

SAATHII – Site visit report 1 of 2 Details of the Educational Grant

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Project Web Site: <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=727>

I visited SAATHII Hyderabad Office and met the team members on 17 December, 2009 during my India visit. We started the meeting with a detailed presentation of the Andhra Pradesh Family Care Continuum (APFCC) program that SAATHII implements in the state to care for families affected / infected by the HIV / AIDS.

The APFCC program covers four districts, however my site visit was limited to the Hyderabad area and I was able to visit only one partner team NHP+. There was wide-spread political and civil unrest in the state during my visit in December 2009, which limited my travel plans.

Terminology:

AfE: Asha for Education

PLHIV: People Living with HIV / AIDS

OVC: Orphans and Vulnerable Children

APFCC: Andhra Pradesh Family Care Continuum

NHP+: Local partner team for the Ranga Reddy district of AP.

CNJ: Central New Jersey chapter of AfE.

NYC/NJ: New York City / New Jersey chapter of AfE

MPHW: Multi purpose Health Workers

ART: Anti-Retroviral Treatment

APFCC Program: (Improved version on the OVC program)

This program that SAATHII implements in the AP state, since 2007, is based on a similar program that the SAATHII team has successfully (relatively speaking) put into place in Tamil Nadu state. The APFCC program covers 52 mandals across six districts of AP. The previous implementation was **only** focused on the orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). Based on the learnings of the OVC program and the observations in the TNFCC program, the OVC program was enhanced to address the total family care. The redesign of the program led to the current definition of the APFCC program.

In its entirety, this program services include medical, psychological, education, nutrition and other home and community based care. By March 2009, this program had reached 1322 families caring for 1813 HIV affected and infected children.

AfE CNJ Chapter funds the educational component of this program. Based on discussions with the program coordinators Kaveeshar and Chandra Reddy, I understand that AfE support has provided uninterrupted school education for 153 children for the last 3 consecutive academic years.

The nutrition services are supported by another grant from AfE NYC/NJ Chapter and this grant is discussed in a subsequent section.

At the field level, this program is implemented by partnering with local community groups and other local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). SAATHII works very closely with these local organizations and provides enormous support for the successful implementation of the program. SAATHII identifies local organizations that they can work with and then provides training support, financial support and logistical support so that the local partner can implement the program goals successfully in the field. In identifying these local community partners, SAATHII regularly evaluates the various services that are available in the districts from various other support mechanisms such as other non-profits and any government programs available in that district / mandal. This prevents duplication of resources and support services.

After a recent evaluation, changes were made to the program in 2009 to improve the effectiveness of the APFCC program, which has an impact on the 2009 funding disbursement (see below). The changes to the program were previously communicated to CNJ chapter in a separate proposal and hence I am not going into the details of those here. The result of the changes is that going forward; the program will be implemented with three partners (NHP+, CJWS and Vianney Home).

2008 Educational Grant: (USD 4860 in Sep. 2008)

This section covers the details of the 2008 CNJ Grant for educational needs. This grant was utilized for the academic year 2009-2010 to support 136 children from families affected by HIV/AIDS. Although the need was greater, the funds were distributed based on a needs-assessment with preference given as follows:

Continuing education for those children that received support in the previous year;

Single or double orphans;

HIV infected children;

Girls

Using the funds in this grant, the program was implemented through seven partners. Partner organizations were entrusted to identify and disburse funds to the children in their local communities. Partners received established guidelines for selecting the children and for technical and financial monitoring. SAATHII program coordinators receive consolidated and monthly statements from the partners detailing various program metrics and financial balances.

Out of the 136 children supported,
59 were HIV infected and 77 children were from HIV affected families.
76 were girls and 60 boys.
Age group of this group ranges from 4 years to 17 years.
Income of these families was below Rs 3000/- per month

2009 Educational Grant: (USD 7876 in Sep 2009)

This section covers the details of the 2009 CNJ Grant for educational needs. This disbursement was based on a proposal that was prior to the program changes. The original proposal was based on funding needs from nine project partners to support the education of 175 children. The proposal also included costs for running 22 remedial class centers from June 2009 through March 2010. However, the grant was late and was only available in Oct 2009.

The program changes were communicated to the CNJ project steward and the SAATHII project coordinators are awaiting approval from CNJ team before these funds will be disbursed.

The new proposal is to support
125 children from 3 project partners (50 children from each partner)
Costs for running 7 remedial class centers for the affected children
Remaining funds in June 2010 will be carried forward for the next academic year.

These changes need CNJ approval. It was mentioned that the funds will be disbursed only after the program changes were approved by the CNJ team.

NHP+ Partner Team:

(Visited on 12/17/2009 along with Kaveeshar and Chandra Reddy of APFCC Program, SAATHII)

NHP+ is a community group that supports the HIV/AIDS affected families in the Ranga Reddy district of AP. I did get a chance to visit the center and interact with the staff and volunteers at the center. The team is led by Ms Swapna and Ms Dhanashree is the project coordinator and APFCC project lead at the partner site. The staff at NHP+ work very closely with the APFCC project coordinators at SAATHII.

Most of the staff at the center have first-hand information and experience with the HIV/AIDS affects and its impact on the families and the surrounding communities. This enables the staff at the center to connect with the people that eventually receive the financial aid (beneficiaries) from the AfE chapters. I found that the staff members at the center are extremely knowledgeable about the various aspects – impact in the family, impact to the individual, the social stigma,

the significance of proper disposal methods, the nutritional needs, the medication, the available governmental support system - of HIV/AIDS. When the center started, there were 25 people, today it has grown and now supports about 5000 people.

Through their staff and volunteers, they provide family counseling for the affected and the infected families. They also provide various support services and perform the role of a support network through the effective use of resources made available to them from various organizations including AfE. They also partner with (or have previously partnered with) organizations like GOD / CFC; SATYAM; CSC; SAATHI to name a few. GOD is a faith based organization that provides family support only girl children, for boys they run an orphanage home but do not provide family based support. CFC is also a faith based organization and provides support only for affected (but not infected) children. Similarly, community support was also received from SATYAM and CSC.

This center plays a very significant local partner role with SAATHI to implement the APFCC program using the financial support from AfE CNJ. In 2007, this partnership started with six children and was gradually increased to 20 children in 2009. In 2010, the goal is to support 50 children using the funds from AfE. It is estimated that there are about 600 infected children in the Ranga Reddy district alone. The number of affected children is estimated to be 10 times that of the infected children.

The 20 children supported under the APFCC program,

- come from six mandals of the district
- 6 are infected children and 14 are affected children
- the mandals were selected based on the local services available to affected families
- in these 6 mandals, it was noted that there were 31 infected children and 289 affected children
- each child got Rs 1400/- for the educational needs as part of the APFCC grant

The APFCC program at the center is implemented by a staff of four. Ms Dhanashree is the project lead at the center and has the support of three field workers designated as Multi purpose Health Workers (MPHW). Each MPHW covers two mandals and works very closely with the children and their families. They are required to perform a field visit (at least) once a month to each home that is covered by the APFCC program. Details of the field visit are covered in the next section. Each MPHW maintains a ledger of a families needs, progress and their current status. Notes from all these ledgers is consolidated into a report called the monthly technical report (MTR) and submitted to SAATHI. APFCC project coordinators at SAATHI receive such MTR reports from each partner and consolidate the reports for calculating various metrics of the APFCC program.

I have personally verified some of the progress reports and the receipts for the school fees paid. Each family acknowledges the receipt of Rs 1400/- in the accounting books maintained by the center. These books are periodically verified by the APFCC program coordinators as well. The staff members at the center were very cooperative and opened the books and allowed me to verify. The amount budgeted in the NHP+ books amounted to $20 \times 1400 = \text{Rs } 28000$, which matches the receipts and the numbers reflected in the books from SAATHII. At this time, I have no reservations about the accounting methods at NHP+ or at SAATHII.

Field Visit:

(Visited on 12/19/2009 7:30 am to 9:30 am along with
Mr Kaveeshar & Mr Chandra Reddy, APFCC, Program Coordinators,
SAATHII;
Ms Dhanashree, APFCC Project Lead, NHP+;
Ms Rama Devi, MPH, NHP+
)

I did get a chance to go on a field visit to the families that receive the benefit dollars from AfE. Due to limitations in my time schedule we were able to visit only two families in Balanagar, Hayatnagar mandal, Ranga Reddy district, AP. I had to take off at 9:45 am to attend Asha Hyderabad chapter meeting and do another site visit at the RUPS school project in Yellamabanda, Hyderabad, funded by Asha Hyderabad.

As mentioned above each field health worker (MPHW), visits the families of the beneficiaries at least once a month and reviews their case status. As part of the field visit, the MPH, verifies the medications, the first aid kit and counsels the family about numerous special things that need to be addressed as part of their daily life. They also verify the medical records of the infected person(s) in the family and make notes in their dairies about their current status. The MPH records things like CD4 counts (indicates immunity level), medication, supplies needed/replenished, any upcoming doctor visits etc. They also verify the progress reports and collect receipts from the school for the children that are supported in the APFCC program.

Jyothi, X Grade:

The first family we visited was a 17 year old girl, named Jyothi, studying tenth standard. She is positive and lives with her grandmother in a one room home, with a bathroom shared by tenants living in building. Her mother passed away due to this illness and her dad's whereabouts are unknown. She is aware of her HIV positive status. She understands the complications of the situation and understands the significance of first-aid kit that she received from NHP+. We also discussed and reviewed with her the significance of proper disposal of medical waste.

She did receive Rs 1400 from NHP+ and is continuing her education in a government school. She was very pleased to meet Ms Ramadevi and Ms Dhanashree and recognized both of them. Although she was very excited to see them, her physical growth seemed to be stunted due to lack of proper nutrition. We did have a discussion about the medications she is expected to take, although we were not able to verify her medications as they were not able to locate the keys for the drawer.

Prashanth, VII Grade:

The second family we visited had two HIV positive people in the family. Prashanth and his mother are both positive and only mom is aware of their status. He attends a local private school Sri Rao's high school and gets a discount on the tuition fees. He attends school very regularly and gets good grades. He has a sister Bhavani, IV grade, who is negative and healthy. They stay in a joint family and one of the grand parents also stays with them to assist them. They do get some support from the relatives and share the costs. His dad passed away. He and his mom are both on anti-retroviral ART treatment, which they get from the government. He walks to the school and packs lunch. They are first generation school children as most of the family members are laborers.

We discussed some of the issues with the family. The child is not aware of his status but since he is now 11 years old, it was noted that the family should be counseled and made aware of their status. This is another task that the MPHWP perform as part of these visits.

2009 Nutritional Supplement Grant: (USD 10977 in Jan 2009)

The site visit for the nutritional supplement grant is documented in a separate site visit document. However a lot of the background for this project has been discussed in this document and hence to get a complete understanding of the project, it is essential to review both the documents to understand the full impact of the project grants.

Recommendation:

The conclusion and recommendation for the project are discussed in the second document that discusses the nutritional supplement grant. Please refer to that document.



Photo 1: Asha volunteer Madhav Lakkapragada with APFCC program coordinators Mr Chandra Reddy and Mr Kaveeshar along with the Staff at NHP+ Madhav (far left), Chandra, Kaveeshar. NHP+ President Ms Swapna far right. Ms Dhanashree, APFCC Lead at NHP+ is in the center.