



Annual Report

2023 - 2024



A Queer Health & Wellbeing Centre

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Our Collaborations

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CSR Partners



Our Centres

MUMBAI

The Humsafar Trust, 3rd Floor,
Manthan Plaza,
Nehru Road, Vakola, Santacruz
(East), Mumbai – 400 055
Maharashtra

☎ **+91 9892940966**

Monday to Friday 10.00 am to 8.30
pm

DELHI

The Humsafar Trust. 1st
Floor, Sant Nagar, #75 Back
Side,
Next to MCD Primary School.
East of Kailash,
New Delhi - 110065

☎ **011 - 46016699**

Monday to Friday 10.00 am to
6.30 pm

GUWAHATI

The Humsafar Trust
#47 Ground Floor,
NKB Building, Bora Service,
Near Hrishaan Suzuki,
Guwahati 781007, Assam

☎ **+91 36135 03326**

Monday to Friday 10.00 am to
7.00 pm

Sahyog LGBTQ+ Integrated Clinics

MUMBAI

3rd Floor, Manthan Plaza,
Nehru Road, Vakola,
Santacruz (East),
Mumbai – 400 055
Maharashtra

+91 9892940966

Mon to Fri: 10.00 am to 8.30
pm

NAGPUR

136, M Roy Villa,
Behind VIMS Hospital,
Near Ambika Bakery,
Mohan Nagar, Nagpur-440001
Maharashtra

+919823049986

Mon to Fri: 12.00 pm to 8.00 pm

GUWAHATI

#47 Ground Floor, NKB
Building, Bora Service,
Near Hrishaan Suzuki,
Guwahati 781007, Assam

+91 36135 03326

Mon to Fri: 10.00 am to 7.00
pm

DELHI

B51,B Block
Sitapuri Extension Part 1
Near Nehru Academy School
New Delhi 110045

+91 9891966088

Mon to Fri: 10.00 am to 6.00 pm

GANGTOK

Rai Cottage Complex,
Church Road,
Opposite Canara Bank,
Arithang, Gangtok,
Sikkim - 737101.

+91 9593044040

Mon to Fri: 10.00 am to 6.30 pm

AMRITSAR

House: 10, Phase-1,
Guru Gobind Singh Nagar,
Majitha Road,
Amritsar -143001

+91 8360165626

Mon to Sat: 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Letter from the CEO

The year 2023–2024 marked a return to normalcy following the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a year of new beginnings, bringing a mix of fresh challenges and renewed achievements to our communities. Like the rest of the world, we continued to adapt to a hybrid model of functioning, blending online and offline modes of engagement. However, one of our key learnings has been clear: organisations that work at the grassroots level cannot operate solely in the digital realm. Community-based work is fundamentally rooted in direct, physical engagement. The human connection remains irreplaceable.

We are proud to present The Humsafar Trust (HST) Annual Report 2023–2024, detailing the wide range of projects and activities implemented over the year.

Our Advocacy Unit prepared a petition to the Supreme Court in support of LGBTQ+ rights. The hearing in early 2023 held promise, but the verdict delivered on October 17, 2023, did not favour our communities.

The Supreme Court referred the matter to the legislature—a setback for many. Despite this, our resolve remains unshaken. We recognise that the journey toward equality is far from complete, and we remain committed to exploring new strategies that promote dignity, justice, and equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community in India.

Health interventions remained at the heart of our work. Our Targeted Interventions promoting safer sex practices, free HIV testing, and access to ART treatment continued across six HST clinics nationwide. Additionally, three STI clinics in Mumbai further expanded our reach. We also piloted the integration of online and offline services across these six clinics, connecting them with our flagship online intervention, NETREACH, to create a holistic healthcare model.

At Humsafar, we remain steadfast in our mission to uphold the health and rights of LGBTQ+ communities across India.

As we move forward, it's evident that online health initiatives will be essential for reaching future generations. NETREACH successfully completed its first three-year phase, culminating in a national dissemination event that showcased its impact. The project has now been extended for an additional 18 months, and we remain committed to securing its sustainability through diverse funding mechanisms.

This year, HST became a Sub-Recipient (SR) in the CR-19 and KP grants of the Global Fund (GFATM), under SAATHII and PLAN India as our Principal Recipients. These one-year grants focus on delivering social entitlements and building community capacities. Together, they support 38 Sub-Sub Recipients (SSRs)—young, emerging Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)—to strengthen the LGBTQ+ movement from within. Our Research Unit also grew in strength, conducting new studies, hosting international visitors, and giving our teams valuable exposure on a global stage. As HST embraces hybrid models across all verticals, we see the future of research moving toward evaluating the real-world impact of both online and offline interventions. There's also a growing need to focus on research that centers the voices, experiences, and needs of transgender communities—a key priority in the year ahead.

At Humsafar, we remain steadfast in our mission to uphold the health and rights of LGBTQ+ communities across India. We are expanding our holistic, inclusive approach and will continue walking the path toward justice, equality, and wellbeing for all.



VIVEK RAJ ANAND

CEO - The Humsafar Trust

About Us

The Humsafar Trust (HST) was founded in April 1994 to reach out to LGBTQ+ communities in the Mumbai Metro and surrounding areas. After sustained networking and advocacy with the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, it became the first openly LGBTQ+ Community Based Organization to operate from 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 center. What started primarily as a support system for sexual minority members and for gay men and their health challenges related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the organization eventually became a pioneering entity dedicated to fostering the health and human rights of the community. Learn more at www.humsafar.org.

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Theory Of Change

By working for the human rights and health of LGBTQ+ individuals and providing holistic services, we pave the way for their acceptance, equality, and a healthier community.

OUR CORE VALUES

Equality

We treat all human beings as equal.

Respect

We respect values, cultural diversity and opinions, parameters of equality, dignity of people, human rights, and child rights.

Empathy

We empathise with the issues of marginalized communities through lived experiences, accounts, and ground level realities.

Inclusivity

We endorse inclusion of people on all the parameters of equality in decisions, processes, consultations, and events.

Integrity

We emphasise adherence to core values, vision, and mission.

Accountability

We are accountable to the community, funders, and stakeholders.

Transparency

We believe and engage in transparency.

Our Statement Of Commitments

A Rainbow Pledge

We, the Humsafar Trust, hereby solemnly affirm our country and the laws of the land. We pledge to uphold the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India, which guarantees fundamental rights and freedom to all citizens irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, or identity. We recognise that the union of India's laws and regulations serve as the bedrock of our society, providing a framework that ensures justice, equality, and inclusivity to every individual. In our pursuit of advocating for the rights of the LGBTQ+, we affirm our dedication to work with the legal framework of the nation. We understand that positive change is best achieved through lawful means, respectful dialogue, and collaboration. We are committed to contributing positively to the social fabric of the country by fostering understanding, awareness and acceptance of diverse identities and orientations.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Humsafar Trust is committed to upholding the UN's vision of enhancing lives by fostering social progress and sustainable development. In pursuit of this shared objective of creating a fair and inclusive future, we harness the strength of

The Humsafar Trust's project and leverage our influence within our capacity to champion initiatives that are in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Children's Rights

The Humsafar Trust supports and respects the rights of a child as stated in the convention on the rights of the child which was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by United Nations, General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49. HST supports measures as enunciated in India's Child Protection Act, 2012, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO), and Section 67B of The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, which, specifically provides protection to children in the electronic medium. Our commitment to children's rights is translated into our organizational policies.

Executive Team

Suhail Abbasi

Co-founder & Chairperson

Vivek Raj Anand

*Chief Executive Officer
& Board Member*

Murugesan Sivasubramanian

Chief Operating Officer

Board Members

Dr. Subhojit Sen

Pradipta Ray

Amitabh Saksena

Vertical Heads

Jayakant Singh

*Director - Strategic Information
& Research (STIR)*

Sandeep Mane

Director - Health

Hemant Thakkar

Associate Director - Finance

Ramesh Jagtap

Finance Manager

Sudhanshu Latad

Advocacy Manager

Sumita Mehta

Head – HR

Archana Shetty

Communication Manager

Mukesh Surve

IT Manager

Creating Impact

The Humsafar Trust is committed to its vision and the LGBTQ+ communities and towards that end, it aims to build one Integrated Organization that will serve the communities in the coming year with vigour and passion. HST has competent and qualified teams that include, the Chair, CEO, Technical Directors for Health, Advocacy, Capacity Building, Research, Finance, Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Communications, and an excellent team of outreach workers and peer educators. This team of 124 individuals working on over 20 projects spread Pan-India have experience and expertise to deliver high quality projects and strive for excellence in service delivery to its communities.

GOVERNANCE

Governance structure of The Humsafar Trust (HST), designed by the board and senior management to direct organisational strategy, operations, finance, and compliances, is rooted in its principles of transparency, responsibility, and accountability. HST has institutionalised its various capacities by developing a Human Resources Policy, Finance, Procurement, Risk and Fraud Policy, Child Protection Policy, Organisational M&E framework, Strategic Plan, Media Policy, and Resource Mobilisation Strategy. HST has developed and adopted a gender neutral Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) policy and guidelines. It has developed two manuals for corporates and educational institutions for inclusion of Transgender communities and various SOPs to strengthen its systems. The organisation has also developed a manual to support counsellors to work with parents of LGBTQ+ communities.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR VERTICALS

The Health vertical at The Humsafar Trust places significant emphasis on sexual and mental health, acknowledging its vital importance within the LGBTQ+ community.

It offers an array of sexual health services that encompass screenings for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV testing, HIV treatment, counselling, guidance on safer sex practices in the context of PrEP, PEP, and U=U (Undetectable = Untransmissible) for the positive communities.

ADVOCACY – The Advocacy vertical at The Humsafar Trust is committed to driving social change, influencing policies, and creating a more inclusive society via advocacy. We create an enabling environment for our community's rights.

CAPACITY BUILDING –

In 2003, HST felt that it was important to build capacities of CommunityBased Organisations and thus the Integrated Network for Sexual Minorities (INFOSEM) was convened by HST. NETREACH is a groundbreaking virtual project initiated in India in 2021, with support from the Global Fund to Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM). The project aims to reach the 'missing millions' and connect them to HIV-related services across the country as well as strengthen the community systems in the country and continue its mandate of building capacities of CBOs to respond to the challenge of HIV.

RESEARCH – The Humsafar Trust's Research unit contributes to evidence planning and implementation of our programs and policies. We have a team of trained and qualified community-based researchers. The Humsafar Trust has a DHR (GOI) and NIH-FWA registered Institutional Ethics Committee.

FINANCE – Finance vertical also plays a pivotal role in financial planning and forecasting. It supports closely works with other departments within the organisation to provide financial guidance and fiscal management support.

Impact Across Our Verticals

Health

Targeted Interventions

Under the National AIDS Control Program, Targeted Intervention (TI) is a focused prevention program offering comprehensive prevention services to Transgender/Hijra and Men Having Sex with Men (MSM). Supported by the Mumbai District AIDS Control Society (MDACS) under the national program, HST continued outreach services to MSM and TG/Hijra communities in Mumbai through its 3 Targeted Intervention projects: Dostaana, Yaarana, and Aarambh. Through these projects, we have served 809 transgender individuals and 2,206 MSM individuals in 2023-24, thereby meeting our set targets. Condom distribution is an integral part of the prevention strategy. In line with this we distributed 431,270 5,86,999 condoms among our clients.

Our TI clinics offered services like Regular Medical Check-ups (RMC), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) treatment and pre- and post-counselling through the year 2023-2024. A total of 21,789 clients availed these services; of these 73.53% of the clients

volunteered to undergo Human Immuno- deficiency Virus (HIV) test and another 37.31% underwent Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) testing. The HIV prevalence was reported at 0.93% and 89% of clients newly tested positive for HIV were linked to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). It was also observed that index testing increased by approximately 25% in the reporting year. Out of the total 4502 VDRL tests conducted, the Syphilis positivity was reported to be as 1.27% and a total of 84.2% of new clients detected VDRL positive were put on treatment.

Link ART Centre

The Humsafar Trust was supported by MDACS in establishing a link ART centre in March 2019. According to the national program guidelines, persons living with HIV (PLHIV) who are stable with >350 CD4 count, virally suppressed and are 90 percent adhering to their ART medication, can receive their medicine from the HST Link ART Center. In the year 2023-24, a total of 113 clients accessed services from the Link ART Centre of the Humsafar Trust resulting in a 17.71% increase in ART linkage.

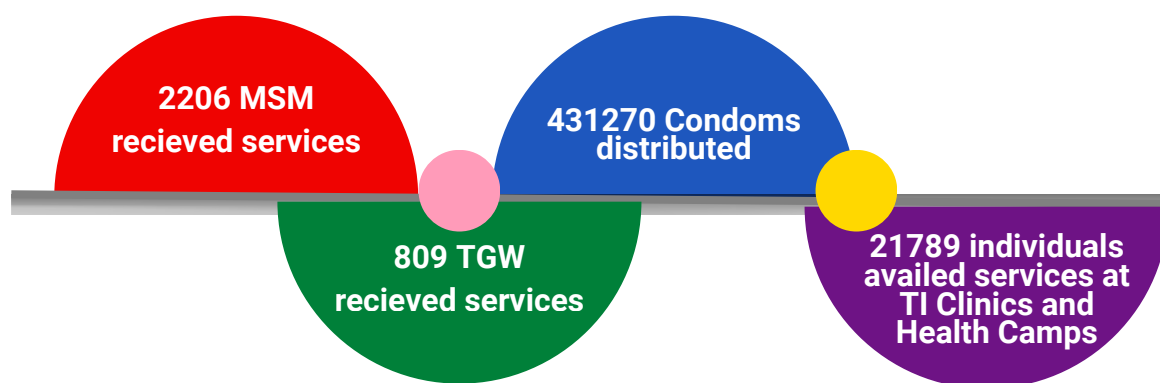


Chart 1: Sahyog Clinics Services Utilised



Inauguration of the Amristar Sahyog Clinic by ASACS



Khojagiri and Dandiya Event



Annual Training and Capacity Building Workshop



WORLD AIDS DAY 2023



Annual Health Camp at Gangtok

PLHIV Support

The Sanjeevani group of The Humsafar Trust provides support to the PLHIV community in terms of counselling, social and peer support, nutrition and health via meetings, health camp and nutrition distribution. In the reporting year, all the activities were accomplished successfully. Link ART Center and Sanjeevani support group work in coordination. The Sanjeevani group conducted 12 support group meetings in the last year and distributed nutrition support to 114 individuals. Almost 100% of the linked clients were supported with Health Camp. Each member of the Sanjeevani support group has their viral load fully suppressed. Adherence counselling is also provided to all members at every meeting. HIV-Syphilis co-infection was found in 60 individuals and everyone was given benzathine penicillin once a week in a month. The group was also supported with 30 CD-4 testing and 122 Viral Load testing out of which 100% had status as target-not-detected.

LGBTQ+ Integrated Clinics - SAHYOG

Sahyog clinics are an inclusive initiative that aims to address the specific needs of the gay, bisexual, transgender, and hijra communities, as well as people living with HIV and their families.

Its primary objective is to increase access to HIV testing services, ensuring that these vital resources are readily available to LGBTQ+ individuals in need. Moreover, the services offered by the SAHYOG clinics are wide ranging such as counselling, testing, referral, and linkage pertaining to HIV/STI, mental health counselling, specialised consultations, regular medical check-ups, health camps, socio-legal support, and condom distribution. The SAHYOG Clinics are in Amritsar, Delhi, Gangtok, Guwahati, Mumbai, and Nagpur. SAHYOG clinics are particularly proud of their mega annual Health Check-up camps which were organised in different batches for PLHIV and non-PLHIV LGBTQ+ individuals in March 2024. This was done in collaboration with corporate diagnostic chains and doctors at each of the four SAHYOG Clinics. The camps had the presence of experienced and specialist doctors, laboratory technicians & phlebotomists. Routine check-ups of PLHIV and LGBTQ+ clients were conducted along with with screening for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). Some of the other tests conducted were CBC, ESR, Liver and Kidney Function Tests (LFT/KFT), Lipid Profile, HbsAg, Uric Acid, Calcium,Urine routine tests, Vitamin Profiling.

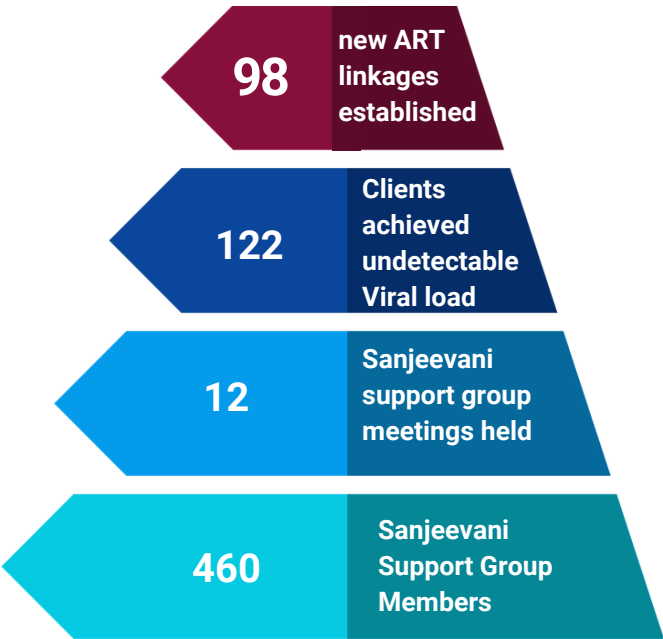


CHART 2: ACHIEVEMENTS OF Mumbai LINK ART CENTER

In this camp screening for Thyroidism, HCV and HBV screening and vaccination, cancer screening, oral and eye health screening, screening for HIV and STI, were also conducted. In this mega camp, clients were provided with consultation with specialist doctors like endocrinologists, gynaecologists, dermatologists, and surgeons. Overall, the clients across the four clinics utilised multiple services as indicated in **Chart: 4**.

HIV & STI Testing among New Clients:

A total of 93.64 of the 3428 newly registered LGBTQ+ clients at the clinics were tested for HIV & STI (Total HIV tests: 3025 and STI tests: 3210). A total of 128 individuals were screened and found to be HIV positive. 85.93% of those tested positive were linked to ART treatment centers. Among STIs (including syphilis) 361 individuals were found to be positive and 95.5% of those tested positive were treated.



CHART 3: SERVICES OF SAHYOG CLINICS

Services And Reach

Overall Reach: A total of 9362 individuals [People living with HIV (PLHIV) and identifying as LGBTQ+ accessed clinical services from the 6 integrated clinics in India till March 2024.

Non-communicable Diseases: A total of 3,071 clients above 30 years of age were screened for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) and given appropriate referrals if diagnosed with any NCD.

Condom Distribution: A total of 59,526 condoms along with 47,490 lubricating agents were distributed and all the clients were counselled on safe sex practices.

The Guwahati clinic reported the highest screened positive cases with HIV prevalence of 26.47%, Syphilis prevalence of 38.88%, and Hepatitis B prevalence of 6.81%.

Nutrition Support: A total of 1524 PLHIV and LGBTQ+ clients availed nutrition support services.

Socio-legal Aid: A total of 59 LGBTQ+ Clients availed socio-legal assistance. in India (High Commission in India) organized a two-day leadership training workshop in Mumbai for 25 young LGBTQ+ and Female Sex Workers (FSW) community leaders' as part of various initiatives and organizations across India that focused on nurturing leadership from a sustainability approach of their respective organizations. This workshop covered management, technical and financial skills, such as understanding their needs and scope of improvement, proposal & grant writing, budget making, developing implementation and visibility strategies, communications and linkage skills, and a brief social media training.

Innovative Health care services: HIV/STI screening camps were conducted to identify individuals with high-risk sexual behaviour in remote areas where communities face challenges in accessing these services . Furthermore, need based reimbursements for Hormone replacement therapy was provide to individuals undergoing gender reassignment process.

Initiate party-based and spa-based interventions in Mumbai and Delhi to reach hard-to-reach populations by providing HIV prevention and treatment-related services.

Mental Health Services: A total of 1,111 LGBTQ+ clients availed counselling services and 573 were given professional mental health support. These included cases of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), suicidal ideations, and insomnia.



CHART 4: ACHIEVEMENTS OF SAHYOG CLINICS

Advocacy

At the heart of The Humsafar Trust's mission is its commitment to advancing health, well-being, and inclusivity for LGBTQ+ communities across India. Our Advocacy team leads this effort, actively engaging a wide network of stakeholders, including lawyers, healthcare providers, educators, law enforcement, corporate allies, policymakers, and families. Together, we're working to foster understanding, equity, and support for LGBTQ+ individuals, paving the way for a more inclusive society. Currently, the advocacy vertical operates across three key domains:

1. Legal Inclusion - Securing Fair Protections and Support:

In 2023-24, our work in legal inclusion aimed to secure protections and equitable treatment for LGBTQ+ communities ensuring the enforcement of NALSA vs UOI Judgement and smooth implementation of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. We provided resources, legal aid, and collaborated closely with legal authorities to promote policies that tackle discrimination, harassment, and other injustices across various institutions. We also conducted training sessions for law enforcement and judiciary members to enhance their understanding of LGBTQ+ well-being within the legal framework. The advocacy vertical also engaged in offering legal counselling to LGBTQ+ individuals in cases of harassment, extortion, home confinement, and mistreatment at their workplaces without any repercussions in the form of comprehensive crisis support.



TG ID card camp

Initiative: TRANScend

1. TRANScend - focused on enhancing inclusivity and acceptance through research and intervention into the socio-economic and educational needs of the community, skills and capacity building, sensitisation of stakeholders, and providing pathways to access services like TG Card and other legal support.

Activities under TRANScend in FY. 2023-24:

- Providing support in Transgender Identity Card process via TG card camps.
- Targeted advocacy meetings with legal authorities.
- Advocacy and sensitisation sessions with law enforcement agencies and police personnel.
- Sensitisation sessions with hospitals and medical institutions.



Outcomes:

- Through 10 Transgender card camps held in Maharashtra, Delhi, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, a total of 229 Transgender ID cards were applied.
- 2 targeted advocacy meetings were conducted with legal authorities in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, reaching 110 emerging advocates and DLSA members to discuss legal issues affecting transgender individuals and the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ communities.
- 4 sensitisation sessions on SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics) and transgender awareness were conducted for 341 police personnel across police academies and law enforcement agencies in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.
- A total of 6 sensitisation sessions on SOGIESC and transgender awareness were held for 279 medical professionals and students across hospitals and medical colleges in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan.



Medical Sensitisation Workshop



Police Sensitisation Workshop

2. Economic Inclusion - Building Pathways to

Financial Security and Growth: Economic inclusion is essential for empowering LGBTQ+ individuals with greater independence and self-worth. Under our diverse initiatives, we engaged with various workplaces to drive organisational diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, creating more welcoming and affirming workplaces. Our team also provides skill-building workshops, organises inclusive job fairs, offers resume support, and extends seed funding to emerging LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and businesses. Through mentorship programs and professional development initiatives, we aim to open pathways to meaningful careers, reduce economic barriers, and promote lasting financial resilience within the LGBTQ+ community.

Initiatives: SAKSHAM, Dolphin Tank, Bhavishya

1. SAKSHAM - aimed to establish equitable and inclusive workplaces for LGBTQ+ communities through a series of targeted interventions. SAKSHAM conducted sensitization sessions across various organizations, raising awareness among employers and employees to cultivate respectful and unbiased work environments. Additionally, SAKSHAM worked with these organizations to review and revise workplace policies, ensuring they were explicitly queer-affirmative and gender-neutral. To empower LGBTQ+ individuals, SAKSHAM provided upskilling initiatives, resume-building workshops, and professional preparation resources. The annual job fair was a cornerstone event, creating a vital platform for inclusive employers and LGBTQ+ professionals to connect, network, and facilitate recruitment, advancing employment equity in meaningful ways across sectors

Activities under SAKSHAM in FY. 2023-24:

- Sensitisation workshops with employers
- Targeted Recruitment drive (SAKSHAM Job Fair)
- Maintaining database of resumes and profiles of LGBTQ+ Communities.



SAKSHAM Job Fair 2023

Outcomes:

- 28 workplace sensitisation sessions were conducted with employers, reaching an audience of 1,500 employees through presentations, both virtual and offline, as well as activities, film screenings, and Ek Madhav Baug to foster awareness and inclusivity within corporate settings.
- The Saksham Job Fair brought together 25 inclusive workplaces and connected with 950 LGBTQ+ community members, facilitating targeted recruitment efforts and paving the way for future employment opportunities. Additionally, a structured database comprising 147 resumes of LGBTQ+ individuals was developed, enhancing their readiness and accessibility for roles within inclusive organizations.

2. Dolphin Tank - focused on fostering entrepreneurship within LGBTQ+ communities. Throughout the year, industry experts led workshops and mentorship sessions, equipping emerging LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs with crucial business skills in strategic planning, financial management, and sustainable business development. The initiative also provided seed funding opportunities, enabling participants to advance their ventures.

Activities under Dolphin Tank in FY. 2023-24:

- Supporting LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurs and Businesses
Dolphin Tank Immersion Programme

Outcomes:

- 14 LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs received seed funding, empowering them to advance their business ventures and overcome initial financial barriers.
- These entrepreneurs participated in the Dolphin Tank Immersion Programme, gaining hands-on experience, mentorship, and essential skills to enhance their business strategies and networking capabilities.



Dolphin Tank 2024

3. Bhavishya: Fostering Inclusivity in Educational Institutions - worked to build inclusive, affirming spaces within educational institutions. This pioneering outreach program aimed to support LGBTQ+ students, educators, and institutions in creating a positive environment for diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

Activities under Bhavishya in FY. 2023-24:

- ▶ Provided financial scholarship support for upskilling and education.
- ▶ Conducted sensitisation sessions in educational institutions for students, teachers, and administrators.
- Offered queer-affirmative career counselling for LGBTQ+ youth.

Outcomes

- ▶ Scholarships awarded to 141 cis-queer and 43 trans-queer students from 24 states; 140 pursued formal education, while 44 undertook vocational courses.
- ▶ Sensitisation sessions held in 41 institutions, reaching 1,508 students and 103 teachers/administrators.
- ▶ Career counselling support offered to 17 LGBTQ+ youth.



Bhavishya Workshop

3. Social Empowerment - Fostering Inclusive and Supportive Community Spaces

Under the Social Inclusion domain, we drive initiatives that foster safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals in diverse societal settings. Each initiative engages with unique aspects of community inclusion and outreach, advancing equity and visibility for LGBTQ+ communities across India.

Initiatives: CONNECT Partners, EQueL, LIKHO, Prabal, Studio DHANAK, Yaariyan, Umang

1. CONNECT Partners - focused on empowering semi-urban and rural LGBTQ+ communities across India by partnering with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to foster inclusion and equality. This initiative enabled network-building and capacity development for more impactful advocacy and health support.

Activities under CONNECT Partners in FY. 2023-24:

- Partnered with CBOs nationwide to conduct social inclusion activities and events.

Outcomes

- Partnered with 60 CBOs, conducting 122 events, including 07 pride marches across 23 states, reaching 25,013 individuals.

2. EQueL: Emerging Queer Leaders - aimed to build leadership capacity among young LGBTQ+ leaders, particularly in non-urban areas, strengthening their skills for local advocacy and movement-building.

Activities under EQueL in FY. 2023-24:

- Capacity-building workshops for emerging LGBTQ+ leaders in non-urban India.
- Youth-focused workshops on leadership and queer advocacy.
- Trans-focused workshops on psychosocial needs for trans communities.

Outcomes

- Trained 20 cis-queer and 37 trans-queer leaders from 19 states through 03 workshops.



EQueL Workshop

3. Likho - The Likho Initiative trained aspiring citizen journalists and sensitized media to ensure accurate, sensitive coverage of LGBTQ+ issues. This program helped build a network of LGBTQ+ storytellers and honoured media excellence in queer-affirmative content creation.

Activities under Likho in FY. 2023-24:

- Likho Journalism Workshop: Trained aspiring citizen journalists on LGBTQ+ reporting.
- Likho Summit: Conducted media sensitisation workshops for inclusive LGBTQ+ coverage.
- Likho Awards: Recognised excellence in queer-affirmative media.

Outcomes

- Engaged with 07 influencers for queer-inclusive social media content.
- 11 awards presented for impactful queer-affirmative media content, including films and podcasts. 20 queer writers trained, resulting in 10 published articles on likhowithpride.com.

Likho Awards





Prabhal Meeting

4. Prabhal Initiative: Empowering Rainbow Parents

Prabhal supports parents of LGBTQ+ children, organizing events that celebrate their journeys of acceptance and building their capacity to foster an inclusive society.

Activities

- Events and meetups recognizing the experiences of parents of LGBTQ+ children.
- Capacity-building workshops for Rainbow Parents to support other parents.

Outcomes

- Organized 03 parent-focused events, including potlucks and acceptance meets, reaching 80 parents.
- Conducted 02 capacity-building workshops (1 virtual, 1 offline) for 25 parents.

5. Studio Dhanak

Studio Dhanak brings together LGBTQ+ scriptwriters, filmmakers, and allies to create and promote queer-affirmative media content. This initiative emphasizes authentic storytelling to inspire social change and increase LGBTQ+ representation in media.

Activities

- Produced short films highlighting queer issues.
- Participated in national and international film festivals.

Outcomes

- Created 05 short films.
- Participated in 45 film festivals (08 in India, 37 international).
- Received 10 nominations and 02 awards for outstanding queer-affirmative content.

6. Yaariyan

Yaariyan is a youth-focused initiative led by young LGBTQ+ volunteers, serving as an online forum and organizing offline events to promote visibility, health, and social support for LGBTQ+ youth. It empowers volunteers through leadership opportunities and skill-building.

Activities

- Organised youth-led events and activities focused on queer visibility and inclusive spaces.
- Provided capacity-building opportunities for volunteers, fostering leadership and other global 21st-century skills.

Outcomes

- Conducted 07 youth-led activities.
- Engaged 79 youth volunteers, reaching 4,990 community members.

7. Umang

Umang is a support group providing safe and affirming spaces for lesbian, bisexual, trans (LBT+), and queer AFAB individuals. It organizes events and activities to foster community engagement and visibility while empowering community members through skill-building opportunities.

Activities

- Organised community-focused events and activities to enhance visibility and foster inclusivity.
- Empowered volunteers through leadership development and capacity-building workshops.

Outcomes

- Conducted 01 youth-led activity under Umang.
- Engaged 15 community volunteers, reaching 100 community members



UMANG meet during Qgames



Yaariyan led Pink fête - Gulabi Mela

Research

Ongoing Projects:

1. CHALO 2.0: a virtual intervention for promoting HIV testing among MSM: The major goals of this project are 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 randomised control trial. The study is funded by National Institutes of Mental Health and is being implemented in Mumbai in partnership with Einstein School of Medicine (Bronx, New York) with Dr. Viraj Patel as the US- Principal investigator.

2. Chetana Peer Navigator Study: Facilitating Engagement in care: The study aims to engage community stakeholders in the adaptation of the Chetana-PN wellness adherence intervention for use with Indian MSM and TGW who are living with HIV and to assess in an RCT the acceptability and feasibility of the theoretically-guided, adapted intervention and obtain preliminary effect size estimations for the impact of the intervention on (1) appointment keeping, (2) ART adherence and (3) viral suppression, among MSM and TGW who are newly or insufficiently engaged in HIV care. The study is funded by National Institutes of Mental Health and is being implemented in Mumbai in partnership with UCSF (San Francisco, California) with Dr. Maria Ekstrand and Dr. Wayne Steward as the US- Principal investigators.

3. Project Ekatra: Co-occurring factors that heighten transgender women's vulnerability to suboptimal ART adherence in India. The study aims to understand patterns and high-risk groups underlying suboptimal ART adherence and unsuppressed viral load related to substance use, stigma, and other syndemic factors among transgender women (TGW) in Mumbai and New Delhi, India, and to assess potential buffering mechanisms for future intervention targets. The study is funded by National Institutes of Health and is being implemented in Mumbai and Delhi in partnership with Brown University (Providence, Rhode Island) with Dr. William Lodge as the US- Principal investigator.

4. Project 'CARET: Consortium for Advancing LGBTQ+ Health Research, Policy Engagement & Training. The project aims to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen capacities, and inform policies for health and wellbeing on LGBTQ+ communities, this project has outlined the following goals in their duration. The project is funded by DBT India Alliance and is being implemented in Mumbai, Chennai and Chandigarh with Dr. Venkatesan Chakrapani as the Senior Research Fellow.

5. MFARR: LGBTQ health and rights in India. The project 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. The project is funded by SSHRC in partnership with C-SHaRP (Chennai) and is being implemented in Mumbai and Chennai with Dr. Venkatesan Chakrapani as the India Principal Investigator and Dr. Peter Newman as the International Principal Investigator.

Project CHALO



6. ELICIT: Experiential learning for HIV awareness–acceptability: The project aims to generate evidence for Implementation and evaluation of experiential and gamified interventions towards strengthening vaccine science literacy and motivation across Africa and India via 1) evaluation of physical toolkit; 2) evaluation of digital toolkit; and 3) comparative evaluation of physical and digital toolkit. The study is funded by USAID and is in partnership with IAVI India and AURUM (South Africa).

7. DIGITaPP: Differential learning for HIV awareness–acceptability: The project aims to on identifying outreach channels and platforms for engaging unreached most-at-risk communities in impactful and cost-effective ways to strengthen their stake and engagement in research on new HIV prevention techniques. The study is funded by USAID and is in partnership with IAVI India.

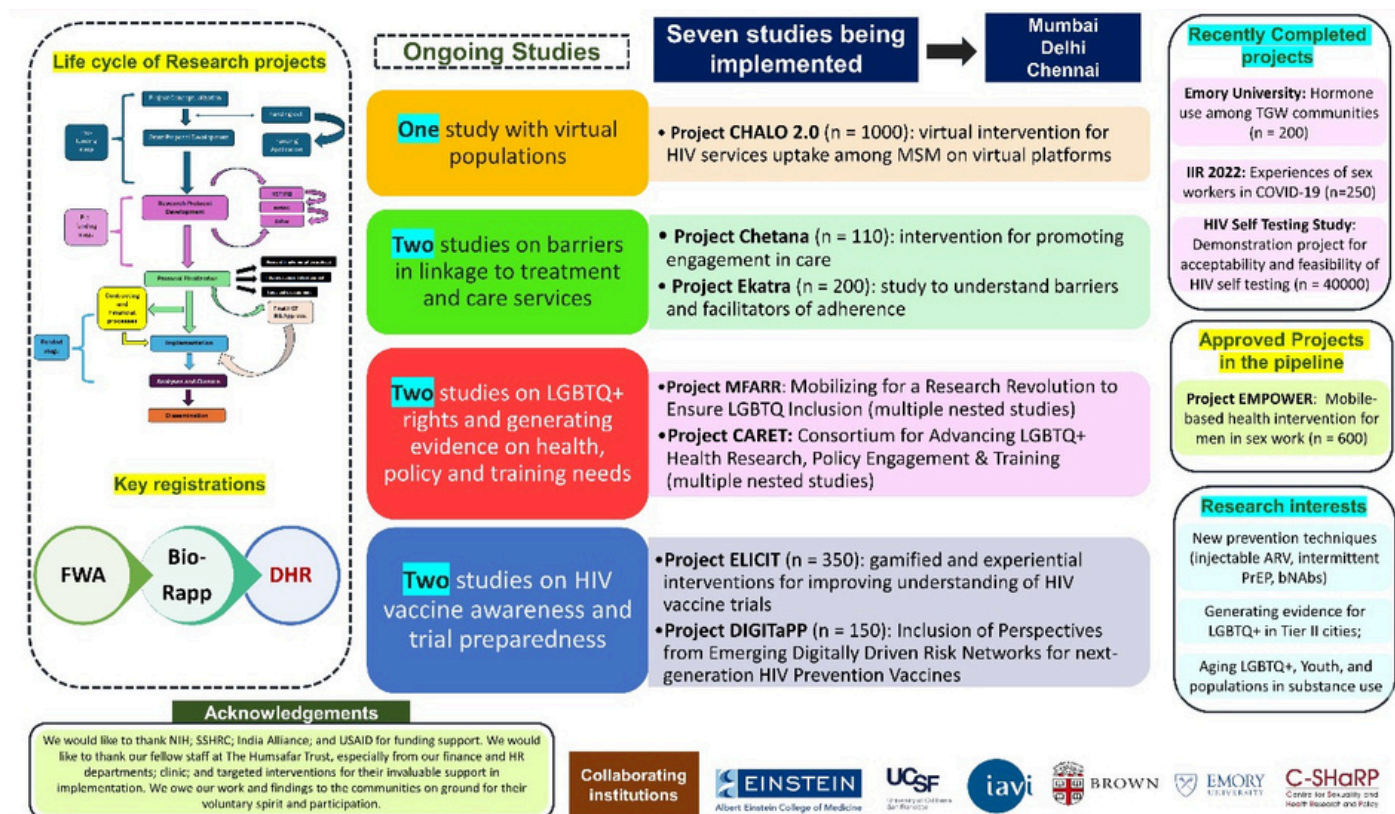
Completed Projects:

1. IIR: Sexual networks, HIV/STI prevalence and access to services amid COVID-19 pandemic for key populations in India and Kenya.

The study aimed to initiate and strengthen south–south collaborations and address key contextual issues via capacity building and community inclusion with research on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on accessing HIV/STI services. The study is funded by USAID and IAVI India with support from NACO and ICMR. It was implemented in two phases in Mumbai, Delhi and Thane, and involved over 200 men- and women in sex work as study participants. Our African partner on the study was KEMRI institute (Kenya). The study ended in December 2023.

2. Health Status and Hormone Use among Adult Transgender Women with or without HIV: The project pilot tested a recruitment and data collection protocol to assemble a cohort and investigate hormone use among transwomen in Mumbai. The study recruited 200 transgender women in Mumbai and investigated their use of gender-reaffirmation approaches. The project was funded by National Institutes of Health in partnership with Emory University with Dr. Michael Goodman as the US Principal Investigator. The study ended in December 2023.

Research At A Glance



Noteworthy events:

- UCSF visit to The Humsafar Trust: Dr. Maria Ekstrand and Dr. Wayne Steward visited The Humsafar Trust on March 8-12, 2024, for a project update as well as a visit to Sion Hospital – one of the recruitment sites on project Chetana.
- AURUM visit to The Humsafar Trust: The study team from AURUM visited The Humsafar Trust on February 26, 2024, for an exchange- and cross-learning visit.
- ELICIT Training with IAVI and AURUM: The research team at HST participated in a training facilitated by IAVI teams in Gurgaon, Haryana, on February 19-23, 2024, with team members from AURUM. The training was conducted under project ELICIT.
- Project CHALO mid-project review: Dr. Viraj Patel; Dr. Venkatesan Chakrapani; Dr. Kenneth Mayer (Fenway Health Institute, Boston); Dr. Julia Arnsten (Einstein School of Medicine, Bronx); and Dr. Sarit Golub (Hunter Cuny College, New York) met with the CHALO Mumbai team on February 12-14, 2024, in Mumbai for a mid-project review of the study. The meeting also featured talks by the visiting experts that were attended by representatives of MDACS and the larger HST teams.
- Dissemination of EKATRA Study Preliminary findings: Dr. William Lodge presented findings from the EKATRA study to HST senior management and staff on November 1, 2023. The findings highlighted barriers and facilitators toward ART adherence among transgender women living with HIV in Mumbai and Delhi.
- Community sharing of EMORY Study findings: Dr. Michael Goodman and Dr. Swagata Banik (Baldwin Wallace University, Cleveland) visited The Humsafar Trust on October 10, 2023, and shared preliminary findings of our study that investigated the uptake of gender reaffirmation processes among transgender women in Mumbai.

- USAID and IAVI visit to The Humsafar Trust: Dr. Benny Kottiri (Chief of Research Division, Office of HIV/AIDS, USAID); Ms. Margaret McCluskey (Senior Technical Advisor, HIV Vaccine Branch/ Research Division, Office of HIV and AIDS, USAID, Washington); and Dr. Ashley Lima Ashley C. Lima (Health Science Specialist & Lead Technical Advisor for Socio-behavioral Research, USAID) visited HST on September 21, 2023, to know more about our work as well as for presentations from IIR award grantees on their study findings.



AURUM TI Visit



Ekatra Study



EMORY Study



Maria Wayne Visit

Key Achievements

- IRB ETHICS Conference:** ICASA Conference: December 4-9, 2023 (Zimbabwe): Dr. Jatin Chaudary represented The Humsafar Trust at the 22nd ICASA Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, on December 4-7, 2023. He presented a talk on “Experiences in engaging the most vulnerable communities on virtual platforms in research” as a part of a satellite hosted by IAVI on Engaging hidden, hard-to-reach and unreached populations under HIV prevention and vaccine research – unpacking challenges and potential strategies.
- Research Ethics Training: Workshop 1:** An in-person training workshop was organized on Good Clinical Practices (GCP), New Drugs and Clinical Trials (NDCT) Rules 2019 and ICMR Guidelines 2017 on Saturday, 26th August 2023. This workshop was conducted by the Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Seth GS Medical College & KEM Hospital, Parel – Mumbai. All the sitting IEC members, research team members and select clinic staff members and two guest members from another NGO attended this workshop. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Sandhya Kamat, Prof & Head, Dept of Pharmacology & therapeutics, KEM Hospital, Mumbai. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Yashashri Shetty, Ex- Member Secretary of IEC-I, KEM Hospital. The workshop covered topics such as an introduction to GCP and Role and responsibility of Ethics committee, role and responsibility of investigator, role and responsibility of sponsor, NDCTR 2019 guidelines with group tasks and ICMR 2017 guidelines in brief. This daylong workshop ended with a valedictory function with distribution of certificates to all the participants. It is worth mentioning that the KEM facilitators were impressed by the range of researches, especially ethics and on-line research deliberated upon by the Humsafar Trust IEC. They also lauded the sharing of CBO based researchers and the on-line research.
- Workshop 2: The Institutional Ethics Committee** Member Secretary Ganesh Acharya and the Research Associate Priti Tripathi attended FERCICON 2023, the International Conference of the Forum for Ethics Review Committees in India in December 7-9 in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The conference was organized by PSG Institute of Medical Science and Research, Coimbatore. The theme of this conference was “strengthening ethics education to empower ethics committees”. The Humsafar Trust was the only community based organization representing their IEC. The participants and the facilitators were impressed by the range of researches, especially ethics and on-line research deliberated upon by The Humsafar Trust IEC.
- Virtual cross-learning webinars with KEMRI:** The Humsafar Trust and KEMRI partnered to host two webinar featuring experts with research- and community-engagement experience in Africa and India on June 29-30, 2023. The webinars titled “Strengthening Clinical evidence around HIV and STIs for marginalized communities: experience from India, Kenya and Rwanda (June 29)” and “Strengthening community ownership and leadership in HIV STI research: mitigating challenges in engaging vulnerable communities (June 30)” each featured talks by four panellists on their experiences conducting clinical- and community-based research in Africa and India.



ICASA

Some key publications and findings:

1) Chakrapani, Venkatesan, Smitha Nair, Sudharshini Subramaniam, Ketki Ranade, Biji Mohan, Ruban Nelson, Sajeesh T. Sivaraman et al. "Efficacy of a multi-level pilot intervention ("Harmony") to reduce discrimination faced by men who have sex with men and transgender women in public hospitals in India: Findings from a pre-and post-test quasi-experimental trial among healthcare workers." *Venereology* 2, no. 3 (2023): 86-107.

Summary of findings: Client surveys were conducted among 400 MSM/TGW (two independent samples of 200 MSM/TGW) attending the intervention hospitals, before the intervention among HCWs and three months after the intervention. Generalised estimating equations assessed service users' satisfaction with hospital services, discrimination experiences, and positive interactions with HCWs. Significant changes were observed in primary outcomes: 30% increase in positive attitude scores (incidence rate ratio (IRR) = 1.30, 95% CI 1.13–1.49) and 23% increase in the proportion of HCWs reporting being comfortable in providing care to MSM/TGW (IRR = 1.23, 95% CI 0.03–1.68). Similarly, there was a significant improvement in secondary outcomes (scores): support for non-discriminatory hospital policies (IRR = 1.08, 95% CI 1.004–1.15), the importance of asking SOGI questions in clinical history (IRR = 1.17, 95% CI 1.06–1.29), and perceived self-efficacy in providing clinical care (IRR = 1.13, 95% CI 1.01–1.27). Service users' data provided corroborative evidence for intervention efficacy: e.g., 14% increase in the proportion of MSM reporting overall satisfaction with hospital services and 6% and 15% increase in the scores of positive interactions with HCWs in the combined sample of MSM/TGW and TGW, respectively.

2) Chakrapani V, Newman PA, Shunmugam M, Rawat S, Mohan BR, Baruah D, et al. (2023) **A scoping review of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people's health in India.** *PLOS Glob Public Health* 3(4): e0001362.

Summary of findings: The study systematically investigated 14 databases to identify peer-reviewed journal articles published in English language between January 1, 2010 and November 20, 2021, that reported empirical qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods data on LGBTQI+ people's health in India. Out of 3,003 results in total, we identified 177 eligible articles; 62% used quantitative, 31% qualitative, and 7% mixed methods. The majority (55%) focused on gay and other MSM, 16% TGW, and 14% both of these populations; 4% focused on lesbian and bisexual women, and 2% on transmasculine people. Overall, studies reported high prevalence of HIV and sexually transmitted infections; multilevel risk factors for HIV; high levels of mental health burden linked to stigma, discrimination, and violence victimization; and non-availability of gender-affirmative medical care in government hospitals. Few longitudinal studies and intervention studies were identified. Findings suggest that LGBTQI+ health research in India needs to move beyond the predominant focus on HIV, and gay men/MSM and TGW, to include mental health and non-communicable diseases, and individuals across the LGBTQI+ spectrum.

USAID IAVI Visit



Some key publications and findings:

3) Datta, D., Dange, A., Rawat, S. et al. **HIV Testing by Gender Identity Among Sexually Active Transgender-, Intersex-, and Hijra Individuals Reached Online in India.** *AIDS Behav* 27, 3150–3156 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-023-04035-x>

Summary of findings: The study presents data from 467 gender-minority respondents identified as transgender women (29.6%), Hijra (5.1%), intersex (37%), or gender non-binary (28.3%). Overall, almost half (47.5%) had never been tested for HIV; among respondents having condomless anal sex, half (50%) reported never testing for HIV. A decreased odds of ever HIV testing was associated with being unsure how to access free testing (compared to being easy; AOR = 0.36, 95%CI 0.20, 0.63) and unaware of comfortable testing sites (AOR = 0.32, 95% CI 0.20, 0.63). Increased odds of testing were associated with identifying as Hijra (compared to transgender women; AOR = 4.07, 95%CI 1.18–16.92) and disclosing sexual behaviours to a doctor (AOR = 3.20, 95% CI 1.91, 5.46). In this GM sample recruited online, HIV testing rates were low.

4) Lodge II W, Biello K, Thomas B, et al. **Longitudinal impact of stressful life events on HIV-related risk and psychosocial problems among MSM in Chennai and Mumbai, India.** *International Journal of STD & AIDS*. 2023;34(6):416-422.doi:10.1177/09564624231155998

Summary of findings: Under this study 608 MSM from Chennai and Mumbai, India, completed behavioral surveys at baseline, 4, 8, and 12 months. We used longitudinal generalized estimating equations (GEE) modeling to examine the relationship between stressful life events (SLE) and their severity and subsequent psychosocial problems; condomless anal sex; and history of diagnosed STIs. All models were adjusted for age, sexual identity, intervention arm, human immunodeficiency virus status, and recruitment city. The number of SLE and their corresponding perceived impact score remained consistent at each time point. In multivariable GEE models, the number of SLE was predictive of CAS, depression, and harmful drinking. Similarly, the ratio of the impact of SLE was predictive of CAS, depression, and diagnosed STI. However, harmful drinking was not predictive in this mode.

2024 - 2025

Short Term Goals

Priority 1: Estimating the burden of non-communicable diseases among LGBTQ+.

Priority 2: Analysing Gap in funding accessibility and utilization of allocated centre and state funding to welfare initiatives and Schemes.

Priority 3: Intervention-based approaches toward improving community-level understanding of HPV vaccines and cervical cancer screening among AFAB individuals.

Priority 4: Investigate dynamics and modalities of chem-sex practices among MSM and TGW

Priority 5: Conduct a capacity building- and needs assessment exercise among research teams to identify areas of internal capacity strengthening

Long Term Goals

Priority 1: Strengthen analyses- and scientific writing capacities of project leads.

Priority 2: Strengthen language, communication, and documentation skills of field teams.

Priority 3: Develop a living document of HST's research contributions; summarize study findings; and integrate findings into program- and service-delivery initiatives.

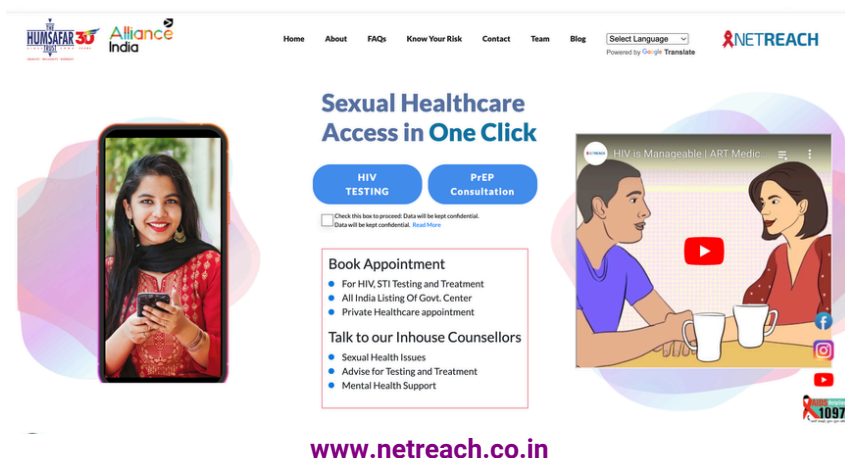
Priority 4: Explore and diversify HST's research funding base and technical collaborations.

Priority 5: Identify new thematic areas of research that are more reflective and inclusive of LGBTQ+ issues beyond the ambit of health-based human rights. For eg:- impact of displacement and migration on communities in sex work (cis- and transgender women in sex work).

Capacity Building

Project NETREACH

- Project NETREACH completed three years of implementation and has gained wider acceptance from the clients, government, and private stakeholders, especially among the SACS and ICTC counselors making virtual referral process easy and accessible in India. The Humsafar Trust is now seen as a leader in virtual intervention and providing guidance and training to SACS and CBOs to implement locally.
- As part of Community Systems Strengthening, under NETREACH, a total of 1602 community champions were trained across the Key Population groups in India. Additionally, NETREACH supported 12 CBOs to implement innovative projects in rural and remote settings to reach out to the hard-to-reach population. Also, 62 CBOs were provided with technical assistance on NGO governance, resource mobilization and other capacity development training so that these CBOs are capacitated to work on the issues of the community at regional level.
- North-East media conclave was organized by NETREACH to sensitize media personnel on appropriate reporting on LGBTQ+ community by understanding their situations and challenges. Notable media houses who took part included The Assam Tribune, Press Trust of India, Prag News, Guwahati Plus, The Indian Express, Sikkim Chronicles, Capital News Arunachal, Prag News, 92.7 Big FM, CNN News 18, News10 Banga, Arunachal Express
- A learning and experience sharing workshop on reaching the missing millions was conducted involving varied stakeholders such as community leaders, project participants (beneficiaries), project staff including HST leaderships and board members, private health care providers, SACS officials, and NACO representatives. The experiences of the stakeholders were encouraging-the SACS officials were of the view that NETREACH like program has greatly contributed to their state target; private health care providers shared their experiences of how with the training they were able to provide community sensitive services. The learnings will be incorporated into the second phase of the programme implementation.



NETREACH @IAS 2024

- With the experience of NETREACH in the virtual landscape, we contributed to the design and implementation of the NACO implemented pilot size estimation of MSM and TG population operated online across the pilot states and districts. The NETREACH personnel provided training to the TIs who would conduct this exercise.
- As part of the project dissemination, NETREACH conducted learning and experience sharing workshop that involved varied stakeholders such as community leaders, project participants (beneficiaries), project staff including HST leaderships and board members, private health care providers, SACS officials, and NACO representatives. The experiences of the stakeholders were encouraging, and the learnings will be incorporated into the second phase of the programme implementation.
- Learnings from NETREACH intervention was presented in a satellite session of the 25th International AIDS Conference, Munich, Germany. NETREACH experiences were also disseminated via two poster presentations i) Strategic approach in reaching 'hard-to-reach' Female Sex Workers (FSW) virtually; and ii) Male Sex Workers: A neglected community in HIV intervention programs.
- In an effort to reach to the unreached populations, several support group meetings were conducted resulting in increased number of case findings. Further, over 200 NETREACH peers were onboarded to service the needs of the community at the district level. This effort enabled in reaching the community in the rural pockets where there is limited reach of the national programme and the community members are generally discrete.
- During the reporting period, online reach through social media and advertising remained at an all-time high with the focus on innovative media campaigns. Across platforms, the reach was high: Facebook reach- 1.2 million, Instagram reach- 3.5 million, Google Ads 5.2 million, Spotify 5.8 million. NETREACH Instagram handle also gained popularity with over 5000 Instagram followers as of March 2024, and over 57000 YouTube subscribers.



NETREACH Progress Update (April 2021-March 2024)			
Sr. No	Key Performance Indicator	Total 2023-24	Grand Total 2021-24
A1	Number of new profiles approached/reached through virtual platforms	79193	263193
A2	Number of key population identified on the Virtual place (Social Networking Reach by numbers clicks/hits at various Social Networking sites)	26173	61034
A3	Number of identified key population linked to HIV related service (Counselling on Mental Health, PrEP, PEP, and Referral to TI services, STI services & HIV testing)	16354	30058
A4	Number of key populations tested for HIV	10582	19948
A5	Number of key populations tested HIV positive	330	687



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Land mark: Next to MCD Primary
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Phone: 011 – 46016699

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Near Hrishaan Suzuki, Bora Service, Guwahati – 781007
Phone: 0361 3503326