, the counsellor facilitated a belly breathing exercise for the caller to ground herself when her thoughts become overpowering. She was encouraged to practise belly breathing regularly to manage her anxiety and regain control over her thoughts. Additionally, the counsellor collaboratively explored the possibility of reaching out to a psychiatrist. Based on the caller's need, the counsellor shared referrals to 3 online psychiatrists. The call provided the caller with a sense of hope and the understanding that she wasn't alone in her struggles, empowering her to take proactive steps towards her mental well-being.*

3. A 47-year old-caller who had a government job called to express concern and a desire to change his anger issues, subsequent feelings of depression and increased alcohol consumption over the past 4-5 years. On exploring, the primary trigger was discussed to be his unsupportive and high-pressure environment at work. Alcohol had become his coping mechanism, leading to strained relationships at home due to his work-related frustrations. The caller expressed a desire to reduce alcohol dependency and feel less angry and triggered. During the call, the counsellor used process skills to validate the caller's feelings and explored his previous coping strategies when the workplace culture was better. They discussed potential changes he could make at work, but it became evident that the challenges he faced were systemic. The counsellor then focused on post-work strategies, such as engaging in his interest areas and prioritising tasks for the next day. By the end of the call, it was decided that he would identify the challenges and barriers in implementing what he wants to do when he returns home.





Outreach

Outreach about this free service was done through multiple online and offline platforms:

- ✳️ Posters created in Marathi and English about different experiences of distress
- ✳️ Press release during the launch of the helpline
- ✳️ Outreach partnership with Aaj ka Anand and Sadhyanand for awareness articles on mental health and help-seeking
- ✳️ Social Media
- ✳️ Radio
- ✳️ Whatsapp community network



आखिर हम अपनी मानसिक तकलीफ को अनदेखी क्यों कर देते हैं ?

स्मिता रवि और उनके दो बच्चे ऐसा छोटा परिवार हैं. स्मिता एक गृहिणी हैं, वो अपने घर के लिए जो सब कर सकती हैं वो करती हैं ताकि उसके रहते घर में किसी चीज की कमी ना महसूस हो. अकेले सब संभालने के धक्कर में खुद कितना तनाव महसूस कर रही हैं ये उसे भी नहीं पता. लेकिन जैसे समय बीतता गया, तनाव के कारण उसका काम में ध्यान नहीं लग रहा है यह उसे भी समझ आ रहा है. अब धीरे-धीरे ऐसा होने लगा है कि वो चीजें यहां-वहां रखकर भूल जाती हैं, और

कभी-कभी दिन के कामों के बारे में सोचकर ही उसे धकादट महसूस होने लगती हैं. बात करने के लिए कोई नहीं. दोनों बच्चे अपनी पढ़ाई और खेल-कूद में व्यस्त होते हैं और स्मिता को लगता है वो यह सारी बातें बच्चों को अगर बता भी दे तो वो समझ नहीं पाएंगे. स्मिता रवि को भी ये नहीं बता पा रही हैं क्योंकि उसे पता है कि रवि खुद ही दिनभर बाहर के कामों में व्यस्त रहता है ताकि घर में किसी चीज की कमी ना हो.

स्मिता को कई बार एक अजीब सी कमी खलती रहती है. काश, कोई होता जिसको वो अपनी सारी बातें बता पाती, जो उसके तनाव उसके चिंता को अनावश्यक समझकर न टाले. ऐसा कोई जो उसके चिंता का मज़ाक न उड़ाए, उसे समझे और उसकी बातों को महत्व दे.

हम अक्सर हमारी रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी के तनाव-तनाव को नज़रअंदाज़ कर देते हैं. उसी तनाव में हम अपने खाने, सोने और सेहत पर ध्यान नहीं देते. हमारे आस-पास बातों से बात करना बंद कर देते हैं या कभी उन पर एकदम से गुस्सा हो जाते हैं. হয় यह नहीं सोचते कि यह चिंता, ये तनाव भी हमारे सेहत के लिए शारीरिक रोग जितने हानिकारक बन सकते हैं. हम क्यों मानसिक तकलीफों को नज़रअंदाज़ कर देते हैं? क्यों यह सोच लेते हैं कि मानसिक तकलीफों का हमें खुद ही सामना करना है? हम क्यों मदद मांगना कमजोरी समझ लेते हैं?



यह खुद को शर्मिंदा ना कर नू
बड़ाहुरी दिखा अकेले आगे बढ़ नू
ताकतवर बन सबसे एक कदम आगे चल नू
इस व्याख्यान पर क्यों? का फ़िल्म नहीं लगाने है,
हम इसी को सब मान लेते हैं?

सब क्यों बताएगा?
मदद मांगने से ईमान कम नहीं हो जाएगा है
मुक्ता मानसिक स्वास्थ्य हेल्पलाइन का मानना है कि शारीरिक तकलीफों के लिए जैसे हम बेडहिक डॉक्टर के पास जाते हैं, वैसे ही मानसिक स्तर पर महसूस कर रहे किसी भी बात पर चर्चा करने के लिए हमें डिस्ट्रिक्ट महसूस नहीं होनी चाहिए.
मानसिक तनाव के लिए ज़रूरी नहीं कि हमें हमेशा इलाज की ज़रूरत होगी. कई बार हमें हमारा मन हल्का करने के लिए ऐसा कोई चाहिए होता है जो

बढ़ने की हिम्मत दे. जब स्मिता ने मुक्ता मानसिक स्वास्थ्य हेल्पलाइन को कॉल किया, अपना नाम बिना बताये उसने उसकी प्रशानियों के बारे में बात की और समुपदेशक के साथ दिनचर्या में कुछ छोटे बदलाव लाने की चर्चा की. उसे जो तनाव चाहिए था रहे थे, उन सबका खुद सामना करने की हिम्मत मिली. बहुत ही कम लोगों की लाइफ़ स्ट्रेम की होती है.
अगर स्मिता जैसे कोई और अपनी मन की दुविधा को लेकर किसी से बात करना चाहे, तो वे मुक्ता मानसिक स्वास्थ्य हेल्पलाइन पर कॉल कर उनके प्रशिक्षित समुपदेशक से बात कर सकते हैं. वहां किसी भी प्रकार की चिंता, चाहे वह ऑफिस में बहुत ज्यादा काम हो, घर में किसी से नज़्क-शोक हो या स्कूल-कॉलेज परीक्षा का टेन्शन ये सब स्ट्रेम मैनेज करने में सहायक ले सकते हैं. वहां आपको एक सहायक आवाजक जग मिलेगी, जहां आप मुफ्त में अपना मन हल्का कर सकेंगे, और आप अपनी प्रशान्ति के बारे में मिलकर मदद हो पाएंगे.

सोमवार से शनिवार दोपहर 12 से रात 8 के बीच कोई भी इस मुफ्त मानसिक स्वास्थ्य हेल्पलाइन पर कॉल कर सकता है. यहाँ आप हिंदी भरती और अंग्रेजी में चर्चा कर सकते हैं.
हेल्पलाइन का नंबर है 788-788-9882

मुश्किल लगता है ?

क्या आप खुद को कहीं खोया हुआ महसूस करते हैं ?

आप इसके बारे में हमसे बात कर सकते हैं ।



कॉल करे 788-788-9882
सायं 3 - 5 (सोम - शुक्र)
मुक्ता मानसिक स्वास्थ्य हेल्पलाइन





Future Plans

As the helpline continues to move forward, our mission is to create a mental health ecosystem that provides accessible and quality care to all, especially the vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Beyond the counselling support provided by the helpline, we also plan to work towards:

- ✳ Awareness and sensitisation on the importance and promotion of mental wellbeing, prevention of issues and promoting help-seeking behaviours
- ✳ Capacity building for governmental and non-governmental organisations to build awareness or community-based support interventions for mental health
- ✳ Building strong referral linkages for long-term or specialised support for callers
- ✳ Utilising conventional and new media platforms including newspapers, radio, social media, websites and online forums to regularly share engaging and informative content such as articles, podcasts, videos, infographics and blog posts to reach a wider audience
- ✳ Establishing and maintaining connections with relevant stakeholders within and across different service sectors to expand the helpline's reach and impact. We aim to tap into existing networks accessed by our target populations for meaningful outreach, accessing diverse perspectives and building awareness and sensitisation





Project 3

Preventing and Supporting Recovery from Addiction

The problem in our society with addiction is that it is often treated as a mere choice made as a personal failing rather than acknowledged as a major problem faced by individuals. At Muktaa Charitable Foundation, we firmly believe that addiction is not a simple matter of willpower, but rather a complex disease that requires a comprehensive approach to treatment and recovery. While getting an individual out of their dependence on certain substances or activities is a critical step towards reclaiming a healthy and fulfilling life, MCF also recognises the importance of addressing the underlying social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to substance abuse.

The prevalence of new drugs, increasing numbers of affected individuals, evolving reasons for substance abuse and the ease of access have created a surge of misuse that demands our immediate attention. Otherwise, what may begin as a voluntary experiment or an attempt to fit in can quickly escalate into a journey of addiction and drug dependence.

Project Objectives

- * Raise awareness about the risks and consequences of addiction, providing information and education to individuals, families, schools and communities – to prevent addiction by promoting healthy behaviours, decision-making skills and resilience among vulnerable populations.
- * Provide accessible and quality support through the Samvad helpline for individuals struggling with addiction with comprehensive medical, psychological and social support, to help individuals overcome addiction, manage withdrawal symptoms and regain control of their lives.
- * Equip primary healthcare professionals to prevent, screen, diagnose, treat and manage addiction in its early stages at a primary care level, before it causes physical, financial, familial, legal and mental damage to individuals.





Project Brief

In response to the urgent need to address the devastating impact of addiction on individuals, families and communities – MCF has been at the forefront of developing and implementing multifaceted programs and initiatives. They have been aimed at preventing substance abuse and supporting individuals in their journey towards recovery for more than a decade.

The project aims to raise awareness about the risks and consequences of addiction through targeted education and outreach programs. By equipping individuals, families, schools and communities with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and adopt healthy behaviours, we can reduce the incidence of substance abuse. Through awareness campaigns, workshops and community events, we empower individuals to recognize the signs of addiction and take proactive measures to prevent its onset.

Through our relentless advocacy and outreach activities, we have reached diverse populations across Maharashtra and beyond. Our goal has been to reach individuals at every stage of life, from adolescents vulnerable to experimentation to adults struggling with addiction. We provide them with the knowledge, resources and support necessary to promote healthy behaviours, decision-making skills and resilience.

The transition to college marks a significant milestone in a youth's adulthood journey. However, this phase coincides with a critical transition period where adolescents are most vulnerable to the allure of addictive substances. Our youth addiction awareness and prevention sessions aim to empower students with knowledge and equip them with the tools necessary to navigate this challenging phase. Through engaging lectures and role-plays with youth in colleges, we strive to educate them on the





physical, mental and social impacts of addiction and emphasise the importance of saying "NO" as the initial step in prevention. We engage with young minds and instil resilience and self-awareness, encouraging them to make informed choices that safeguard their well-being.

Accessible and high-quality treatment services are crucial for individuals struggling with addiction. Thus, the project links high-risk populations with the Samvad Helpline to provide comprehensive medical, psychological and social counselling support – to promote recovery and empower individuals to regain control of their lives. By offering evidence-based information, non-judgemental support and referrals to treatment options, we aim to improve the outcomes and well-being of those in recovery.

One of our notable initiatives in preventing addiction has been the series of capacity-building workshops conducted for doctors, psychologists and counsellors with the objective of ensuring they are equipped with the latest evidence-based practices and approaches in de-addiction. The aim is to strengthen the workforce to prevent, screen, diagnose, treat and manage addiction in its early stages at a primary care level – before it causes physical, financial, familial, legal and mental damage to individuals.

Additionally, we aim to strengthen the overall support system for individuals affected by addiction. These workshops have proven instrumental in fostering collaboration, sharing best practices and improving the quality of care provided to those seeking help.





Outcomes and Impact this year

In May and June 2022, MCF organised an online webinar series as part of our ongoing efforts to combat addiction in society. The de-addiction lecture series was conducted virtually over two consecutive weekends, specifically on 28th and 29th May 2022 and 4th and 5th June 2022. The virtual platform allowed participation from doctors in rural areas, expanding the reach of the program. Approximately 250 doctors, psychologists and counsellors from all over Maharashtra registered for the workshops. The Rotary Club of Pune Katraj sponsored this initiative.

The sessions were facilitated by a panel of experienced doctors from Mumbai and Pune, each specialising in different areas of de-addiction. They focused on various aspects of addiction, emphasising that it is a disease and covering topics such as the management of addiction, its physical, mental and social impact on individuals and their families. Specific substances like tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and narcotics were covered. At the end of the webinar series, participants' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter was evaluated through a quiz.

Role of General Practitioners in De-Addiction

Dr Ashish Deshpande

Tobacco De Addiction

Dr Rohan Bartakke

Addiction to Alcohol and Hard Drugs

Dr Swapnil Deshmukh
Dr Ashutosh Chouhan
Dr Bhalchandra Kalmegh





How to Counsel Addicts and their Families

Dr Ananya Chitale,
Dr Onkar Joshi, Dr Sonali Kale,
Dr Deepika Patil

Voice and Speech Disorders

Dr Anuradha Mache

Tobacco and cancer

Dr Roy Cherry

Alcoholic Anonymous

Mr Amit Thatte

We also conducted a Deaddiction Training Seminar and Webinar Series in Hadapsar from 3rd to 23rd March 2023. The series aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills and understanding of addiction prevention and recovery in primary healthcare doctors and mental health practitioners.

More than 140 participants benefited from this comprehensive lecture series. The sessions covered various aspects of addiction – its causes, impact, assessment, intervention and treatment. Renowned experts and practitioners in the field of addiction medicine facilitated the sessions, ensuring the delivery of up-to-date and evidence-based information. Through interactive sessions, case discussions and practical insights, attendees gained valuable insights into effective strategies and interventions. The series also created opportunities for networking, collaboration and sharing of best practices among professionals in the field. The sessions were delivered in-person and online to cater to the diverse needs of participants. This hybrid approach allowed for broader access and participation.

The event was jointly organised by RECAP of Rotary club and Muktaa Charitable Foundation, with the valuable moderation of Dr. Madhu Oswal Thakkar, past president and founding trustee of MCF. The capacity building series was funded by the Rotary Club of India Global Grants.





Challenges and Lessons Learnt

As we reflect on our history of work in preventing addiction, we take pride in the lives positively impacted and the progress made in combating this pervasive issue.

However, we also acknowledge the evolving nature of addiction and the challenges that lie ahead. Our work has constantly shown us that addiction isn't a question of the individual's morality. Thus, reducing stigma in society and increasing support from loved ones is crucial towards de-addiction, right after self-acceptance of one's addiction.

Through this year's Deaddiction Series, we took another step forward in our mission to prevent addiction and support individuals on their journey to recovery. This project exemplified our dedication to knowledge dissemination, capacity building and fostering collaborative partnerships in the fight against addiction.

With unwavering determination, MCF remains committed to adapting and innovating our strategies, forging new partnerships and continuing to make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities affected by addiction.





Project 4

Sakav

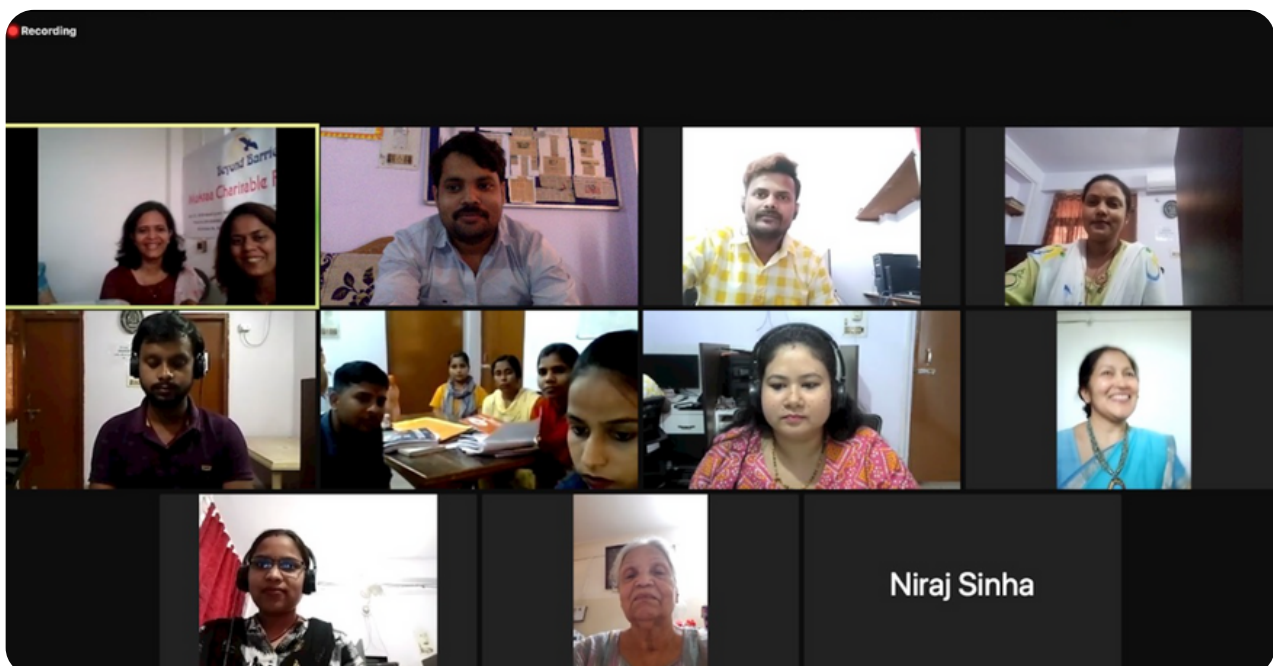
Gender Project



Project Objectives

Sakav is geared towards creating a world where all individuals, regardless of their gender, can thrive and enjoy equal rights and opportunities. We do this by planning interventions around the following objectives:

- * Raise awareness and understanding about gender, stereotypes and social constructs
- * Promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes in all spheres of life, including education, employment, healthcare and social participation
- * Address gender-related issues through multifaceted information on sexual health, nutrition, addiction, laws, career choices and power dynamics
- * Foster behaviour modification and sensitisation towards gender-related concerns by enhancing knowledge and sensitivity



Project Brief

For too long, the web of gender inequality has burdened both men and women, reinforcing harmful stereotypes, limiting opportunities and denying the inherent right to equality. Yet, as we peer into Indian lives, we witness stories of resilience, untapped potential and a burning desire for change.

In the face of these challenges, MCF proudly presents Sakav. Our primary objective is to advocate for and work towards achieving gender equality in all spheres of life, including education, employment, healthcare and social participation. The program takes a multipronged approach for building awareness, sensitisation and behaviour modification in adolescents.

Sakav has been working towards bridging the gender gap by promoting gender awareness and challenging stereotypes since 2021. Driven by the vision of Dr. Manasi Pahade and Mr. Peeyush Pahade, this initiative sought to confront systemic inequalities, challenge personal biases and foster a more inclusive future.





Outcomes and Impact this year

The program began with three sessions for students at Haribhai Desai College. Based on the resounding success of our initial sessions, we expanded our reach far beyond the confines of a single institution. Through an established partnership with IQAC Cluster, an organisation working towards higher education, a session plan of 16 hours was designed.

The project expanded its reach by conducting a national-level program from May 2nd to May 9th 2022, which attracted multiple colleges across India and over 1000 students actively participated.

Gender as a Concept and Human History, Bias in Iconology

Understanding Gender, its Stereotypes and Social Constructs

Gender and Sexual Health

Gender and Nutrition

Gender Equality and UGC regulations 2015, Gender and Men

Gender and Sexual Orientation (LGBTQIA+)

Gender and Addiction

Laws and Ethics related to Gender





Laws for Women and Sexual Minorities

Division of Labour and the Need for Change and Women Empowerment

Awareness on Consent, Choice, Career – Metro Sexualities in Realities

Switching between Patriarchal and Matriarchal Dominance

Gender and Powerplay

Sensitisation for Behaviour Modification

The speakers of eminence for the session were:

- ✳ Dr Swati Dehadroy
- ✳ Dr. Ananya Bibave, Vice Principal Modern Law College, Pune.
- ✳ Dr. Snehal Neel
- ✳ Ms. Vrunda Joshi & Ms. Prachi Dole, Prograce Mantra
- ✳ Ms. Amrapali Aurangabadkar, HoD English, Siddhivinayak College, Pune
- ✳ Mr. Achyut Borgaonkar
- ✳ Dr Seema Sonis
- ✳ Dr. Rupa Agarwal

They painted vivid pictures of a society burdened by stereotypes, restrictive norms and the immense struggle faced by different genders to break free from the shackles of tradition. The sessions created a safe space for open dialogue, sustained engagement and participation of students in the deep-rooted gender stereotypes, societal resistance to change and ways to move forward.





Future Plans

Building on the success of the Sakav project, MCF envisions expanding its reach and impact by collaborating with more colleges and educational institutions across India to reach a larger audience and promote gender awareness. We wish to integrate gender sensitisation programs into the academic curriculum to ensure sustained education on gender-related issues.

GENDER AWARENESS

SAKAV: Bridging the Barriers of Gender

Topics

1. Understanding the gender; Gender stereotypes with social construct
2. Gender and sexual health
3. Gender and nutrition
4. Gender division of Labour; Gender Discrimination and Violence (Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Sexual Harassment at Workplace) POSH Concept according to UGSC for college staff and students
5. Sexual orientation (LGBTQ terms)
6. Gender and Addiction
7. Laws and ethics related to gender.
 - Consequences of stepping out of Gender stereotype behavior
 - Division of labor and expected change, need and Importance of woman empowerment
 - Brief knowledge about various laws and schemes for protection/ support of a woman
 - Legal protection to various minority population with sexual orientations
8. Gender awareness in context with choice for Eg Gender in academics, Gender and options in carrier/profession.. Is the scene changing now? metrosexualities in reality
9. Gender concept and Human history; gender bias in Iconology (Role of Culture/ Religious practices)
10. Switching between Patriachal/ Matriortical dominance in human history
11. Gender and power play
12. Breaking the Barriers and addressing the issues (Sensitization, Gender in day to day life, behavioral modifications)

Eminent Speakers:
Dr Swati Dyhadroy
Mr. Achut Borgaonkar
Dr Ananya Bibave
Ms. Amrapali Aurangabadkar
Ms. Vrunda Joshi + Prachi Dole
Dr Seema Sonis
Dr. Snehal Pathak
Dr Rupa Agarwal

For Detail Contact:
Dr Manasi Pahade **Dr Jayashree Sonis**
9822209943 **9860488737**

When : 6 April - 13 April 2022

Time : 5.00 To 7 PM

Fees : 5950/-



Technical Partner

Muktaa Charitable Foundation  **IQAC CLUSTER** 





Project 5 First Aid for All



In the fast-paced world we live in, medical emergencies strike unexpectedly. They come without any warning to anybody, anywhere, anytime and demand immediate action. While doctors in hospital emergency rooms provide critical care, it is the individuals in schools, colleges, workplaces and public spaces who often find themselves at the forefront, responding to common emergencies.

These individuals become the first line of defence, offering vital first aid that can make a significant difference in saving lives and preventing further harm. The scope of first aid extends far beyond simple wound dressings or transporting victims to hospitals. It encompasses a wide range of situations from attending to snake bites and nosebleeds to immobilising sprained ankles. Basic life support, oxygen administration and other critical treatments may be the domain of medical professionals, but first aid forms the backbone of immediate care that can make a significant difference in outcomes.



Project Objectives

Sakav is geared towards creating a world where all individuals, regardless of their gender, can thrive and enjoy equal rights and opportunities. We do this by planning interventions around the following objectives:

- ✳ Enhance community awareness and understanding of first aid principles to foster a culture of safety and well-being
- ✳ Equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively respond to emergencies, minimising the impact of injuries and saving lives
- ✳ Promote equitable access to life-saving first aid training





Project Brief

MCF recognises the paramount importance of equipping communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively to emergency medical events. When Pratham Education Foundation, an NGO working towards education of youth and children for 25+ years, approached us for expert guidance on the finer medical aspects of first aid – MCF's doctor network supplemented Pratham's first aid resources with long-term supervision of participants.

Knowing that immediate first aid can save lives, expedite recovery, reduce healthcare costs and prevent worsening of injuries – First Aid For All, the joint venture established since 2020, endeavours to provide inclusive and equitable access to comprehensive first aid training for individuals across diverse communities.

It focuses on first aid training of the masses in India, particularly youth and individuals from underprivileged rural areas with limited access to healthcare facilities to act as first responders in medical emergencies. Through our training sessions, workshops and awareness programs we disseminate life-saving knowledge about immediate medical care, injury prevention and emergency response techniques. By instilling the confidence and knowledge to recognise various emergencies and provide essential care until professional help arrives, this project seeks to empower individuals to act swiftly and confidently as first responders.

The impact of this project extends beyond the immediate response – it fosters a sense of resilience and community care that is available throughout society.





Outcomes and Impact this year

MCF's involvement in the First Aid for All project has yielded significant outcomes and made a notable impact on the communities it serves.

A] FIRST AID CONTENT RELATED INPUTS

MCF played a crucial role in reviewing the first aid content developed by Pratham to ensure accuracy, innovation and alignment with best practices in the field.

B] ONLINE TRAINING-OF-TRAINER SESSIONS

MCF continues to provide expertise and guidance through online training and supervision sessions. Over the course of the project, MCF has conducted 66 sessions to train approximately 3,000 trainers. These trainers, equipped with knowledge gained from MCF's expert calls, subsequently educate rural communities on first aid through online sessions like "Ask the Doctor". The expert calls were conducted in various Indian languages, allowing for effective communication and engagement with diverse audiences. MCF's network of doctors from different states has expanded this project's reach, growth and effectiveness.

✳ **First Aid Sessions for Stree-Mukti Sanghatana, Mumbai**

In May 2022, MCF conducted first aid sessions for Stree-Mukti Sanghatana in Mumbai. These sessions with 64 cleaning workers from the Mumbai Corporation, shared accurate information, addressing their misconceptions related to first aid and enhancing their ability to respond to emergencies effectively.





✳ **First Aid session for Pratham on World Health Day**

On World Health Day, MCF organised an online interactive session for Pratham employees and their families. The session, titled "A Healthy Outside Starts from the Inside", aimed to promote holistic well-being and educate participants about maintaining good health. Dr. Snehal Neel and Dr. Jaishree Sonis shared insights and guidance to enable participants to make informed health choices.

✳ **Practising Yoga on World Yoga Day**

On World Yoga Day, MCF conducted a Rubaru Town Hall Yoga session for Pratham's employees and their families. This session, led by yoga experts from the Iyengar Yoga Institute, introduced participants to the benefits of yoga and guided them through simple yoga practices. MCF also shared videos and online sessions to introduce young children from various states to yoga. These children went on to conduct yoga sessions in schools, Anganwadi centres and villages, spreading the awareness and practice of yoga within their communities.

✳ **Eye Care Awareness for Welders**

MCF collaborated with Pratham to create eye care videos in five languages for the Pratham's welding upskilling course. These videos, featuring ophthalmologists such as Dr Devika Joshi, Dr Ashwineekumar Sahu, Dr Manasa K.V. and Dr Arun Sharma, shared easy-to-understand information on maintaining eye health and preventing eye injuries. By disseminating these videos, MCF has contributed to promoting eye care awareness and reducing the risk of eye-related issues among individuals involved in welding activities.

C] OFFLINE TRAINING SESSIONS

MCF organised a Step-by-Step CPR training session for the Rotaract Club of Pune Zenith Aundh. This session, held on September 18, 2022, provided hands-on training to 34 enthusiastic Rotaract members on CPR, choking management and other lifesaving first aid techniques using mannequins. Led by Dr Deepali Bhujbal and Dr Jyoti Shinde, the session equipped





participants with practical skills to respond effectively in emergency situations.


Participants in these online and offline training sessions have gone on to increase community preparedness, confidence and resilience in handling emergency situations and actively share their knowledge within their networks. Additionally, as individuals develop a shared commitment to prioritise safety, prevention and timely assistance – it enhances social cohesion and collective responsibility within communities.



Rotary 

 ROTARACT CLUB OF PUNE ZENITH

 Make It Happen

Rotaract 

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CPR TRAINING

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION

#KEEPPGROWING
#KEEPINSPIRING



Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Throughout the implementation of the project, we encountered several challenges inherent in the social health sector, including limited financial resources, logistical complexities and the need for sustained engagement to reinforce learning.

These challenges have provided valuable lessons, including the following:

- * The significance of community engagement and local stakeholder involvement in driving sustainable impact and ensuring the project's long-term success
- * The importance of continuous monitoring, evaluation and feedback loops to assess effectiveness, address community-specific needs and adapt training methodologies accordingly
- * The need for resource mobilisation and strategic partnerships to overcome financial constraints and scale up the project's reach





Future Plans

As we move forward with our commitment to expanding first aid training, collaborating with experts and addressing the unique challenges faced in this endeavour, we envision a future where every person possesses the ability to respond effectively to medical emergencies. Together, we can create a safer, more compassionate society where the power of first aid is within reach for all.





Project 6

Capacity-Building of Healthcare Providers

Project Objectives

- * Equip primary care providers with the knowledge and skills required for accurate diagnosis, appropriate treatment and effective management of common health conditions
- * Strengthen the clinical competencies of primary care providers by providing specialised training and resources
- * Emphasise the importance of preventive healthcare and enable primary care providers to implement preventive strategies, health promotion and disease prevention programs into their practice
- * Foster effective communication skills and patient engagement techniques among primary care providers to promote patient-centred care and shared decision-making
- * Extending primary healthcare support to mental health by providing service information and capacity-building for effective psychological first aid
- * Offering long-term specialised support through counselling for behaviour modification to healthcare workers and their patients through MCF's helplines for cases HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, substance use, sexually transmitted diseases and mental health issues



Project Brief

Well-equipped and knowledgeable healthcare professionals are vital for delivering high-quality care and addressing the evolving healthcare challenges of our time. Capacity building is a strategic investment to effectively respond to the healthcare needs of individuals, communities and populations. It plays a crucial role in strengthening healthcare systems, improving patient outcomes and promoting sustainable development in the field of healthcare. Recognising its significance, global organisations such as the World Health Organisation and leading healthcare institutions have emphasised the need for continuous professional development and training for healthcare providers.

Muktaa Charitable Foundation believes that by investing in the continuous professional development of healthcare providers, we can build a resilient workforce that is capable of addressing existing and emerging healthcare challenges. Through training and continuous education, healthcare professionals can acquire updated evidence-based practices, refine their clinical skills and stay abreast of advancements in their respective fields – ultimately improving community health outcomes and ensuring the well-being of individuals and communities.

The capacity building of primary care providers is a crucial project undertaken by MCF to enhance the skills and knowledge of healthcare professionals working at the primary care level. These sessions are tailored to the needs of general practitioners, family physicians, nurse practitioners and other healthcare providers involved in delivering primary healthcare services. They serve as the first point of contact for patients seeking healthcare, making their capacity building essential for ensuring quality care at the grassroots level.





Outcomes in this year

Through this initiative, MCF aims to empower primary care providers with the necessary competencies to deliver high-quality healthcare services and improve patient outcomes. The project involves comprehensive training programs, workshops and resources designed to address the specific needs and challenges faced by primary care providers.

A] HICCUPS FOR GP IN GYNECOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS

MCF organised a month-long online webinar series and certificate course, conducted by renowned gynaecologist Dr. Sunita Lalwani. Over 100 doctors from all over Maharashtra participated and received specialised training on gynaecological and obstetric topics. The primary care providers reported gaining valuable knowledge and skills, enabling them to provide better care to women during pregnancy and address common issues in gynaecology. The series was orchestrated by Dr Jayashree Sonis and Dr Gayatri Thatte.

Medical Disorders in Pregnancy

High Risk Pregnancy

Antenatal Care

PCOS

Leucorrhoea





B] MCF MONSOON MEDICLONE: DEMYSTIFYING ECG

MCF organised a month-long online webinar series and certificate course. It consisted of a series of five webinars, focusing on ECG interpretation led by eminent physician Dr. Anuj Darak. The webinars attracted around 120 doctors from across Maharashtra who upskilled their understanding and interpretation of ECG readings and left confident in their ability to diagnose and manage cardiac conditions effectively. Participants who successfully completed the online tests and passed the post-assessment received certificates.

ECG at a Glance

ECG Basics and Reporting

Approach to Conduction Abnormalities

ECG for Patients with Chest Pain and Acute Coronary Syndrome

ECG Approach in Palpitations and Syncope

C] PHARMA SERIES

A continuation of last year's series on pharmacology marked the start of this year. Each of these courses has a quiz and other evaluations to test the participants' learning and knowledge in different real-life scenarios. Participation is encouraged through incentivising the winners with trophies, certificates of recognition and gifts of medical equipment. Past winners also encourage future participation by sharing their achievements within their networks.



Impact

For healthcare providers, these sessions had a lasting impact in boosting their confidence, broadening their expertise and opening doors for further professional development opportunities.

- ✳ **Enhanced Knowledge and Skills** to deliver more accurate diagnoses, develop appropriate treatment plans and provide comprehensive care to their patients.
- ✳ **Improved Patient Care** in identifying and managing specific conditions, providing appropriate care, addressing high-risk situations, diagnosing abnormalities and making timely referrals if necessary.
- ✳ **Facilitated Collaboration and Networking** space for healthcare professionals to learn from each other and build a supportive community. Primary care providers from different regions can come together and exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices.
- ✳ **Guided Personal and Professional Growth** of participants with the acquisition of specialised knowledge and skills in specialised areas.



Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Through our work, MCF has first-hand experienced the impact limited resources for funding, infrastructure and training facilities have on the scalability and reach of capacity-building initiatives.

Despite limited resources, we were adamant about tailoring the capacity-building programs to the specific needs and contexts of primary care providers. Understanding the local healthcare landscape, cultural nuances and healthcare delivery challenges ensured the relevance and effectiveness of the training interventions.

Regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms helped identify areas for improvement and refine the capacity-building interventions. This iterative process ensured that the training programs remained up-to-date, evidence-based and responsive to evolving healthcare needs.





Future Plans

Recognising the importance of ongoing professional development for primary care providers, future plans include establishing mechanisms for continuous learning. This includes webinars, conferences and online resources to support their knowledge and skill enhancement beyond our existing training programs. Building on the successes and experiences of the capacity-building project for primary care providers, MCF aims to expand the reach of capacity-building programs to a larger number of primary care providers across India.

In line with the World Health Organisation's recommendations, we also wish to equip the healthcare workforce with awareness, sensitivity and knowledge to provide preliminary mental healthcare to their patients. With the development of MCF's mental health helpline, we aim to include capacity building for basic counselling support in our network of doctors.

By implementing these future plans, MCF aims to contribute to the continued improvement of primary healthcare services, ensuring that primary care providers are well-equipped to meet the evolving healthcare needs of their communities.





Project 7

Shala Beyond Books: Lifeskill, Sexual and Reproductive Health Education



The responsibility of educating youth goes beyond teaching history, english or maths. As adolescents navigate the intricate path of adolescence, a phase of major transformations and profound self-discovery, they encounter a myriad of challenges, uncertainties and moments of growth. It is during this formative period that the significance of holistic education becomes paramount. To guide young minds towards a holistic development that extends beyond the boundaries of traditional academic subjects.





Project Objectives

- * Provide adolescents with a fundamental and comprehensive understanding of various life skills that are crucial for their personal and social development
- * Create awareness among adolescents about addictions and risky behaviours, enabling them to make informed decisions and steer clear of harmful habits
- * Educate adolescents about stages of sexual development, shades of sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases and prevention measures to promote healthy sexual behaviours
- * Engage parents through tailored sessions to enhance communication, parental involvement in adolescent education and support mechanisms

The primary service users of the project include:

- * **Adolescents aged 13-16 years:** The project targets adolescents in schools, hostels, coaching classes and societies, helping them develop essential life skills to make informed choices.
- * **Parents:** Recognising parents as a direct source of contact for further communication and support, parents are involved and given information and resources to better understand and support their adolescent children.
- * **Teachers:** Acknowledging teachers' influential role in shaping the lives of adolescents, teachers are given training and resources to serve as role models and guides for students.





Project Brief

Fueled by the belief that adolescents' transformative years are not merely shaped by their academic pursuits but are influenced by a myriad of life experiences, relationships and self-discoveries, MCF embarked on an inspiring journey called "Shala – Beyond Books." This project goes beyond textbooks to empower adolescents with essential life skills that prepare them to navigate any situation they may encounter, particularly those associated with high-risk behaviours.

Analytical thinking, creative thinking, decision-making, sexual health and interpersonal relationship management are the key pillars upon which MCF has been conducting Shala life skill education sessions in schools across and around Pune since 2015. By channelising these core areas, MCF strives to equip adolescents with the tools to cultivate self-awareness and self-confidence, make informed choices, build resilient relationships and embrace their unique identities.

In alignment with the project's objectives, MCF has meticulously developed tailored age-appropriate modules based on insights from renowned organisations such as UNICEF and WHO. The module encompasses a comprehensive range of themes including self-awareness, self-confidence, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, stress management, sexual and reproductive health and addressing the risks associated with substance use.

A] AWARENESS AND SENSITISATION FOR YOUTH, TEACHERS AND PARENTS

MCF collaborates with schools, hostels, coaching classes and societies to provide holistic education to a wide spectrum of adolescents aged 13-16 years. The project aims to support healthy psychological development and equip adolescents with essential life skills through activity and discussion





oriented sessions.



Moreover, the project acknowledges the importance of engaging not only with adolescents themselves but also their parents and teachers who serve as pillars of support and guidance during this transformative journey. The modules include:

Self Awareness and Self Confidence

Cleanliness

Interpersonal Relationships (Friends, Family and Romantic)

Communication Skills

Addictions and Abuse – Identify Risky Behaviours

Physical, Psychological and Societal Changes in Adolescence

Stress Management

Negotiation Skills





Sexual Health in Boys and Girls

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Prevention

Post-sessions, participants are given a qualitative survey with some reflective questions, to assess the impact of our sessions. This serves as a reflection tool, allowing adolescents to record their learnings from the sessions and helps us track their progress.

B] TRAINING AND EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERS

At the heart of the Shala - Beyond Books project lies a dedicated team of volunteers, comprising social workers, doctors and individuals with a background in psychology. Recognising the importance of skilled facilitators and sharing of accurate information with the general public, MCF invests in comprehensive training programs to equip volunteers with the necessary knowledge and tools to conduct impactful sessions in their communities. Through training sessions, workshops and continuous support these passionate individuals become ambassadors of holistic education, adept at engaging and guiding adolescents towards their journey of self-discovery.

C] LINKING TO OUR HELPLINE FOR SUPPORT

To ensure that no query or concern goes unanswered, MCF has established a dedicated helpline number. Adolescent service users of the Shala project can reach out to the helpline to seek guidance, clarification or support in navigating the challenges they face. This helpline connects adolescents with expert counsellors for free counselling sessions. By offering a safe and confidential space, MCF ensures that adolescents have access to the support they need to address their concerns and make informed decisions.





Outcomes in this year

MCF has conducted sessions in more than 20 schools across and around Pune, reaching **2338** students in 2022-2023. This brings our impact since inception to 20,000+ youth empowered on sexual and reproductive health.

Gara Palkar School, Karve Nager

Kadam Kanya School, Kothrud

Vidya Jyoti Special School,
Sadashiv Peth

MIT Vishwashanti Gurukul School,
Kothrud

Anusaya Bai Khillare School,
Erandwane

Shankarrao More Vidyalaya, Kothrud

Matoshree Ginnidevi Mittal
Vidyalaya, Ambegaon Budruk

Dhyansadhana Vidyamandir,
Vadgaon Budruk

Mahatma Gandhi Vidyalaya and
Junior College, Khanapur

New English School, Khamgaon

Dnyan-samvardhini School, Shirwal

Prerana Highschool, Ambegaon
Pathar

Priyadarshini Vidya Mandir,
Dhankawadi

Utkarsha education Institute,
Ambegaon Pather





Dr. Kalmadi Shamrao High School

Bharati Vidyapeeth Kanya Prashala,
Dhankawadi

Maharshi Karve Vidyala

Prerana Vidyala Mandir

Matoshree Ginni Devi Mittal, School
Ambegao Budruk

M.P College

Dr. Kalmadi Shamrao High School
(Parents Session)

Vidya Jyoti Special School, Sadashiv
Peth (Parents Session)

Additionally, MCF has also started *Shala* sessions with schools in Bihar. In 2022-2023, the team reached five schools and the school management and students' response was overwhelmingly positive.

The *Shala - Beyond Books* project has yielded significant outcomes and made a positive impact on the lives of adolescents we have worked with:

- * Adolescents who have participated in the life skills education sessions have shown improvements in their analytical thinking, decision-making, interpersonal relationship management and communication skills.
- * The project has raised awareness among adolescents about addiction risks and high-risk behaviours. Through education and interactive sessions, participants have gained knowledge about the consequences of addiction and have been empowered to avoid such behaviours.
- * Similarly, adolescents have gained a better understanding of stages of sexual development, sexually transmitted diseases and prevention measures. This knowledge empowers them to make informed decisions regarding their sexual health and adopt responsible behaviours.
- * Parent sessions have facilitated improved communication and understanding between parents and adolescents. Parents are also better equipped to address sensitive topics and support their children's healthy development.





Lessons Learnt and Future Plans

While the project experienced a temporary standstill in FY 2022-21, efforts were made to resume activities in FY 2021-22 by approaching schools, shifting to alternative mass media platforms such as Radio Akashwani to reach adolescents in rural Maharashtra. Despite the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Shala - Beyond Books project has demonstrated resilience and adaptability.

Looking ahead, MCF envisions a future where holistic education is embraced more widely, enabling adolescents to thrive academically, emotionally and socially. This year, we have set a target of conducting around 100 sessions with 50 schools in Bihar, as well as awareness sessions with the college youth in collaboration with 10 colleges.

The organisation's aspirations extend beyond the current scope of the Shala - Beyond Books project, with plans to expand outreach, collaborate with more schools and leverage platforms such as local radio stations to reach underserved communities. MCF is eager to foster collaborations with stakeholders, secure additional funding and enhance the quality and impact of their sessions, ultimately enriching the lives of countless adolescents.





Our Stakeholders

Our Stakeholders

86

Our Programme Participants	88
Our Partners	90
Our Staff and Board Members	92
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Our Donors and Funders	97



The people we work with make us who we are. This includes our programme participants, funders, volunteers, employees, board members, partners and well-wishers.

We value establishing and maintaining connections with people within and across different service sectors to expand our reach and impact. We aim to tap into existing networks accessed by our service users for meaningful partnerships, accessing diverse perspectives from our programme participants, building a strong service arm alongside our employees and building awareness and sensitisation through our volunteers.



Our Programme Participants

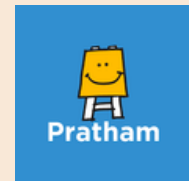




While the accessibility and anonymity of our helpline and other programmes allow for access by a wide range of individuals, groups and communities, we lay a special focus on reaching out to marginalised and vulnerable populations that are most affected by the issues we are working on. Their needs and interests are at the core of the NGO's mission.

Some of our programme participants have been listed below.

- * Individuals affected by chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Oral Cancer, Hepatitis B and C
- * Individuals affected by Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- * Individuals struggling with Alcohol or Substance Abuse
- * Children and Youth
- * Women and Girls
- * Sex workers
- * LGBTQIA+ individuals
- * Economically Vulnerable Populations
- * Urban Informal Settlements
- * Rural Communities
- * Doctors, Nurses and Paramedical staff
- * Counsellors and Psychologists
- * General Public



Our Partners





Networking and partnerships are key to enhancing our reach, service effectiveness and sustainability and building a comprehensive support system for individuals in need. Together, we share knowledge, resources and best practices, fostering a collaborative environment where collective efforts are maximised. With them, we break down silos, forge strong networks and build a supportive ecosystem.



Our Employees and Board Members





It's really the people that make us who we are. The young and dynamic leaders who call MCF their home know exactly what they're good at and they put together their individual strengths, diverse backgrounds and emotional investment in the work they do to accelerate the creation of a quality and innovative healthcare ecosystem.

- * Adeeti Sinha
- * Anam Sheikh
- * Babita
- * Bharat Dhanawale
- * Deepak
- * Deepali Godse
- * Dhriti Agarwal
- * Divya Ahire
- * Geetanjali K
- * Hitesh Oswal
- * Jitendra
- * Joshua Christian
- * Jyoti Kumar
- * Ketaki Kelkar
- * Madhuri Kumari
- * Naaz
- * Niraj Sharma
- * Nupur Akkalkotkar
- * Rahul Das
- * Ruta Sahastrabudhe
- * Sakshi Kothpalliwar
- * Sarita Kumari
- * Shruti Khavate
- * Shubham Kamble
- * Siddhi Memane
- * Shweta Chavan
- * Umesh Mali
- * Yogendra Chaubey

OUR TRUSTEE BOARD

- * Dr Prakash Mahajan
- * Dr Rupa Agarwal
- * Ashiwini Shinde
- * Dr Anuradha Tarkunde
- * Dr Snehal Neel Pathak
- * Dr Jyoti Mahadev Shinde
- * Ghanshyam Nanaware



Our Volunteers





Our dedicated volunteers are the backbone of our organisation. With their passion, skills and commitment, they bring our programs to life and make a tangible difference in the lives of our programme participants. Their selfless contributions and active involvement demonstrate the power of collective action and the strength of our community-driven approach.

- * Abhinav Lahoti
- * Arpit Kothari
- * Arun Sharma SBI Mullana
- * Ambala
- * Deepa Mukherji
- * Deepashri Karandikar
- * Disket Angmo
- * Dr Anita Deshmukh
- * Dr Anjana Rathor
- * Dr Aprana Vaidya
- * Dr Arati Thakur
- * Dr Archana Choghule
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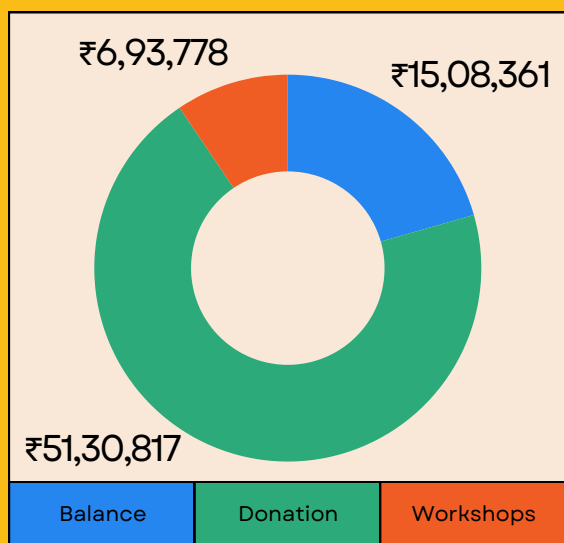


Till today, Muktaa has always been funded by individuals, foundations and entities that have a vested interest in our success and impact. Their trust in our work and financial support serve are not just a validation of our mission and work but also a reminder of the significance of the responsibility we have been entrusted with.

- * Asawari Anand Patil
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- * Sujata Madhav Godbole
- * Vidya Jyoti (Special) School
- * Vishwas Moghe
- * White Code Technology Solutions Pvt Ltd



Our Financial Portfolio for 2022-23

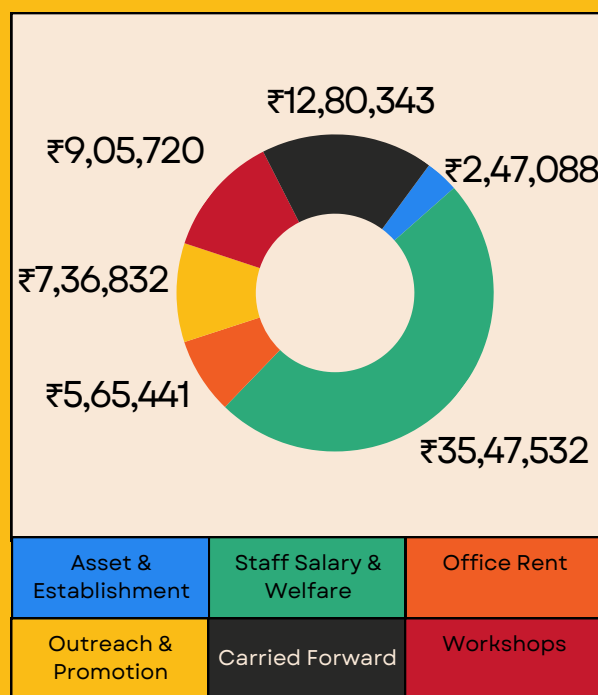


Income FY 22-23

₹73,32,956

Expenditure FY 22-23

₹73,32,956



»»

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Bank: **State Bank of India, Erandwane**

Account No : **36048568325**

Type: **Current**

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CONTACT US

Dr Rupa Agarwal

Secretary and Trustee

rupa.agarwal@mcf.org.in

+91-982-264-4886

