

**Internship at
FHI 360, Hyderabad**

By

Hanvitha Khambampati

MBA Hospital and Health Management

Academic year, 2015-2017



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

1, Prabhu Dayal Marg, Sanganer Airport
Jaipur-302029, Rajasthan
Ph: 0141 3924700, Fax: 3924738
Website: www.iihmr.edu.in

Organization Profile

FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. The staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing — creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 60 countries and all U.S. states and territories.

Vision

FHI 360 envisions a world in which all individuals and communities have the opportunity to reach their highest potential.

Mission

To improve lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions for human development.

About the Project

Linkages Across the Continuum of HIV Services for Key Populations Affected by HIV (LINKAGES) project is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and implemented by FHI 360 in partnership with Pact, IntraHealth International and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In line with USAID's goal, LINKAGES aims to accelerate the ability of governments, key population (KP) organizations and private sector providers to collaboratively plan, deliver and optimize services that reduce Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) transmission among KPs and extend life for those who are HIV-positive. Supporting governments, KP leaders, organizations working with KPs, and private-sector providers to use evidence based approaches to plan and implement comprehensive and sustainable services that reduce HIV transmission among key populations and extend the lives of those already living with HIV is a key component of the projects strategic approach.

In India, the National AIDS Control Program Phase-IV (NACP-IV), formally launched in February 2014, has prioritized a continued focus on prevention including accelerated coverage and improved quality of services for KPs, enhanced health communication and investments in innovations and technology to increase impact and foster access to quality services across the HIV prevention to care continuum. NACP-IV supported Targeted Intervention (TI) programs implemented by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) provide prevention services to KPs including behavior change communication (BCC), free condoms, management of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and referrals for HIV testing to Integrated Counseling and Testing Centers (ICTC). Additional services for People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) include needle and syringe exchange program, abscess management and opioid substitution therapy (OST). The Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) centers provide regular check-ups for People Living with HIV (PLHIV), CD4 testing, prevention and treatment of Opportunistic Infections (OI) including tuberculosis (TB), counseling services and free ART. National adult eligibility criteria for ART are World Health Organization (WHO) clinical stage III or IV, CD4 less than 350 cells/mm³, TB co-infection, and hepatitis B or C virus co-infection with chronic active hepatitis. However, there are concerns about the losses to follow-up across the HIV

continuum-of-care. Owing to lack of an on-line individual tracking system at the TI and ART centers, national or state-level data on the HIV cascade is not available. A cohort study in a district in Andhra Pradesh found that less than one-third of PLHIV followed all stages of care from diagnosis to achievement of virological suppression after ART initiation, and that attrition was higher in pre-ART stages than after ART initiation. Qualitative studies conducted with KPs to explore barriers in accessing HIV services revealed fear of the psychological impact of a positive HIV status, fear of rejection by family/community and loss of income, time and cost involved in accessing services, stigma and discrimination by health care workers (HCWs) as common factors.

The priority of the LINKAGES project, India will be on activities that increase access to comprehensive HIV prevention, care and treatment services as well as strengthening systems for planning, monitoring, evaluating and assuring quality of services across the prevention-to-care continuum for KPs. Under the PEPFAR plan for India, the LINKAGES project will focus on mapping and size estimation of KPs, provision of quality HIV prevention services, reaching, ensure access to HIV testing and linking those KPs who test HIV positive to care, while Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its partners will complete the remaining stages in the continuum. The geographic focus will be on five high HIV prevalence districts in two states; three districts in Andhra Pradesh (Guntur, Krishna and East Godavari) and two districts in Maharashtra (Mumbai and Pune). FHI 360 will work with the existing National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) / State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) funded Targeted Interventions (TIs) providing services to female sex workers (FSWs), men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender persons and PWIDs across these five districts.

Role as an Intern

- To gain basic understanding of LINKAGES project and its activities
- Meet with LINKAGES lead agency, RIDES, Vijayawada
- Visit the KP Hotspots and HRGs
- Identifying and documenting issues and challenges in project implementation
- Identifying and documenting issues and challenges faced by KPs