

Leadership Project

Our work on issues of sexuality started when we were commissioned to be the Asia evaluators for Ford Foundation's programme of Global Dialogues for Sexual Health and Wellbeing, May 2008. This evaluation helped both Ford Foundation and programme grantees analyse results, identify effective and sustainable strategies, organizational development issues and identify the most effective, compelling and sustainable aspects of their program. The South-To-South HIV/AIDS Resource Exchange (SHARE) project commissioned BPF to document 20 of NACO's best practices covering a broad spectrum of India's HIV/AIDS prevention interventions, for dissemination in Asia and Africa.

The Department of Social Justice, Government of Kerala commissioned Sangama to conduct a seminal study to assess the needs of transgenders in Kerala, who in turn commissioned BPF to document the experiences of transgenders in the areas of social inclusion, economic inclusion and access to services, gender identity, and the violence they face in public and private spaces in the state of Kerala.

Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) invited BPF to document and disseminate demonstrated best practices of CBOs and NGOs in 12 identified sites in the implementation of the target intervention programme that are both replicable and scalable. In another partnership with KHPT we developed entrepreneurial capabilities of Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and trans people in Dharwad district of Karnataka, through delivery of the Market Oriented Value Enhancement (MOVE) livelihood approach.

In order to intensify our work with the sex worker and sexual minority communities, Best Practices Foundation created a separate division to solely focus on their issues. This wing is led by Shubha Chacko, with a 4 member team. The team works to build leadership at the grassroots level by supporting individual activists in different small towns in South India. In an attempt to enable the CBOs to address issues relevant to their communities, the capacities of the members are built on a range of practical skills to take up tasks of helping their members access entitlements such as a voter id cards, opening a bank accounts, access to subsidized food (ration cards), all of which contribute towards the members well-being. The idea is to build self sufficiency and voice. Partnerships are built with a wide range of organisations and individuals who have experience of leadership and institution building.

Issues around mental health are also given special focus through training in peer counselling and links with professional counsellors etc.

Economic empowerment is another area of important concern of these communities. The team works to improve their prospects of finding employment in the formal sector, as well as expand livelihood options. Towards this, interventions in livelihood and training in soft skills, are shared as per the requirements of the project. Both divisions work in synergy towards accomplishing the larger goal of creating a society where people can live with dignity and freedom.