



THE HUMSAFAR TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Vision Statement

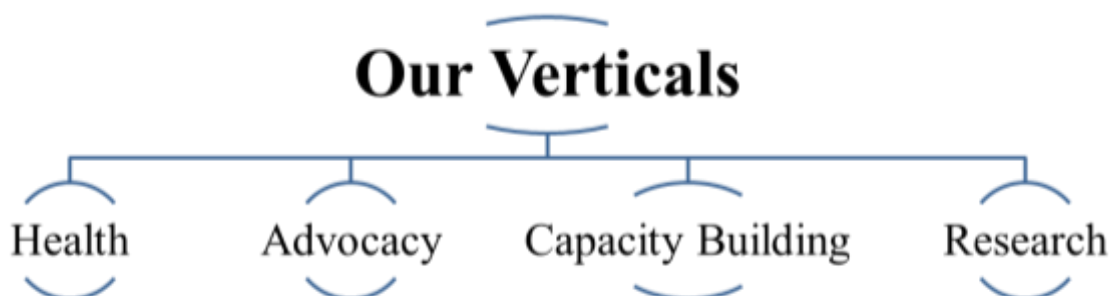
Holistic approach to the rights and health of sexual minorities and promoting rational attitudes towards sexuality.

Mission Statement

Strive for the human rights, social wellbeing of sexual minorities and provide them comprehensive health services.

Theory of Change

If we work for the human rights and health of sexual minorities who are LGBTQ+ and provide holistic services, then this work will lead to acceptance and equality of sexual minorities and a healthier community



INTRODUCTION

The Humsafar Trust (HST) was founded in April 1994 to reach out to LGBTQ communities in Mumbai Metro and surrounding areas. After much networking and advocacy with the Mumbai Municipal Corporation it became the first openly LGBTQ Community Based Organization to be allotted space in a Municipal building in Mumbai. The Trust began its activities by inviting gay men and lesbian women to attend its workshops on Fridays at its drop-in centre. The drop-in centre saw various workshops on issues of HIV and AIDS and human rights of LGBTQ+ and it soon became evident that the trust will have to work aggressively on the health and human rights of the community.

HST's began its health initiative with free distribution of condoms at two Gay men and Other Men Having Sex with Men (MSM) cruising sites in Mumbai in June 1995. Later in the year 1998, HST with its first grant from the Directorate of Health Services conducted a mapping study in Mumbai and identified 77 sites where Gay men and MSM met regularly either to seek partners or socialize and exchange information.

The HST was awarded the first pilot project to 'Motivate Safer Sex among Gay men and Other MSM at Selected Sites in Mumbai Metro' supported by MDACS in April 1999. Since February 2001, USAID/ FHI under its IMPACT project supported HST, which scaled up the MDACS project. This project upgraded the VCCTC infrastructure, doctors working honorary on the project were hired to work part-time The HST implemented four phases of the intervention project, extending its services to 127 MSM and transgender sites in Mumbai and its surrounding areas. This project resulted in setting up a 'HUB' within HST that took a holistic approach towards the needs of the MSM and TGW communities in Mumbai Metro.

The HIV interventions of HST are supported by National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and Mumbai District AIDS Control Society (MDACS) to provide health services to 8500 Men who have sex with men and Transgender communities every year through Public Health Care delivery systems and its In-house clinics. In the last two decades the outreach program has reached out to more than 110,000 Gay, Men having Sex with Men and Transgender and distributed over 700,000 condoms every year at more than 129 physical sites in Mumbai and nearly 40000 HIV tests and 70000 STIs screened and treatments provided. HST reaches out to over 10,000 gay men and men who have sex with men and transgender communities every year through its social media and online outreach programs. HST Collaborations with Public health delivery systems of Mumbai like LTMG, Nair, KEM and JJ Hospitals.

In 2018 with support from NACO /MDACS and USAID FHI360 supported project LINKAGES Humsafar set up a first of its kind integrated HIV clinic in its premises serving as a LINK ART centre for Gay men/ MSM / TGW and other marginalized communities. The project also strengthened its capacities to include FSWs and IDUs under its umbrella of services and technical assistance.

In April 2021, HST was awarded a Global Fund Grant (GFATM) to implement a virtual outreach Project that would reach to young, adolescent, hard to reach Gay men and MSM, Female Sex Workers through online dating apps and social media. The project will also strengthen community systems of marginalized groups in India.

In house clinics remain open five days a week with three qualified Doctors and two Lab Technicians attending to clients. A clinical psychologist works full time along with a team of 4 community counsellors and 2 health facilitators and a nutritionist working on the program providing nutritional counselling assistance. HST organizes advocacy workshops for health care providers, law enforcement agencies, judiciary, legislators, politicians and political parties, Government bodies, media, student community to sensitize them on Gay, MSM and TG issues.

HST has institutionalized its various capacities by developing a Human Resources Policy, Finance, Procurement, Risk and Fraud policy, Child Protection Policy, Credit Society Policy, Organizational M & E framework, Strategic Plan, Mission Azadi Document (MAD) - A reference Manual for LGBTQ+ rights in India, Sanchar – A language recommendation manual for Media on reporting LGBTQ+ issues, SHAKTI- A Hijra health care manual for health care providers, AROGYA- Community health workers training manual, Onward granting manual, National Advocacy Plan for MTH groups, Institutional Review Board (IRB) Policy and procedures for research projects. It has developed four guidebooks to provide ongoing support to community-based organizations.

HST has nurtured support groups YAARIYAN for young LGBTQ+, UMANG for LBT persons and SANJEEVANI for persons living with HIV. HST also provides legal support, crisis management, mental health and nutrition counselling to its communities.

The Humsafar Trust (HST) was founded in April 1994 by a group of self-identified gay men to reach out to LGBTQ+ communities in Mumbai and Thane District. After much networking and advocacy with the Mumbai Municipal Corporation it became the first openly Gay Community Based Organisation (CBO) to be allotted space in a Municipal building in Mumbai in 1995.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020-2021

The time when we all faced major challenges was the year of 2020. The pandemic affected the work and slowed the world down. But we kept working through this tough time

- INFOSEM Annual General Meeting and Elections 2020: HST being a secretariat for India's largest LGBTQ network. The Integrated Network for Sexual Minorities (INFOSEM) conducted its Managing Committee (MC) & Governing Board (GB) elections on 28-30 March in VITS, Mumbai. The meeting was supported by Amplify Change under CONNECT Project. The meeting was attended by 59 INFOSEM members.

- IDAHOTB 2021: The Humsafar Trust observed the IDAHOTB by organizing different events in Mumbai and Delhi on Mental Health and discussion on acceptance to address homophobia and transphobia. HST also conducted workshop to design an online campaign with the partners from the 18 states. After the workshop, all the participants developed about 55 posters and shared it on social media. The online campaign provided visibility to the regional partners through the post. The IDAHOTB campaign was supported by the British High Commission, New Delhi and Amplify Change.

PROJECT AND EVENT UPDATES OF YEAR 2020-2021

TARGETED INTERVENTION AND OUTREACH

HST continued outreach services to MSM and TG communities in Mumbai through its 3 projects, Dostaana, Yaarana and Aarambh. The program reached out to 8022 MSM and TG and 10919 were tested. The TI achieved higher testing and linkage numbers in 2020-21. HST continues to have strong linkages with public health systems in Mumbai and has strongly embedded ART services in the five ART centres of Mumbai and Thane. HST also continues to provide legal support, crisis management, mental health counselling, and nutrition counselling to its communities. Routine events organized by the TIs saw the participation of over 4000 community individuals.

Integrated HIV clinic

During this period, the clinic tested 3742 clients after which 39 clients who tested HIV positive were referred to ART centres. Further 128 clients who tested positive for syphilis were connected to public hospitals for treatment.

The clinic introduced a rapid finger prick test to screen for HIV which minimized waiting time and ensured faster delivery of services and linkage to ART centres. Further, HST implemented Free Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (FICTC) and organized health camps for free HIV testing for unreached populations. In Hub clinic, provide 184 mental health counselling and 162 nutrition counselling who has accessed the HST also conducted a Hepatitis testing and vaccination camp for LGBTQ clinic attendees. In span of one year, total 5200 community members who have visited DIC services So far 55 PLHIV are accessing ART medicine from HST LINK ART centre.

Sanjeevani Care and Support

Sanjeevani Care and Support group is a team of peer navigators working exclusively to strengthen PLHIV care and support across Mumbai and Thane. Despite financial constraints, Sanjeevani continues to provide referral, treatment and care services, follow-ups and counselling/legal/nutrition support to over 300 PLHA registered with

the group. In this period, we have provided clinical services to 265 people for their routine medical check-up

Mental Health Counselling

Integrated with the Clinic Unit, HST's (Mental Health) Counselling unit is among the most important services offered for the community. Relationships, Depression, Anxiety issues, OCD, stress at work due to non-hetero-normative gender expressions and sexuality, education and career are the key issues currently discussed by clients as per counselling records. Although the drop-in crowd is of mixed age and class, the issues of family pressure, coming out traumas, career pressure and the relationship were also discussed. 184 individuals accessed the mental health counselling services from Hub clinic.

RESEARCH

HST Research has played an important role in informing, designing and guiding interventions pertaining to the HIV related risk behaviors of MSM. Research studies as an integral part of an intervention were in-built into the programs of the HST. Over the years, research studies in HST have become technically sound just as the interventions have become more focused. However, the credit of creating an environment for scientific research can itself be attributed to those core members who themselves did not come from research background but, were visionary in their approach of evidence-based planning. Through various national, international conferences, seminars, research findings have been disseminated, medical practitioners and policy makers and even to common public. These events have been a part of the advocacy program geared to create an enabling environment for discussion on issues concerning MSM. HST is the first community-based organization that set up its own Institutional Review Board in 2006 with National Institute of Health (NIH) with Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) certification in place. The following are some of the ongoing studies:

1) CHALO 2.0: A mobile-technology-based intervention to accelerate HIV testing and linkage to prevention and treatment

This study aims to investigate the efficacy of a messaging intervention on HIV testing and linkage to prevention/treatment services among internet-using MSM in Mumbai via a three-arm randomized control trial

2) Reducing health inequalities among sexual minorities in India: generating evidence for action

This project is supported by DBT/Wellcome India Alliance senior fellowship of Dr. Venkatesan Chakrapani. The project aims to test a theoretical model of production of syndemics, informed by Intersectionality framework (i.e., intersections of stigmatised

identities contributing to inequalities), to explain disparities in HIV risk among MSM and TGW. Further it aims to design and test syndemically-informed interventions to reduce disparities in HIV risk, and to translate the research evidence into standard public health practice. So far, several peer-reviewed articles, and book chapters have been published based on the studies from this project.

3) *Title: Mobilizing for a Research Revolution to Ensure LGBTQ Inclusion in Asia*

The study aims to explore and understand LGBTQ people's experiences of inclusion in various domains of life such as education, health, family, economic well-being, personal security, violence and political/civic participation; identify current gaps/progress made on LGBTQ inclusion; and develop indicators for LGBTQ inclusion

4) *CHALO Delhi: Implementation science approach for increasing HIV testing uptake among online MSM in Delhi, India: Testing acceptability, feasibility and real world-effectiveness virtual interventions*

The major goals of this project are to investigate the effectiveness, feasibility, and acceptability of a messaging intervention on HIV testing and linkage to prevention/treatment services among internet-using MSM in Delhi via a two-armed randomized control trial

5) *Title: #SafeHandsSafeHearts: The effect of an eHealth intervention on COVID-19 knowledge, behaviors and mental wellness of LGBT+ people – a randomized control trial*

The major goals of this project are to investigate the effectiveness, feasibility, and acceptability of a messaging intervention on HIV testing and linkage to prevention/treatment services among internet-using MSM in Delhi via a two-armed randomized control trial

6) *Reducing health inequalities among sexual minorities in India: generating evidence for action*

This collaboration aims to identify factors that affect health seeking among sexual minorities with focus on the understanding how syndemic conditions form as well as exploring the role of stigmas in the production of syndemics.

7) *Health Status and Hormone Use among Adult Transgender Women with or without HIV*

The project will develop and pilot test a recruitment and data collection protocol to assemble a cohort and investigate hormone use among transwomen in Mumbai

HEALTH

The Humsafar Trust runs three Targeted Interventions (TIs) supported by NACO-MDACS with an aim to reduce HIV/STI prevalence among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and TG/ Hijra communities. This projects aim at promoting safer sex practices among MSM and TG groups, improve access to government health care facilities and create enabling environment for MSM/TGs on selected sites of Mumbai district. The focus is on reducing the transmission rates and promoting access to health care and reducing stigma against MSM and TG communities. A total of 7500 MSM and TG clients have been reached out through these TIs. All three TI projects have initiated virtual outreach to tap into the social and sexual networks of clients using mobile based apps and other online platforms.

ADVOCACY

Since its modest beginning in 2008, the Advocacy wing at The Humsafar Trusts has been engaging with the community at various levels. At present, the wing functions at five levels which include sensitization, community mobilisation, media relations, crisis management and policy change.



Sensitization

Creating social spaces LGBTQ sensitive and inclusive is the key objective of HST's Sensitization. As part of this initiative, the advocacy team engages with several stakeholders such as the police, the bureaucrats, policy makers, the press and the corporate sector. To enhance its outreach, the team has implemented innovative methods like organising workshops, film screenings, street plays and demonstrations.

Ek Madhav Baug

Ek Madhav Baug written by Late Chetan Datar is one of the pioneering plays written on homosexuality and acceptance of LGBTQ community. The poignant play tells the story of a 21-year old young boy coming to terms with his sexuality. The play is seen from the viewpoint of the mother of the young man who is reading his personal diary in which he speaks to his mother about growing up, conflicts faced in coming to terms with his sexuality. The play brings out the emotions of the mother and son and leave no soul untouched through its intensity and heartfelt content. Ek Madhavbaug is performed in Hindi and English by Mona Ambegaonkar who has numerous theatre, film and ad campaigns to her credit. We have performed over 30 corporate spaces in India. The play is performed in two formats- play reading and full stage play performance. The play reading format was developed to increase the outreach of the play. The reading format is logistically quite minimalistic- it requires only a simple table and chair in terms of set-up. The full stage format has props, lights and sound which requires some set up and technicians. This format is usually for auditoriums and theatres.

Films

HST has been producing films as a tool for advocacy and entertainment. Films are one of the main ways in which HST has been creating interesting content for allies and communities. Films like 68 Pages, Bolo, Aa Muskura, MTV Staying Alive Short films are some of the resources available.

Workshops

We conduct interactive session tackling the basics of inclusion of sexual and gender minorities. This workshop will help give you a real-world view of what an TG inclusive space should look like. It also goes into detail about the LGBT community, the issues both legal and social and explains through films and activities how stigma and discrimination play a role in workplace dynamics.

Community Mobilization

The Community Mobilisation drive aims at creating leadership among community members through active intervention and outreach. This is carried out in association of various support groups namely Yaariyan – a youth initiative of the HST, Umang – an LBT support group of HST, Sanjeevani –a support group for MSM and Transgender individuals who are living with HIV and Queer Azaadi Mumbai (QAM) – a collective of LGBTQ organisations that together organise Mumbai Pride March. Besides, HST takes active participation in community events and the annual pride march held in various cities across the country.

TRANScend

This is an initiative by The Humsafar Trust and supported by Publicis Sapient, aims to enhance socio-economic inclusion of transgender people in India. It works towards enhancing inclusivity and acceptance of transgender communities in India through research and intervention into the socioeconomic and educational needs of community, skills and capacity building, sensitization of stakeholders (corporates and educational institutions), and providing the pathways to accessing services like Aadhaar cards, PAN, cards, changes of gazette details (name, gender, etc), and bank accounts.

This has been a rollercoaster of a year and we are looking forward to another one with the same zeal and enthusiasm.

OUR RECENT INITIATIVES



Trans Tuesday – Haldi Kumkum (HST, Vakola)

Queers for Climate Action



Workshops on Climate Sustainability

Capacity building Workshops for LGBTQIA+ persons, to understand, engage and facilitate positive Climate Action on local, national and international levels.

January '22 to March '22

One session per month

- Fill the Google form to participate - bit.ly/33xwg8g
- Deadline to fill the form: 22nd January '22
- For any queries or clarifications, please contact Priyasha Banerjee on +91 8287783889

Presented by:



SPROUTS



FRIDAY WORKSHOP

Reviving the ritual of Gup-Shup
Dance, Health-counselling in
a Safe Space

Date: Friday 25th Feb 2022
Time: 2:00 pm onwards

Venue: 75 Backside, First floor,
Sant Nagar, next to MCD Primary School,
East of Kailash, New Delhi

Contact: +919888857974 Mannu
+917701979874 Kusum

FREE CAREER COUNSELLING

Opportunity for self-identified
transgender persons to get
free career counselling.

Follow the link and fill
the google form to get on the list

bit.ly/3HUu7CW



Form open till 31st March, 2022

