

# Positive action in India

**FACTSHEET** AUGUST 2013

## A new approach to HIV prevention

Around the world, most HIV prevention efforts focus on people who are not living with HIV. Very few target the 34 million people living with HIV<sup>1</sup> worldwide, despite the fact that they play an equally important role in preventing new HIV infections.

Strategies that help people living with HIV protect their sexual and reproductive health, delay HIV disease progression, and work with their partners to reduce the risk of HIV transmission are called 'positive prevention'. Such strategies are becoming increasingly important as treatment is rolled out, and HIV is becoming a long-term manageable condition.

In India, an estimated 2.4 million people were living with HIV in 2009<sup>2</sup>. HIV prevalence rates are highest among people who use drugs (9.2%), men who have sex with men (7.3%) and sex workers (4.9%)<sup>3</sup>. However, HIV focussed programmes for these key populations are limited.



## IPPF Japan Trust Fund supports positive change

Since 2010, the IPPF Japan Trust Fund (JTF) project 'Addressing Stigma and Positive Prevention among people living with HIV and key populations', run by the Family Planning Association of India (FPA India), has been working to improve the sexual and reproductive health and quality of life for people living with HIV – particularly men who have sex with men and transgenders.

At FPA India's clinics, people living with HIV can access services for counselling, family planning, treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), condoms, advice on HIV treatment, or referrals for other services such as treatment of TB. Counsellors and health workers also help them to disclose their status to loved-ones if they wish to. People living with HIV are frequently rejected by their partners or family, so counselling is provided to encourage acceptance, care and support.

Discrimination against key populations and people living with HIV also means that they are often unable to find work, and condemned to poverty. Through the project, people can learn new skills, such as candle making or mobile-phone repair, and set up their own business.

FPA India is helping to increase acceptance of people living with HIV by their partners and family.

### India

Population: 1.205 billion (2012)  
Life expectancy: 67 years (2011)  
Adult HIV prevalence rate: 0.3% (2009)  
No. of people living with HIV: 2.4 million (2009)  
No. of people on HIV treatment: 424.8 thousand (2009)  
(References overleaf)

### Project Facts

Organization: Family Planning Association of India (FPA India)  
Donor: IPPF Japan Trust Fund for HIV and Reproductive Health  
Objective: To improve the health and quality of life of people living with HIV  
Location: Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and Kohima  
Period: 2010-2012

### Project Service Statistics

10,325 people reached with SRH services including:  
1,198 HIV tests conducted  
3,961 counselling sessions conducted for PLHIV  
1,514 counselling sessions for partners and family members  
1,793 opportunistic infections treated  
1,152 STI services provided  
42,198 condoms distributed  
194 people supported with income generation activities

"I wish that FPA India continues its amazing work forever. I love coming here because I can be myself without fear of discrimination..."

**Client (18), Nagaland**

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## Akshay's story

Akshay\* is 26 years old and lives with his wife, sister and parents in Mumbai. He tested positive for HIV in 2009. Afraid of the stigma associated with HIV, he has only told a few people he is living with HIV.

When Akshay first came to FPA India's clinic, he immediately observed that the staff were different. "I realized that people here are good, they talk to you properly, they give you complete information and you don't feel lost". Inspired by his experience he applied to be an Outreach Worker under the Positive Prevention project and was ecstatic when he got the job. "Stigma starts with being judgemental" he says. "At FPA India no one ever asked me how I got HIV...They just treat you as an equal".

As an Outreach Worker, Akshay introduces other people living with HIV to FPA India's clinic. He has also accessed services himself, like Hepatitis B vaccination, treatment for opportunistic infections and condoms, and has brought his wife for HIV counselling and testing. "I have changed a lot. I have become more responsible in my behaviour and feel less anxious about the challenges ahead. I am the only son and there is pressure to have a child soon...If everything goes well, I can plan for a child with the help of advanced fertilization techniques."

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### Photos

1. The Nagaland State AIDS Control Society 'Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS' Coordinator at an event showcasing candle making in Nagaland.
2. A transgender client of the FPA India clinic, Mumbai.
3. Family members of a client who uses drugs at the FPA India clinic, Nagaland.
4. A client who uses drugs at a recreational event organized by the FPA India clinic, Nagaland.

Photos: IPPF/Peter Caton/India/2008 (front cover and 2); IPPF/Vincent Belho/India/2010 (1, 3, 4)

## Increasing awareness, sharing lessons

The IPPF JTF project has been instrumental in increasing understanding of how to meet the positive prevention needs of people living with HIV. A comprehensive approach, that provides sexual and reproductive health services, addresses stigma and discrimination and encourages economic empowerment, is key to this.

These and other lessons have been captured in the publication developed by FPA India and the Indian Network of People living with HIV (INP+), with support from IPPF South Asia Regional Office titled 'Positive Prevention: prevention strategies for people living with HIV'<sup>4</sup>. FPA India has also been invited by other organizations to train their counsellors on positive prevention strategies. Furthermore, its clinics will continue to provide services to people living with HIV, ensuring that the impact of the project continues into the future.

### References

1. UNAIDS, World AIDS Day Report, 2011 (p. 6)
2. UNAIDS, Country Factsheet India, [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)
3. Ibid.
4. Access the publication at [www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org)

\* name changed to protect confidentiality

India facts from: CIA, The World Factbook, India, [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

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From  
the People of Japan

The IPPF Japan Trust Fund for HIV and Reproductive Health was set up by the Government of Japan in 2000, to increase access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services for women, young people and key populations in developing countries. Since its establishment, it has supported more than 121 projects in 49 countries.