Annexure 1b: Case Studies of Successful Resource Mobilisation

Case I: Sex Workers turn Entrepreneurs

For sex workers, fighting social stigma and discrimination is a big challenge. Unlike in the old days when society accepted them as part of the social structure and gave them a respected place, sex workers today are harassed and looked down upon and, more often than not, exploited. Ashodaya Samithi, an organisation of female, male and transgender sex workers in Karnataka, is addressing the issue of social stigma and discrimination towards HIV positive sex workers and sex workers in general by promoting entrepreneurship among them. Its efforts towards this have given shape to an innovative and sustainable project—a community kitchen in Mysore.

Around 150 organised sex workers are today selling thalis or meals at Rs 7 each, at their centre. They sell about 150 meals a day. What began as an experimental proposition has turned into a business model for them. Their joint effort has won their organisation, Ashodaya, a World Bank grant as well. Development Marketplace (DM) is a competitive grant programme administered by the World Bank and supported by various partners. It identifies and funds innovative, small-scale development projects with good potential for expansion that can be replicated and which could have development impact.

The sex workers’ organisation has won the grant from among 1,000 competing proposals. The 75 shortlisted finalists from among the 1,000, were invited to Mumbai to set up a stall, exhibit and explain their proposal to a team of jurors and convince them on their proposal. A sex worker and Ashodaya secretary, Bhagyalakshmi did the promotional work. She convinced the jurors on the innovativeness, replication and sustainability of their project and made Ashodaya qualify to receive the World Bank grant of $40,000 in Mumbai from actor and UNICEF envoy Shabana Azmi.

The grant aims are: reducing the social stigma that sex workers face, by undertaking healthcare measures, training speakers and promoting positive living, developing business initiative, and documenting each episode of discrimination and to address them.

Sushena Rezapaul, head of Disha project, which provides technical backing to Ashodaya, told Business Standard, ‘Ashodaya plans to expand the community kitchen project to other districts, encouraged by its success’. As these marginalised women become ‘kitchen managers’, discrimination and stigma will take a backseat.

Ashodaya emerged from a need among Mysore’s sex workers to group themselves into an organisation. Those who came for treatment at the Emanuel Hospital Association (EHA), which is running an HIV prevention project in Mysore and Mandya districts, decided to group into Ashodaya organisation. Besides running the kitchen, Ashodaya, headed by its president Rathnamma, has put up two stalls at the Urban Haath, a handicraft centre in Mysore, where they sell clothes. They plan to promote a community laundry and cater to IT companies, hospitals and major firms, Rezapaul said. Rathnamma acknowledges the increasing awareness towards the inherent capacity of the marginalised and hopes that they will scale greater heights in HIV prevention, care and support through their joint effort.
**Case II: Dream-A-Dream Gets a Slice of the Earnings**

Dream-a-Dream has joined hands with selected restaurants in Bangalore to create a ‘Dream Table’. From each order given by customers at the ‘dream table’, a portion of the bill goes to Dream-a-Dream. This builds an opportunity for corporate social responsibility (CSR) into the hospitality industry.

The objective of Dream-a-Dream Bangalore is to promote leadership in children from diverse backgrounds.

**Case III: Sristisankula**

Sristisankula is a registered community-based organisation (CBO), working with men who have sex with men (MSM) in Gadag district of Karnataka. It is part of a state-level MSM CBO federation called Sarathya. Sarathya presently covers 20 districts of the state and is encouraging MSM communities in remaining districts to form CBOs and be part of the federation. This federation was formed with the support of Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT); being part of the federation, the CBOs receive knowledge support and information about funding opportunities.

Mr Arif, Secretary of the federation, is also the founder of Sristisankula. In 2002, Mr Arif started working in Gadag district with Samraksha, a partner voluntary organisation of KHPT, towards prevention of HIV and ensured care and medical facilities for those affected. The main objective of Sristisankula is ensuring that MSM, transgender and other sexual minority communities become part of mainstream society.

According to Mr Arif, the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) provides direct financial support to MSM CBOs which are more than two years old, under its targeted intervention (Ti) programs. Being just a year old, Sristisankula cannot receive support directly from NACO, so it receives financial support from NACO through another CBO Rakshane. Rakshane is a five-year old CBO which works with female sex workers (FSWs). It approached NACO on behalf of Sristisankula and has received an annual grant of Rs 11 lakh. Next year Sristisankula will approach NACO and has already started building relations with the Joint Director and Programme Director of Karnataka State AIDS Control Society (KSACS).

Mr Arif is also planning to organise events across the district like antakshari competitions, cooking competitions and cultural nights during the year to raise financial support from the local communities. He has approached and presented Sristisankula to local Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and visiting dignitaries. He also keeps the district administration officials informed of Sristisankula activities. He is hopeful of receiving their individual contributions and later their support under various government schemes. Sristisankula charges Rs. 20 as an annual membership fee from its members for the support it provides.

Sristisankula though just a year-old, looks for opportunities for support from individuals, government institutions and other grant-making agencies, whenever and wherever there is an opportunity.

The members of Sristisankula and other CBOs like Aaptamitra and Sanjeevani in Raichur district have started to provide meals to Karnataka State AIDS Control Society (KSACS) training programmes, as part of their income-generating programme. The profits from
Case IV: Samartya

Samartya, a six-month old CBO, is also part of the MSM federation Sarathya. Being part of the federation, Samartya receives technical knowledge of running and maintaining the CBO which includes exploring self-generated income opportunities.

Samartya is unique in its work in that it links the MSM, transgender and other sexual minorities to various government schemes, such as Aarogyashree (Health Card) and an old age pension scheme.

Being a six-month old CBO, Samartya hopes to receive support from KSACS next year for its work. In the meantime, it is exploring opportunities with KHPT officials for income-generating activities for its members. It will be conducting feasibility studies for manufacturing and selling of handicrafts and other products. It is also working with other CBOs that work with women, Dalits and the handicapped. Samartya is also exploring other income-generating opportunities, such as operating telephone booths.

Samartya approaches and receives individual donations from local MLAs, small businessmen and district administration officials. An annual membership fee of Rs 50 is charged and it constitutes a part of self-generated income.

The interesting thing about all of these CBOs is that they have received considerable encouragement and support from partner agencies of grant-making organisations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, NACO and KSACS. These CBOs have received training in how to generate funds locally. It is the partner agencies like Sangama, Samraksha and others that are facing a resource crunch and are finding it difficult to sustain their work.