



PLUS

June 2009

Network of Maharashtra People with HIV

State public hearing on 2nd line on 30th June

NMP+ board members and staff are getting ready for a State Public Hearing in Mumbai on the subject of access to 2nd line antiretroviral treatment. A number of people desperate to get 2nd line are travelling to Mumbai to attend the hearing and question the panel which includes representatives from NACO, MSACS, and the Human Rights law Network.

2nd line drugs are essential to the life chances of many people with HIV. These are people for whom the normal treatment for HIV, 1st line drugs, have failed, cause too many side effects, or are no longer effective. These people need an alternative (that is, 2nd line) treatment or they will die.

In Maharashtra, 2nd line drugs are only available at J.J.Hospital, Mumbai. This makes it inaccessible to many people who live far away. In addition, the Government criteria by which people can access 2nd line are too prescriptive and seem designed to make it easier to deny the treatment than give it. People are assessed not on clinical need but on such factors as whether they have previously received private treatment, or the number of years they have been on 1st line.

People in a poor socio-economic condition cannot afford private 2nd line drugs because of the high cost in India.

Our Public Hearing is intended to sensitise policymakers and civil society organisations about the importance of 2nd line ART drugs to PLHIV. NMP+ is organising this State Public Hearing in association with the Indian Network for People living with HIV (INP+), with funding from Family Health International (FHI)/USAID.

Marriage mela in Sangli

Aamhich Aamache Sanstha, Sangli organised a Marriage Mela for positive people on 28th June at the Maratha Samaj Karyalaya. Someone looking for a marriage partner was asked to bring along a photograph and test report in order to be registered. We hope to carry a report of the event in next month's edition.



Staff changes at NMP+

Following the extra responsibilities given to NMP+ by CHAHA, the changes to job titles are as follows: Vinod Jambhale will now be Programme Coordinator for CHAHA.

Balaji Ubarhande is CHAHA Monitoring and Evaluation Programme Officer.

Salim Shaikh is CHAHA Programme Officer.

Ayub Sutar (Sam) is the new CHAHA Finance Officer. Sam joins us from Kolhapur district.

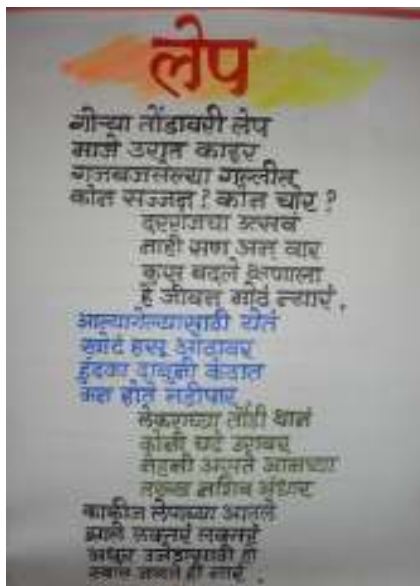
Asha Bhatt is Insurance Coordinator working on the NMP+ health insurance.

Yuvraj Shinde is the new State Programme Associate in place of Balaji.

Replacing Yuvraj as State Treatment Education Officer is Vijay Bhende. We welcome Vijay from Gadchiroli DLN.

Striking artwork interests UNICEF and MSACS

For the recent youth mela (see report on last page) each district was asked to produce posters, poems or other materials for communicating messages about HIV to young people. The districts responded by getting their peer treatment educators involved. They produced work of such a high calibre that UNICEF and MSACS have asked to review the works with a view to printing some of the posters. Here, a selection of the posters produced by the districts.



Government promises help for widows and children

At an event for Global AIDS Week of Action arranged at Sangli, Mangla Shinde, from the Zilla Parishad, spoke about the various programmes under Mahila and Bal Vikas Yojana run by the Government of Maharashtra. She appealed to women to seize the opportunities for individual development that government schemes offer. She also spoke of a government scheme to provide bicycles to girls in rural areas so they can get to school, and she urged parents to take advantage of this scheme.

Mrs. Shinde was welcomed by Fr Sabu Mathew from the Dilasa Counselling Centre, who also spoke about the work of the centre and how the CHAHA project is benefitting affected children in Sangli.

Below: Mrs. Shinde speaking at Miraj



In another Sangli event for GAWA, Mrs. Shilpa Patil (Women and Children Development Officer, Sangli) urged people to prepare paperwork and apply for Bal Sangopan Yojana. In this scheme orphans and children of parents who are seriously sick or handicapped are given a sum of rupees for every child per month.

She reminded people of the widow pension, the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana assures every widow a pension. Very few widows are enjoying this provision and there are many who deserve it.

Global AIDS Week of Action



Yuvraj Shinde from NMP+ gave a positive speech before hundreds of people in Pune, for the Candlelight Vigil organised by WakeUpPune.

Hope from MSACS meeting

In a meeting at the Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society on the 20th May to mark the Global AIDS Week of Action, NMP+ together with CHAHA sub-recipient partners Mamta and Plan International met newly appointed Project Director Ramesh Devkar to ask for improvements to services.

In a fruitful meeting, Mr. Devkar said that there now sufficient stocks for Cotrimoxazole prophylaxis to be made available for every positive child below 5 years. He asked to be informed if this is not happening.

Districts. Please send details of any child under 5 not receiving prophylaxis to NMP+, giving names, addresses, contact details and a case study.

Mr. Devkar also **confirmed that CD4 counts would take place every 6 months.** He spoke to the Civil Hospital in Satara and asked them to ensure that this happened in future. Vinod Jambhale will visit Satara in July to check that this is happening.

It was also agreed that **District staff could attend all District Coordination meetings each month.** CHAHA representatives could attend the **State Steering Meetings** each quarter. This is hugely promising for the future of HIV treatment in Maharashtra. Our team of Vinod Jambhale, Balaji Ubarhande and Salim Shaikh came away from the meeting much encouraged.

More Gawa activities

300 at Saras Bagh, Pune

On the occasion of Global Aids Week of Action, Sarva Seva Sangh organised a children's' meet at Saras Bagh with a Candle Light Memorial and Action of We-feeling within the Community living with HIV-AIDS. About 300 people participated. The District Officer of Women and Child Welfare Department Mahendra Gaikwad and Asim Sarode, the Director of Legal Defenders on Human Rights were present as guest of Honour.

Mr. Sarode emphasised that society needs to change its approach to the community living with HIV/AIDS, who need greater Human and Constitutional rights. Mr. Gaikwad shared his experiences of when he had worked with National AIDS Research Institute; he focused on educated people's misconception regarding HIV/AIDS, and discrimination within the family, the community, and the overall society. He gave information about various support schemes provided by the Women and Child Welfare Department for PLHA.

Fr. Mathews, director of Sarva Seva Sangh requested people to come out of the society stigma and actively participate in the various welfare schemes.

News

- Problems at the **Dhule ART Centre** were reported in last month's newsletter. As a result of the public demonstrations about the performance of the ART Centre, two Medical Officers have resigned. We are awaiting new appointments and better performance.
- The accused in the murder case against our much missed **late Vice President, Vidha Kadam**, has still to come to court. Meanwhile, the accused, Vidha's Mother-in-law and Brother-in-law, have been refused bail by a judge and are remanded in prison.

Children the focus for Karunya Trust, Nahur

At a GAWA meeting attended by Umesh Mali, Social worker at the Network of Mumbai People with HIV, Fr Biju M called for greater knowledge among positive people of Cotrimoxazole Prophylaxis Therapy.

Topics covered were health, nutrition, stigma and discrimination, access to ART, adherence, access to education and poor economic condition. Umesh spoke about the importance of breastfeeding to children's health.

The Mayor at Pimpri



Pimpri Chinchwad; meeting place promised

CHAHA Project Coordinator Dipti Ghone Introduced Dr. Aparnatai Doke, (Mayor, P.C.M.C), Dr. Rajshekhar Ayyar (Medical Director of PCMC), and Manoj Pardesi (General Secretary NMP+), at a GAWA meeting in Pimpri Chinchwad.

The Mayor promised to find a base for CHAHA in Pimpri Chinchwad.

Dr Ayyar asked for more coordination between NGOs working in the HIV field, and government. Ms Ghone agreed to organise a meeting to develop this.

Resource persons Dr. Madhu Oswald (Mukta Helpline), and Dr. Mangesh Khandave (in charge of ART in YCM Hospital), gave sessions on Positive Living and Prophylaxis.

New board at Beed



The Network of Beed by People living with HIV held its Annual General meeting on 28 May. 14 candidates stood in the election and 55 voters participated. Included in the newly elected board are President Mr. Shivaji Barge, Secretary Mrs. Rajashree Hivreker, and Treasurer Mrs. Anita Shejul.

Income generation unit for NMP+

NMP+ has set up an income generation unit. Provisional funding for 20 widows to receive carts and other equipment to help them earn an income has been promised. The money is coming from Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

The first meeting of widows from the Pune district has taken place, and the widows were consulted on the best way to run the scheme. It is hoped that the first carts will be in operation by early August.

Right; Women at NMP+ for the income consultation.

100 at youth mela

Over 100 young people from all over Maharashtra, mainly between the ages of 20 and 30, attended a 3 day mela in Pune in June. This conference was organised by the Population Foundation of India and NMP+. It was inaugurated by Nilesh Kadam, President, Standing Committee of Municipal Corporation, Pune. He encouraged young people to work to prevent the spread of HIV. Manoj Pardesi from NMP+ also encouraged the young, and Dr. Ganga Khedkar said that the use of condoms by commercial sex workers, and good work by networks of People Living with HIV has been a major contributor in controlling the spread of HIV.

A poster exhibition of HIV and AIDS information was held. The posters were created by the districts, and were much admired. See Page 2 for a selection of the best.



Star of the month ☆

This month's stars are the young people from all over Maharashtra who participated so openly and with such enthusiasm at the youth mela. Please pass on to them our thanks.

Please send pictures, contributions or suggestions for the newsletter to Vincent McDonald, Communications Adviser, at vjmcd@hotmail.co.uk, or to **NMP+**, 401-403 Ganga Prestige Arcade, Nana Peth, Laxmi Road, Pune 411002, e mail: nmpplus@gmail.com, phone: 020 – 26336084/87