

Final Report: UNAIDS PAF Project No: IND/02/W01
For the period January 2002 – September 2003

UNIFEM South Asia Regional Office, New Delhi

Project Title:	Gender, HIV and Human Rights: Strengthening partnerships with Women's movement
Project Number	IND/02/W01
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Duration	January 2002 - September 2003
Reporting Period	End project report December 2003
Countries covered (Region)	India
Executing Agency:	UNIFEM
Implementing Agency:	UNIFEM
Collaborating Agencies:	Governments and NGOs in the region
Current Total Budget:	USD 170,000
Source of Funds:	UNAIDS PAF funds

A. Background and Justification

In just a few years, women and young people have taken centre stage in the AIDS epidemic. Recent data on the spread of HIV/AIDS is clearly evident of transcendence beyond high-risk groups to affecting younger women and adolescent girls within the households. The proportion of women living with HIV/AIDS has risen steadily in recent years. While in 1997¹, 41% of HIV-positive adults were women, today approximately 48% of the 36 million adults living with HIV/AIDS are women. In South Asia, as the urgency of addressing HIV/AIDS in the region increases, UNIFEM has catalyzed strategic linkages amongst several stakeholders on issues relating to gender equality, sexuality and care/support through the Gender Focused Interventions for HIV/AIDS pilot and other initiatives that have emerged in the past few years. Our capacity building efforts have included skill building in communications towards negotiating safer sex and dealing with gender based violence; facilitation of gender-sensitive materials; community-based studies on Gender and HIV/AIDS. As a member of the UNAIDS "Virtual Team" currently Technical Resource Team in India, UNIFEM has also been helping engender the policies and interventions of the National AIDS programme as well as that of the UN system. The initial results of the project have thrown light on some of the complex areas in the domain of HIV/AIDS and this project will address these gaps.

¹ UNAIDS epidemic updates

B. Beneficiaries

Women in general, governments, civil servants and NGOs

C. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

Contribute to the stemming of HIV/AIDS by addressing vulnerabilities that put women at risk to HIV/AIDS as well as addressing gender inequalities in the context of care, treatment and support for WLHAs.

D. The Immediate Objectives of the project:

1. To enhance knowledge base and capabilities as well as create platforms for interaction and experimentation of UNIFEM partners and key constituencies on intersectional issues of Gender, Women's Human rights and HIV/AIDS
2. To engender the National Programme on HIV/AIDS, relevant Technical Resource Groups (TRGs) and select State AIDS Control Societies
3. To conduct gender sensitive community based studies for developing new knowledge base and advocacy
4. To facilitate sharing/exchange of experiences with members of civil society towards gender-sensitising their responses to the issue of HIV/AIDS

Key Accomplishments

UNIFEM established partnerships with 14 women's groups and NGOs in the country from different parts of the country – Gujarat, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and West Bengal. On the one hand, the project has enabled a meaningful partnership with women's organizations on HIV/AIDS and on the other it enabled a reach out to a newer constituency in the field on HIV/AIDS such as panchayats in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Rajasthan, self help groups, a well known advertising agency in Delhi, positive women's networks around the country, women from marginalized communities in UP, media, schools of journalism, parliamentarians, bureaucrats etc.

In collaboration with partners UNIFEM reached out to and worked with State AIDS Cells from Kerala, Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, *Nagaland, Assam, Rajasthan, Manipur* and Uttar Pradesh. Advocacy with National Commission for Women and NACO as well as Dept of Women and Child Development as well as with relevant state agencies in the field was undertaken throughout the process by inviting them as well as sharing experiences and lessons from the field and seeking their support to issues of women's rights and concerns. Besides at state level the Minister of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development in Karnataka, District Collectors, Panchayat Presidents in Tamil Nadu, District Commissioner, Police and District Health Officer in UP and a host of other officials were invited as well as reached out to advocate for vulnerabilities of women.

The project faced several challenges, as the national momentum on HIV/AIDS is seeing a rapid scaling up and many women's organizations are still building their capacities and understandings. The learning process undertaken by partners and UNIFEM ensured that a healthy balance of innovations in the field of gender and HIV/AIDS, a spirit of academic learning, grass roots advocacy, media sensitization, Behaviour Communications Change components, networking and alliance building as well as continual capacity building of the women and women's groups and their networks were built into the project.

Methodologically there have been other challenges – the Government programmes still continue to work on targeted interventions while many of the women's groups see themselves playing a cross cutting role and not a service implementation role and that role has not yet been built into the government programming systematically.

Many partners have developed innovative learning processes as well as gender sensitive products and advocacy tools which have widely disseminated. The learning journey also brought in new dimensions as the project unfolded and fed into larger advocacy processes. Another example is that the positive women started out with legal literacy workshops and later it all coalesced into their study of human rights of women, etc.

Key Results:

Advocacy:

- **The National Commission for Women and UNIFEM organized a national event where NACO, the State Minister of Health** as well as the members of the Commission came together along with prominent legal activists, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and women's groups came together to develop an effective response to issues of positive and vulnerable women and mainstream strategies for engendering HIV in policy and practice. The issue of stigma and discrimination has taken centre-stage and the NCW is now examining the issue in a systemic perspective. The Ministry of Health has recently said it would legislate on the issue of stigma and discrimination and the positive women's groups are using the findings of their study for further advocacy and public hearings in four state have been organized by the them in collaboration with the Commission.
- At the Fourth Regional Biennial Beijing Review meeting organised by UNIFEM in collaboration with the Royal Govt. of Bhutan, the commitments on Gender and HIV/AIDS has been included in the Bhutan Forward Looking Strategies: Accelerating Actions and Results endorsed by Ministry of Women's Affairs, SAARC Secretariat and women's groups in the South Asia region held in May 2003.
- **Media Advocacy:** Following the capacity building in select states of journalists and round tables from the regional press sensitive coverage has been undertaken by media in the regional press and an e-net of journalists has been formed for supporting journalists. A gender sensitive media tool for journalists (print and

electronic) has been developed by UNIFEM in collaboration with the Positive Women's Network and Centre for Advocacy and Research and launched at a symposium in Delhi and inaugurated by the Chairperson of the Press Council of India with representatives from schools of journalism, media agencies, Television stations and alternate media and NGOs. As a result the media tool is now being adapted by Two State AIDS Organisations – Kerala and Tamil Nadu for the local media as advocacy for revising press council guidelines is underway. The monitoring process of coverage by the PWN and CFAR continues and any issues of gross violations are being reported back to the reporters as was an incident recently in Tamil Nadu where the child of a positive woman leader was shown in the newspaper and the electronic media and immediate action by CFAR stopped the coverage on a prominent TV channel.

- **Rights perspective:** The CEDAW framework is being effectively used as a learning and advocacy tool to enhance women's rights within HIV/AIDS. Legal literacy workshops for positive women have been conducted in several states to increase awareness. The UNIFEM CEDAW booklet has been widely distributed and **Gender sensitive indicators** have been developed and will be used for wider use in UN programmes including CHARCA.

Brokering partnerships:

- Between the Positive women's Network and women's groups and the National Commission for Women and DWCD and media
- Between women performers in the Bedin community with NCW, DWCD, legal and women's rights groups
- Between SACs and women's groups - Assam SACS was introduced to our partner and have participated in their consultations. They have requested gender sensitisation workshops for all their district offices and NEN will be conducting gender sensitive workshops in 6 districts and link up the district offices with its on going work on violence against women, counseling and Life skill education for the youth.

Capacity Building:

- Information and skill outreach has been made possible to more than 1500 participants from NGOs, human rights groups, CBOs, adolescents, media groups, folk artists; to more than 1500 people from Panchayats, including elected women representatives, SHGs, district and block officials in the districts, and to more than 80 positive women.
- Representatives of State AIDS Organisations in Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, UP, West Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Manipur have shown keen interest in gender issues and are keen to incorporate gender into their work. The State AIDS Cell in West Bengal collaborated with UNIFEM to convene a training session on Gender and HIV/AIDS while Assam and Tamil Nadu have

requested our partners to provide technical inputs on gender. In Assam our partner will be working with the State AIDS Organisation in six districts

- **Studies and new knowledge base:** The study on Positive Speaking – Voice of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in the context of CEDAW was released at a National Launch by NCW as part of UNIFEM's campaign on gender based violence. NCW has used the findings along with their own investigation report as a basis for a national consultation on Policy and programme guidelines on HIV/AIDS supported by UNIFEM. The study findings have been shared at various national, regional and international fora, including the Asian Women's Court organised by Asian Women's Human Rights Committee with support from UNDP, at the Round table organised by UNIFEM/UNFPA in New York. The positive women have also been participating in meetings being organised by the National Alliance of Women on the shadow NGO CEDAW report to feed these findings..

Study - To Sing or Not to Sing: A community based study conducted with women from one of the most marginalised communities (in fact they are considered a criminal tribe) the Bedin community has been completed and is in the process of being printed by a well established publishing house.

The findings of the study have been disseminated through street theatre – nautanki - a form used by these women in their state to create awareness on their issues and rights. A group of women visited Delhi for the first time after getting over their hesitation of being in public places to advocate for their rights and have given petitions to National Commission of Women, the Commission on Minorities as well as met with women's groups, lawyer's networks to seek support for rights violations that they are facing as a community of scheduled caste as well as women. During the process of the study their information on health issues, HIV/AIDS and women's issues has been disseminated so as to support their access to services.

- **Leadership development of positive women:** Through out the process, in many ways, the involvement of positive women and their networks have been ensured – as resource persons, as partners, participants, etc. The GIPA principle has always been deployed by UNIFEM. They have been linked to women' groups, to the domestic violence draft Bill campaign, to the CEDAW report writing meetings, gender trainings and other national advocacy processes. The President of PWN+ was the key speaker representing all the positive people in the country at a National Parliamentarian Forum that was recently launched wherein more than 1000 parliamentarians and political representatives from all three political tiers participated and the panel had the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition as well as the Health Minister. The President of PWN+ has this year been invited to the Board of ICW+ - International Committee of Women as well as on a special task force convened by UNAIDS for the International Conference on Women and

AIDS. Technical support to leveraging additional financial resources with international agencies has also been undertaken

- **Material development:** Very innovative gender sensitive materials have been developed – a poster that was launched at the World AIDS Day Programme 2002 and a series of 6 posters on violence and HIV/AIDS for Panchayats was launched in 2003. A manual for Trainers in Hindi on Gender and HIV/AIDS, and series of six templates on Women and Violence and HIV/AIDS – on safe sex, protection from HIV and unwanted pregnancies and respect for women has been produced keeping in mind messaging form men. In all 6 publications, 8 comprehensive workshop and consultation reports including CD Roms, 3 sets of communication materials and the process of setting up the web-based resource centre on Gender and HIV have been produced.
- **Building linkages across UNIFEM programmes:** Through out the process UNIFEM has ensured that this project is building synergy and lessons learnt are being shared with other projects in the organization.

Objective 1:

To enhance knowledge base and capabilities as well as create platforms for interaction and experimentation of UNIFEM partners, key constituencies including positive women on intersectional issues of Gender, Women’s Human rights and HIV/AIDS

Activities:

1.1 National Workshop for capacity building and Advocacy: Organised by UNIFEM

UNIFEM organised a National Workshop with Eighteen Participants from twelve organisations, identified in the first phase of this project, to enhance their knowledge base on crosscutting gender, human rights and HIV/AIDS issues. Representatives from the UNAIDS, UNODC, NACO, Positive Women’s Network and Dept. Women and Child Development were invited for enabling linkages for future programming and networking purposes.

The workshop recommended key issues:

- Documenting stark cases of human rights violations
- Talk to government about help lines and referrals to women’s organisations
- Counseling services and building links with women in conflict situations, with programmes working on anti-trafficking, etc.
- Dialogue with men and highlight issues of masculinity
- Work closely with policy planners on engendering programmes
- Media advocacy and framing the debate with media

These recommendations were built into all the subsequent projects undertaken by the partners.

1.2 Three Regional Workshops on Gender, Human rights and HIV/AIDS: **Western, Eastern and Northern regions covering 14 states**

For the first time, on demand from the women's groups, three regional consultations were held on Gender, Human rights and HIV/AIDS with a cross section of women's groups, media groups, community NGOs, AIDS NGOs, human rights and lawyers groups and positive women's networks as well as with members from INP+. Besides representation from these groups all the three regional workshops were well attended by representatives from the State AIDS Control Societies and other government departments of health, and district administration and line departments.

The design of all the workshops was woven around the understanding of the CEDAW framework addressing cross-cutting issues affecting women in health care, legal aid and livelihood security, violence, etc, with the aim to building a broad spectrum and multi partner response to the issues of gender and HIV/AIDS.

These consultations highlighted the complexity of the issue when discussing problems related to migration, intravenous drug use, implementation and coordination between various organizations and lack of access to services for treatment, victimization of sex workers and severe discrimination and violence faced by positive people especially women. National and international policies on transmission, prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS were discussed alongside building an understanding on the issues of vulnerability of women, discrimination, stigma, legal rights, and counselling. The need to deepen the work on some of the critical issues such as need for sustained sensitisation of the law enforcing and health service agencies against stigma and discrimination; advocacy for right to information and accessible health services and treatment for positive people found expression in all the consultations. The need to network and build alliances also emerged so that better flow of information for joint advocacy on women's rights in HIV could be developed.

Highlights

- Approximately 175 participants from more than 80 diverse organizations in 14 states, including sex workers collectives, international agencies, NGOs, women's groups, NACO/SACS and community based groups participated in these consultations. All these consultations were covered by the local media.
- Following recommendations from the North regional consultation held last year by Institute of Social Studies Trust, Delhi a training manual on Gender and HIV/AIDS in Hindi has been produced by the same agency, covering issues of vulnerability of women, public health, care and prevention, government policies and legal rights.
- Before undertaking the exercise of planning for the eastern region consultation, Sanhita, a gender training and resource centre based in Kolkatta did a mapping

- exercise of the eastern region organizations and their work on how gender issues are being incorporated by Government and NGOs in their work on HIV/AIDS. This has become a useful tool to be used for developing further strategies for capacity building, advocacy and networking for the region as well as nationally.
- Based on their participation in the regional consultations SACS of Assam, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have subsequently partnered with Sanhita, North East Network and PWN+ on Gender sensitisation
 - *Sanhita conducted a training workshop of the policy makers & implementers from W.Bengal SACS and its partner NGOs on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. This workshop was conducted with UNIFEM support in September'03. ASSAM SACS*
 - Tamil Nadu SACS has invited PWN to be on its Governing Body. TNSACS has been supporting and linking up with PWN for various state level activities.
 - Due to the exchange and interaction with the project partners these SACS have been linked to the women's groups in their respective states.

1.3 Legal literacy and Skill building workshops in three Southern states – Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka

The Positive Women's Network Chennai, organized three skill building workshops on Legal Literacy in Karnataka, Kerala and Pune in May and June 2003. These workshops were held by PWN+ for the women participants from the Committee of Positive People in Kerala (CPK+), Network of Maharashtra Positive People (NMP+) and Karnataka Network of Positive People living with HIV (KNP+). Support from and alliance building with the three SACs was also built in the workshop design. Technical inputs for the workshops were provided by MARG a legal literacy and advocacy group with support from UNIFEM's human rights programme.

Highlights

- This was for the first time that such capacity building trainings have been organized for WLHAs. Around 80 positive women attended these workshops and discussed the concept of fundamental rights, legal services act as well as provisions under personal laws – relating to marriage, divorce, maintenance, dowry prohibition act, laws on rape and sexual harassment, property laws, banking and insurance, and laws related to HIV/AIDS – consent and testing, confidentiality; discrimination; women in vulnerable situations and children, sex determination and medical termination of pregnancy. Labour laws pertaining to working women were also discussed. Many participants discussed their personal cases in court such as retrieval of dowry money, property in their name, torture by in laws and so on. **The key recommendations included training workshops with police on women's rights, need for implementation of national HIV policy on stigma and discrimination, care and counseling and subsidized treatment.**

- The enhanced capacities of the positive women proved very valuable in their undertaking a study subsequently on testimonies of women. This process tremendously helped in building their personal skills, leadership potential and advocates.
- As part of this process and to strengthen linkages and networking of positive women's groups with the women's movement, UNIFEM supported the participation of three positive women representatives from PWN+ and PATH, to a National Consultation on the Protection from Domestic Violence Bill, 2001 organized by PAF partner Action India in collaboration with Lawyers Collective a legal rights NGO. Women's groups from across India are advocating for right to residence and redressal mechanisms as part of the Bill with the Govt. The positive women put forth the situation of violation of their human rights with reference to property, family violence, abandonment, marriage without consent which was a first time learning experience for many of the participants who were working on women's issues. Their inputs were covered in a press report by the media.
- PWN+ has been strongly advocating legal support processes and has mobilized support for five district level workshops for women from the Tamil Nadu SACS.
- The workshops have helped PWN in broad basing the support for their issues within a wider spectrum of women's groups and other NGOs.

1.4 Three phase Trainings for building capacities in Gender-sensitive counseling in North East:

The North East Network (NEN) Assam completed a three-phased skill building trainings on gender-sensitive counseling for 20 counselors from Nagaland and Assam. These trainings focused upon self-awareness - a critical ingredient for counselors, and dealt with the problem-solving model, looking at issues of confidentiality, addressing suicidal cases, concerns of prolonged depression, inactivity, obsessive-compulsive behaviour and the like, to enable counselors to deal with a range of clients sensitively.

Highlights

- These workshops enabled engagement on behavioral change issues and work with young people in colleges and schools on issues of masculinity, gender, and responsible sexual behaviour. Subsequently NEN organised several workshops after completing the 3 phase counseling workshops involving the trained counselors.
- A great result of their work was the invitation by Assam SACS to conduct gender sensitisation workshops for all its district offices and NEN will be conducting gender sensitive workshops in 6 districts and link up the district

offices with its on going work on violence against women, counseling and Life skill education for the youth.

1.5 Building capacities of elected representatives for Mainstreaming Gender and HIV into Panchayati Raj institutions and local governance

Three partner organizations took up training and materials development for panchayat members at various levels and elected women representatives and rural poor women.

The Hunger Project, India initiated a dialogue on the Panchayats looking at cross-cutting issues of violence against women, including health hazards related with sexual subjugation and ‘voicelessness’. An initial needs assessment was conducted through a workshop in Sujangarh block in Rajasthan in April’03 to gain a broad understanding of different kinds of gender based violence in rural areas as well as map actions that elected and community women can take at the village, block, district and state levels to create violence free villages. 50 participants representing panchayat, panchayat samities, districts, wards, NGOs, newspapers, local government, and international agencies discussed gender based violence and strategies to address them. An exposure visit to a UNIFEM partner’s organisation working on zero-violence zones was organized for thirty participants and to observe monthly hearings on how cases of dispute are being solved by the tribal communities. A workshop was also conducted for the capacity building of the project staff for developing their perspective to integrate knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its gender dimensions into their work on gender based violence. **Two states they are working in – Assam and Tamil Nadu are keen to integrate HIV into their training with panchayats and other states are keen to do so too.** Mechanisms of support will have to be worked out.

The Hunger Project is in the process of module development on Social Citizenship for women elected representatives. It has printed a set of five posters to accompany the workshop module which have been widely disseminated. These posters which address gender, HIV and violence issues are being used as training and advocacy materials for the panchayat member.

These posters were released on 25th Nov.03 on the inaugural day of the fortnight campaign to protest for violence against women.

THP has effectively tried to develop grass root advocacy and awareness raising IEC strategies to mainstream issues concerning VAW and other forms of gender based vulnerabilities faced by women.

Mahila Samakhya, a women’s organization working on women and education under the aegis of Ministry of Education, Karnataka organized a Panchayati Raj Mela for 300 elected women representatives in February to mobilize them on issues of gender, health and human rights. This was the first time that they were reaching

out to elected women and used it as an opportunity to provide women with tools, information and skills on a range of issues as well as provide them an opportunity to interact with the Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj as well as visit the State Legislature House.

The training sessions included understanding how the Panchayati Raj institutions function as well as how Standing Committee needs to work especially the social justice committee with reference to its importance, composition, legal rights and links to women's court (nari adalat) processes as well as how they could strengthen linkages with women's federation. They also discussed the role, rules and regulations regarding the Gram Sabha and how to strengthen women's governance agendas. Particular focus on the Health and Education agendas for women with special reference to HIV/AIDS was addressed. This workshop highlighted the need to deliberate both on governance, mobilization and vulnerability issues of women. Materials on HIV/AIDS and women were circulated to all participants. Karnataka SACs also provided IEC materials and information to the elected women representatives.

A C.D Rom covering the key events of the mela cum workshop with English subtitles has been prepared.

Highlights-

Mahila Samakhya has been involved in the district situational analysis for the CHARCA project in Bellary district and had taken this learning opportunity to extend the understanding on gender and HIV issues to its large network of women sangha members in several districts of Karnataka.

The Institute of Social Sciences, Chennai branch conducted a campaign through workshops and meetings at the district level to forge linkages between the Govt. and panchayat bodies on gender and HIV issues related to care, support, minimizing stigma and discrimination in 8 districts of Tamilnadu. These workshops were aimed to empower Local Self Government to address emerging health/HIV issues in Tamil Nadu especially focusing on the districts with high rates of HIV prevalence.

Eight districts, which were covered: Salem, Tiruvar, Sivaganga, Nammakal, Villuparam, Vellore, and Coimbatore and Madurai. While critical issues on stigma, counseling, treatment and care were addressed there were discussions on ways in which the issue of HIV/AIDS needs to be taken to gram sabhas – the assembly of people in the villages. It was also suggested that villages where there have been increased reporting of cases of HIV/AIDS should have monitoring cells and an advisory committee under the panchayats to assess the situation and refer cases for treatment. However concerns that health gets a back seat in the panchayat activities was also discussed as civic amenities take priority and often there are delays in fund flows.

Highlights

- In all more than 1200 participants comprising panchayat presidents, vice presidents, union council members, Executive officers of town panchayats, Self Help Groups, NGOs, health workers, Block Development Officers, Rural Development Officers, Health Inspectors, village nurses, college students, community medicine students and others participated in the workshops. Most of these workshops were inaugurated either by the District Collector, Panchayat Presidents or other senior government officials. Simple IEC materials were distributed with the support of TNSACs.
- A strong need for developing advocacy materials in Tamil for the panchayat representatives for gender and HIV was felt as an outcome of the district level workshops. In response a training and advocacy document to strengthen gender sensitive response of panchayats and state agencies to HIV/AIDS is under final stages of production and will be ready for the year end release.

1.6 Training peer educators in Sexuality and Gender – A Life Skills Training on HIV/AIDS Awareness:

Action India has completed the training programme with 24 master trainers reaching out to 240 peer educators who in turn have reached out to around 800 adolescents living in five different slum communities of Delhi using life skill education approach to build a gendered perspective on youth issues. As a wide dissemination strategy a youth utsav (information fair) was held in February in which all the master trainers, peer educators and the adolescents from the 5 communities were invited and through the use of interactive communication mediums messages on gender and HIV were given to the young gathering. These sessions helped in building their information base as well as developing their communication and leadership skills.

The demand and popularity of the life skills approach among the adolescents in the community led the organization to carry forward its work with the peer educators in the five communities albeit voluntarily with no monetary incentive and support.

Action India's work with the young people on gender and empowerment issues through the Behaviour Change Communication approach has opened up the window to develop methods and tools in the immediate future on issues of de-layering concepts of masculinity, responsible behaviour, peer support, gender and HIV and VAW.

Objective 2:

To engender the National Programme on HIV/AIDS, relevant Technical Resource Groups (TRGs) and select State AIDS Control Societies

Activities with NACO and other national agencies: NACO was invited to the national consultations organized by UNIFEM and its PAF project partner, CFAR. The Project director, NACO took keen interest and expressed support to further engender the ongoing activities and programmes at the national and state level through SACs and its other partners. She expressed her commitment to ensure GIPA in practice especially emphasizing the importance of positive women's representation in SACS.

National Commission for Women, NCW took a very active stand in taking the initiative to carry the mandate for "working towards a gender sensitive policy on HIV/AIDS". The chairperson, NCW was very keenly involved during the human rights violation study of positive women. She put forth a very strong advocacy for placing the issues of stigma, discrimination in the wider public domain and the need for greater involvement of positive women at all levels of policy development and programme planning. In August'03 NCW hosted the national consultation to develop action points for mainstreaming gender in HIV/AIDS programming and policy whose mandate came from the human rights violation study of positive women conducted by CFAR and PWN. This consultation drew response from a wide circle of stakeholders such as the ministry of health, DWCD, NACO, bilateral and UN agencies, women's groups, HIV/AIDS groups and legal and media groups.

Activities with SACS: As mentioned earlier a workshop on gender sensitization was conducted with the West Bengal state AIDS control society with support from Sanhita and resource persons from CFAR with support from UNIFEM. The insights from the study on the human rights violations of the positive women conducted by PWN and CFAR were used to build the perspective of the policy makers and the partner NGOs on the emerging issues and concerns related to gender and HIV.

Activities with the other select SACS weren't conducted separately. They were included and invited to all the regional, media and training sessions and consultations and the SACS of Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Kerala had also participated in the research studies which were undertaken by the project partners PWN and CFAR. Such interactions had facilitated in developing a working relationship of women's groups directly with the SACs on gender issues.

P.Ds and/ or their representatives from the SACS of Manipur, Kerela, Bihar, Karnataka and Tamilnadu attended the National Consultations held in Delhi in July and August'03 to share the insights from the study of Human Rights Violations of positive women by partner organizations CFAR and PWN+.

Activities with the relevant TRGs and UN agencies: During the project period UNIFEM continued to provide ongoing technical support to UN agencies, international agencies and partners in the field in various forms:

- In collaboration with UNAIDS, raising issues of how women's concerns in HIV/AIDS can be addressed with the Delhi State Commission on Women and provided materials on Gender and HIV/AIDS, as well as IEC materials on legal literacy for their constituencies.
- Increased advocacy for women's issues: UNIFEM highlighted the issues of Women and HIV/AIDS in the document – Progress of South Asia Women 2003 that was disseminated at the high level Inter Ministerial Fourth South Asia Regional Meeting to Commemorate Beijing organized by UNIFEM in collaboration with the Royal Govt. of Bhutan. This has resulted in recommendations on Gender and HIV/AIDS in the Bhutan Forward Moving Strategies 2003 that has been endorsed by Ministers, senior officials of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, SAARC Secretariat and women's groups in the region.
- Providing inputs into trainings, materials and networking: supported sister UN agencies – ILO supported trainings with Trade Union leaders, private sector supported NGOS such as MODI CARE Foundation, etc.
- Facilitated the participation of three positive women to a joint UNDP, NACO, IIPM and INP plus workshop on Leadership for results programme: People living with HIV/AIDS
- UNIFEM has provided both technical and financial support to the development of the Life skills module prepared by the Inter Agency Group on Population and Development with support from WHO, UNFPA and UNESCO.

Objective 3:

To conduct gender sensitive community based studies and materials for developing new knowledge base and advocacy

Development of media messages on gender, violence and HIV/AIDS:

Breakthrough, an international women's group working on violence and human rights has finalized the media campaign with an advertising agency, McCann Erikson. The media messages (at present in the form of templates) have been created for both men and women to challenge them to transform the circumstances that cause women to be vulnerable to domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. The organization has chosen to target an urban audience and will be deploying music videos and advertisements; however the mandate is to make the message universally understandable.

Highlights

- Once released these media messages are expected to have a large scale outreach in India and overseas. Breakthrough has created a Reproductive and Sexual Rights Advisory Committee to provide sustained inputs for its media products and developing gender sensitive IEC strategies. It now in the process of fund raising to broad base the out reach of the media campaign.

Data base on Women and HIV/AIDS

In collaboration with The Center for Media and Communications a Technical Paper on Gender and HIV/AIDS in the South Asian region was finalized in January and was included in the background documents of the conference and widely disseminated at the High level Conference on Accelerating the Momentum in the Fight against HIV/AIDS in South Asia organized by UNICEF and UNAIDS in Nepal in February 2003. UNIFEM also disseminated the paper at a high level Inter-Ministerial Conference held in Bhutan on Reviewing Progress of South Asia Women 2003 where govt. and NGO representatives from seven countries participated and endorsed an agenda for the future which also included working on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and addressing women's rights.

Community based Study: "Understanding and Overcoming Vulnerabilities of women of the Bedin Community", Uttar Pradesh:

Alarippu – a women's cultural organisation in Delhi has completed the field study with the women in the Bedin Community who have settled in and around villages/towns of UP. 76 interviews and a detailed survey of 42 people of different age groups – old women, girls who have returned from Mumbai, illiterate adolescents, young women, literate youth and groups of Bedia community based in rural and urban areas has been completed.

The study reveals that in the Bedin community historical relations have impacted and transformed gender relations and increased vulnerabilities of young women and men. Bedin is striving hard to survive in the dire circumstance offered to her by the society. Extreme Violation of Human Rights has been taking place in this community.

Due to deeply situated historical factors in her life, there is reluctance in dealing with issues of HIV/AIDS apriori due to stigma and fear and it is hoped that these issues will best be addressed in light of reproductive health and women's rights. All to such an extent has deceived Bedin women fear to trust anybody who approaches them because of extreme and vicious cycle of exploitation she has suffered all through their lives.

Theater was used a medium of communicating their pain and vulnerabilities. A theatre workshop was conducted in Banda in which a play titled – Nartiki Ki Peeda (Pain of a Dancer) and three public shows were organized in the study areas – Banda, Mehnadia and Beta village. One of the shows was organized at the special request of the District Commissioner for the district officials in Banda district.

To build linkages of the Bedin community with the wider social and civic institutions in the area Alarippu has facilitated linking them with local women's groups particularly on accessing services of P.D.S, health, and education for women and youth. Local district administration has also been engaged to provide basic protection from regular police harassment and exploitation for sexual trafficking.

Few young people from the Bedin Community who worked as research associates were sent for exposure visits to other organizations In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh working in the areas of trafficking and folk arts revival.

Some of the key recommendations from the study are- Preventing frequent police atrocities on Bedin community; Advocacy with the Government agencies for creating educational facilities for children and livelihood options for young boys and girls of the community; Sensitizing the community about the various aspects of Health; To provide due recognition and status in the society to the art and the skill these Bedin community possess. Talent should get the required appreciation and should not be denounced in the society.

The challenge is to prevent the younger Bedin girls from being forced into sex work.

A 4 day workshop in September'03 was organized by Alarippu to provide a platform to articulate the concerns of Bedin women and seek support from various quarters to address their immediate needs of health, children's education and prevention of police atrocities. During the workshop the representatives of Bedin community, a local cultural and social community group met with the NCW chairperson and its U.P state representative, officials in the DWCD and several women's groups, dalit women activist, media advocacy group, and community organizations in Delhi. Recommendations from the study were presented to the NCW, National Human rights Commission and the DWCD.

A letter from the NCW was sent to the local police authorities to look into the matter and immediate action was promised to be taken.

The study report has been finalized and is under printing by an established publishing house, Seagull.

Highlights-

- It was for the first time that the Bedin women and young boys and girls from the community were provided an opportunity to be listened to and articulate their concerns and demand for basic services and to live with dignity sans harassment and humiliation.

- The study has made openings for further advocacy and alliance building for the extremely isolated and vulnerable Bedin community women with women's groups and state services.

Human rights, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Documenting experiences of women living with HIV/AIDS using CEDAW framework

The Centre for Media Advocacy and Research (CFAR), New Delhi, in partnership with Positive Women's Network, Chennai has completed the process of documenting violations of human rights of women affected by the HIV pandemic and the publication of the study titled 'Positive speaking-Voices of women living with HIV/AIDS' was released on the inaugural day of the fortnight campaign for protesting the violence against women on Nov, 25th 2003 by the chairperson of National Commission for Women.

The study has been completed through intensive interviews – 55 interviews in Kerala, 19 in Tamil Nadu and 26 in Karnataka, 21 case profiles have been completed and six FGDs held. The documentation was preceded with a series of capacity building workshops and consultations with many stakeholders from the women's groups. State workshops in Chennai, Karnataka and Kerala were held with the stakeholders from SACS, public health administration, policy makers and civil society organizations including the AIDS groups. A national consultation was held in January this year to share the initial study design and develop it with the inputs from the experts who were invited to the consultation.

PWN+ has been fully involved in the study from the stage of designing, planning and conducting the investigation.

While focusing on the main legal, political and human rights issues the study, its processes, and methods were attentive to emerging trends and future issues related to reducing the vulnerability of women to HIV. Based on the analysis of the testimonies of the positive women the issues of stigma and discrimination faced by them formed the key essence of the report.

Based on a strong human rights framework the testimonies in the study have most evocatively brought before the reader both the extreme forms of disempowerment women undergo through out the life cycle and her stories of courage, persistence and hope for a better future for herself and her children. It also recognizes different forms of violence, the efforts have increased to raise awareness, to strengthen network of positive women and to promote knowledge and research on the issue.

The study has reaffirmed the intricacy and interrelated web of factors that cause and perpetuate the cycle of violations and accompanying vulnerabilities for girls and women and the continuing need to address pervasive gender inequality and

discrimination. The study indicates the need for continued support even in areas where progress has been made. For instance, the legislative and policy frameworks established need continuing development and attention. On the positive side we see that the discourse on gender and HIV has moved forward with this study and its wide scale dissemination at various international and national platforms consisting of a wide circle of stakeholders from the state and non state agencies.

Highlights-

- This has been a path breaking study which has brought forth the issues of the positive women most powerfully. The study has been a tremendous learning and training experience for the positive women groups- this experience has enhanced their individual and organizational capacities. They have presented the findings of the study in an international GIPA meeting held in London in November'03, they were also invited to make a presentation at the international meet of the positive people held in Uganda in October'03 The findings of the study have been shared at various platforms both internationally and at the national level.
- The study has been shared in two national consultations which drew positive response and participation from all key national and state agencies, bilaterals and UN agencies as well as from the key non state, civil society groups and organizations working on the relevant issues.
- The National Commission of Women has taken the study on its agenda and has made concerted efforts to move the agenda of mainstreaming gender in the HIV with all concerned stakeholders.
- PWN has been provided technical support by UNIFEM in leveraging additional resources for advocacy, networking and training on gender and HIV issues with on other platforms and with women's and AIDS groups. As part of this process, UNIFEM supported the participation of three positive women participants to the Leadership for Results Programme for People Living with HIV/AIDS organized by UNDP in collaboration with INP+ and NACO. 130 PLWHA participants highlighted critical concerns and recommended funds and resources for all PLWHA members, capacity development of all networks of PLWHA, greater involvement at all levels of HIV/AIDS response, access to treatment for all including HART and full information to all people testing positive for HIV on prevention, treatment, care and support.
- President of the PWN has been invited to represent on the international forum for positive women (ICW)
- Results of the study have also been fed into the CEDAW shadow country report

Objective 4:

To facilitate sharing/exchange of experiences with media and members of civil society for enhanced gender-sensitising responses

Media Sensitisation of Editors and Reporters at the Regional level:

Two media organizations organized the media round tables in three regions of the country. CFAR organized it in the southern and eastern regions and WFS organized these in the northern region.

Following the media sensitization workshops conducted by The Center for Media Advocacy and Research (CFAR), Delhi, a media tool kit for media practitioners, AIDS activists and women's groups for gender sensitive reporting and handling of advocacy issues has been prepared and launched by CFAR. The module deals with aspects of ethical reporting norms, inclusive representation, and language and how stories can be framed highlighting the exploitation issues of marginalised groups and remains sensitive to protecting rights of people and ensure confidentiality.

The media booklet was launched with the government, NGOs and women's machinery and the press. A C.D Rom is also available. It's has been widely disseminated.

Highlights-

- The media Tool has been distributed to key editors and channel heads and has received appreciation from different quarters. Channel heads such as Sahara and journalism schools such as School of Convergence have requested for intensive training sessions with upcoming reporters.
- There has been a demand from positive groups in Tamil Nadu and Kerala to create similar products for Tamil and Malayalam journalists. PWN+ has requested CFAR for technical support to create these customised versions of the Media Tool. We are working with them on this.
- Learnings from this process has also been incorporated in a module on Gender and Mass Media that CFAR has produced for NCW. This will be part of curriculum for schools of journalism.
- There has been positive feedback and demand for products like these from groups in Himachal Pradesh.

Women's Feature Service also completed its media monitoring process following media sensitization workshops in UP and MP. They were notable changes in the month of September in the articles on HIV/AIDS in UP and MP – 19 articles were published in UP and 14 in MP/Chattisgarh. In December there was a remarkable increase 42 articles in UP and 62 in MP/Chattisgarh. Women's Feature Service mailed special packs of materials to the journalists – as follow up from the workshops in Hindi. The journalists have also advocated for political action. However it must be noted that there are few articles on gender and sexuality, and issues of sexual health and violence have been captured in the context of youth, women are still projected as poor and bad women. Another notable change has been in the language being used by the journalists – it is more

sensitive, gender neutral, such as 'deha vepar' instead of 'vaishya' – amore sensitive term for women in prostitution and replacement of 'AIDS se grast' (AIDS sufferers) with 'AIDS se jee rahe hain' (living with HIV/AIDS). Recommendations include the need for updated and timely materials in Hindi and the need to support journalists with trainings and inputs as well as continual sensitization to women's issues.

Highlights-

Setting up a web based resource centre on gender and HIV/AIDS:

The need for a resource centre which could provide a single window for information on gender and HIV was articulated in the course of various consultations and workshops and also as part of planned activities from UNIFEM for CHARCA. As a response to this need Women's Feature Service (WFS) was approached to set up a virtual resource centre on its website to build bridges between the media, NGOs, UN agencies, government agencies and other organizations on the cross cutting issues of gender based vulnerabilities for women. The process is underway with the collection and compilation of available reports on gender and HIV from different geographical locations.

Reports and publications: The following reports have either been published or produced by the PAF project partners with technical and financial support from UNIFEM

1. Media tool for gender sensitive reporting on HIV/AIDS prepared by CFAR and PWN (A publication and a CD ROM)
2. Positive speaking: voices of women (A publication of the testimonies of the positive women on their human rights violations)
3. A Hindi training manual on gender and HIV by ISST (published)
4. An information resource book for panchayats on gender and HIV in Tamil and English by ISS(to be published)
5. 'To sing or not to sing'- a publication by Alarippu on the study of the vulnerability of the women in the Bedin community of Uttar Pradesh
6. A set of five printed posters on women's vulnerabilities to be used as IEC for training of the panchayat cadre by The Hunger Project.
7. A C.D rom in Telgu and a training manual in Kannada and English on the 3 day workshop with more than 300 elected women representatives from the panchayts of Karnataka by Mahila Samakhya, Karnataka
8. A set of posters giving gender sensitive messages on violence against women and vulnerability to HIV for the print and visual media on HIV expected from Breakthrough
9. 3 Gender and HIV regional consultation Reports
10. 2 media advocacy and consultation reports by CFAR and WFS
11. A workshop report by NEN on the three phase enhancing the counseling skills of the practicing councilors in the hospitals and clinics
12. A detailed report by Action India on the peer educators training and their outreach activities in the urban slum communities of Delhi
13. One national consultation report on working towards a gender sensitive policy on HIV/AIDS held in collaboration with NCW

14. One report on the national consultation to disseminate the findings and insights from the study on the human rights violations of positive women within the CEDAW framework
15. A report on W. Bengal consultation with WBSACS and women's groups to develop gender sensitive policy and programmatic initiatives in the state.

Challenges:

- One of the key challenges while working through the project processes and partnerships remains to respond to HIV/AIDS in the developmental context of poverty and gendered inequality. The redressal mechanisms are still piecemeal in nature. Scope for the non state actors to work as equal partners with the state although has been acknowledged but still has lot of gaps in intent and practice.
- The challenges emerging from partner organizations, especially those who have for the first time addressed this issue, is how they can integrate this issue into ongoing work. Both technical and financial support would be required to advance this agenda as well as more inputs into mainstreaming methodology would have to be developed. UNIFEM has been providing them with the necessary information on funding raising and advocacy.
- Most media treatment on the issue of HIV/AIDS relies on the stereotypical presentations of men and women –using patriarchal family structures, power residing with men and marital relationships as its basis. The challenge and the steps for the future would be to develop IEC strategies and materials which sensitively help explore the issues of masculinity, portray the causes and forms of women's vulnerability and empowering her to have control and make informed choices for safe sex.

Lessons- The project has assisted in enlarging the scope of learning to make gender sensitive responses to HIV/AIDS. In addition it has also been useful in identifying the gaps. For example it showed that there was paucity of information which provides a gender sensitive and empowering understanding of the key issues in popular and democratic forms and spaces; peer support, immediacy of response by the government agencies; that women were unaware of their legal rights and available support services and lacked access to and information on them; that men needed to be involved in the efforts to combat gender based vulnerability to HIV.

Lessons for project management- Although the project has paid rich dividends in terms of multiple outcomes and outputs coming from a small project for a short duration which essentially had a catalytic role to play it needed a very intensive investment from the UNIFEM HIV programme staff in project management of and high levels of technical inputs. The lesson learnt is to do strategic partnerships which reduce the strain of micro level project management. However, the need for a very time intensive involvement from the HIV project staff was required because of the new and hitherto largely unexplored areas of engendering HIV with in the AIDS and women's groups.

Future Steps:

- The notions of gender equality, masculinities and sensitivity to involvement of men as key actors for empowerment need to be deepened and further focused in our work on gender and HIV/AIDS.
- Need to develop strategies to reach out to young people on the intersecting issues of gender, human rights, VAW. etc.
- Help Positive Women's network in developing a long term organizational vision, mission and setting of goals to increase their outreach and build their stronger advocacy role
- Strengthening grass root advocacy and capacity building through I.E.C, training, awareness raising and skill building activities for the youth, panchayat representatives, women's self help groups and women in the unorganized sector
- Disseminate and share the materials, products and learnings from this project with the other UNIFEM project partners and programmes such as railways, CHARCA, and human security etc.
- Strategic link up of the HIV project activities with other thematic areas of UNIFEM of trafficking, governance, gender audit, women in the unorganized sector and VAW
- Develop knowledge base on aspects of care and support for WLHAs, for instance gain understanding of the impact of the care economy from a gendered perspective
- Sustained engagement with the media to break the gender stereotypes

Conclusion-Although small funds project it has been a catalytic project in the truest sense of the term. Not only the activities under the project launched multiple products and publications, its processes and methods have been trend setters in advocacy research and focusing on the human rights concerns of the positive people especially women in an extremely poignant and powerful manner on the national agenda of the policy makers and women's machinery.

The PAF project has been very successful in building the knowledge and skill base of women's organizations and their networks to address the gender inequalities in the context of care, treatment and support for women living with HIV/AIDS (WLHAs). The research studies both on the vulnerability of Bedin community women and human rights violations of HIV positive women have demonstrated and shared new approaches to qualitative, participatory and feminist studies on the gender dimensions of violence, sexual exploitation and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS into the public discourse both aspects which were disempowering and which were rebuilding hope and dignity of these women.

Working with diverse partners that included government agencies, NGOs, media, positive women networks, women and the community, UNIFEM's initiatives through the project have been able to bring on board new partnerships with National Commission for Women (NCW) and partnerships of PWN with SACS and NACO and women's machinery.

The outputs from the project provide an excellent advocacy tools and rich resource for diverse practitioners including government agencies, NGOs, national and international organizations working on gender and HIV. Not only have the outcomes added to our learning on the issue, it also provides us with a reference point for the future efforts.

The challenge in the coming time for UNIFEM is to go beyond the existing human rights discourse and address women's concerns at all levels.

