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Stop TB Partnership

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SWEET

Street Women Empowered and Engaged to Stop TB



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Humana People to People India (HPPI), in partnership with Stop TB, under the Challenge Facility for Civil Society (CFCS Round 12) grant is implementing the SWEET (Street Women Empowered and Engaged to Stop TB) initiative. This project provides vital information about TB, including screening, support to testing and treatment, aiming to educate, mobilise, and organise a community-wide effort to end TB among 5,000 homeless women and their families across 4-5 districts in Delhi.

The project focuses on Community, Rights and Gender (CRG), meaning to help and support women (as well as men and other genders) to understand TB and what it takes to end it and prevent it.

The main objectives are extending support and outreach to homeless women, empowering and fostering collective learning, and building the capacity of Sahelis (friends), with knowledge and understanding to take action for ending TB in their communities.

The power of collective support

During a Saheli Support Group (women's community supporting each other and spreading TB awareness) meeting, a TB Affected Street Activist (TASA) was discussing the symptoms of tuberculosis with the group members. During the session, a group member shared concerns about her friend Raveena, whose deteriorating health matched all the symptoms of TB.

Following the meeting, the TASA and several Saheli group members visited Raveena at her home in a slum in East Delhi. Their fears were confirmed when Raveena was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Despite her diagnosis, she had not started treatment as there were challenges in ensuring treatment adherence.

Determined to help, a Saheli member visited the local health facility to inquire about starting Raveena's treatment in Delhi. Her treatment was not initiated because of her homeless and mobile characteristics. After several discussions, the doctor agreed to start the treatment, but with one condition: Raveena's husband had to provide a written assurance that she would remain in one place until her treatment was complete.



The Saheli member and the TASA conducted multiple visits to Raveena's home, patiently convincing her husband to submit the required document. Their perseverance paid off. The husband eventually agreed, and Raveena's treatment was initiated.

Now, four months into her treatment, Raveena is showing significant improvement. Her journey is a testament to the strength of community support, compassion, and relentless dedication proof that collective effort can restore hope in the lonely journey of a person with TB.

A second chance at healing

Jyoti, a dedicated Saheli group member, met Reena during a weekly Support Group Meeting conducted in the slums and shared her difficult journey—diagnosed with tuberculosis in 2010, at the age of 30. She had begun treatment but discontinued it midway due to neglect, prioritising daily earnings over her health, compounded by the stigma surrounding tuberculosis. Now, at the age of 44, the disease has resurfaced with deteriorating health.

Understanding the urgency, Jyoti advised Reena to visit the Poly Clinic for an X-ray and sputum examination. However, the clinic referred them to Lady Hardinge Hospital for further tests. Despite undergoing the tests, they weren't provided with the reports and were told the results were negative.



Unconvinced and deeply concerned, Jyoti noticed Reena's symptoms persisting and took her back to the PolyClinic. She requested the clinic to conduct the sputum examination on-site. This time, the test was carried out, and the results confirmed positive for tuberculosis.

Without delay, Reena was put on treatment and linked to Ni-kshay Poshan Yojna. Jyoti followed up regularly during the treatment and provided counselling support to Reena. She has been following the regular treatment and her health condition has improved substantially.

This story is a powerful reminder of the importance of persistence, advocacy, and the life-changing impact of community support. Thanks to Jyoti's unwavering determination, Reena has been given a second chance at health and hope.

A journey of hope and healing

Mahmooda, a dedicated TASA in the SWEET Project, met Som Raj after being approached by his concerned wife, a member of the Saheli group. Som Raj had been living with symptoms of TB but was reluctant to go for a test and seek treatment.

Mahmooda counselled him patiently and accompanied him to the nearest health facility for his tests.

Originally from a village in Jammu, Som Raj was torn between his family's advice to return home for treatment from a local traditional healer and the other opportunity to start with proper treatment in Delhi. Understanding the gravity of his situation, Mahmooda provided consistent support, urging him to begin treatment in Delhi so he could continue with his medicine and support his family.

Though initially hesitant, Som Raj eventually agreed and was placed on medication after diagnosis of TB. Mahmooda visited him weekly, offering encouragement and ensuring he adhered to his treatment. Today, as he nears the end of his treatment after 6 months, Som Raj feels significantly better. His wife remains deeply grateful for the timely intervention and unwavering support from the project team.

This story stands as a testament to the power of empathy, persistence, and community support in transforming lives.



A path to recovery


Anita, a 22-year-old woman from Jhandewalan, Delhi, found a lifeline when a Saheli from the SWEET Project recognised her symptoms of tuberculosis and facilitated her diagnosis. Anita admitted that she might have TB but had no idea where to seek treatment.

With Saheli's support, Anita underwent the necessary diagnostic tests, which revealed that she had Multi-Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis. Without hesitation, she was placed under the care of a local health facility and linked to Ni-kshay Poshan Yojna (Government nutritional support scheme).

Now on the path to recovery, Anita's journey highlights the transformative power of awareness, guidance, and timely intervention. Her story stands as an inspiration—a reminder that with the right support, even the most challenging battles can be fought and won.

Transforming lives: The impact of TASA support

Shifa, a 44-year-old woman residing in the crowded slums beneath the Mansarovar Park metro flyover, found a beacon of hope when Nageena



and Nisha, dedicated TASAs, visited her community. During a health screening, she exhibited TB symptoms. Upon conducting the necessary tests, it was confirmed that she had TB. Thanks to the timely intervention and treatment support provided by the HPPI staff, Shifa successfully completed her treatment.

Subsequently, Shifa shared another challenge—she did not possess a disability certificate, which was essential for accessing a disability pension. She was assured of support by TASA in resolving this matter. The following day, Nageena and Nisha accompanied Shifa to the hospital, where the doctor informed them that a Unique Disability ID (UDID) certificate was a prerequisite for obtaining the disability certificate.

Within a few days, Shifa's UDID certificate was successfully arranged by TASA. On a subsequent visit to the hospital, the doctor assessed her condition and determined she was 75% disabled. Over the next three weeks, all necessary formalities were completed, and Shifa received her disability certificate.

Following this, her application for a disability pension was submitted at the pension office, with all required processes duly completed. The application is currently under review, and efforts are ongoing to ensure that Shifa receives her pension soon.

This case underscores the impact of persistent effort and collaborative action in addressing challenges faced by marginalised individuals and securing their rights.

15 years of struggle, 15 days of change: Veena Devi's journey to relief

Veena Devi, a 65-year-old resident of the Motia Khan slums, has faced unimaginable loss and hardship. Diagnosed with tuberculosis herself, she had already endured the devastating loss of both her sons to the same disease. Their tragic passing during treatment left her alone, with no breadwinners to support the family.

To add to her plight, her sons' savings had been stalled for a long 15 years, compounding her financial struggles. By the time Veena's case came to light during a survey in Motia Khan, she had all but given up hope, resigned to the harsh realities of her life.

It was at this critical juncture that Chanda, a TASA associated with the SWEET project, stepped in. Demonstrating unwavering determination, Chanda tirelessly pursued Veena's case. She made multiple visits to the Shri Nivas Puri post office to submit and follow up on the necessary documentation required to withdraw the stalled savings.

After 15 days of persistent effort, Chanda's intervention bore fruit. Veena Devi finally received ₹4,000 in her account—a small but significant victory that rekindled a glimmer of hope in her life. Moreover, Veena also successfully completed her tuberculosis treatment in October 2024.

A new lease on life: Roman's journey to recovery

My name is Roman, and I'm 15 years old. I live in a slum near Mansarovar Park metro station with my family. We lived happily until my health began to deteriorate. I suffered from a persistent cough and fever for over a month. My weight decreased, and despite trying various local doctors, nothing helped.

One day, a Humana staff member visited our home, asking if anyone was unwell. Initially, my father denied it, but after they inquired further, he mentioned my condition. They advised us to visit a government hospital. The next day, with their support, we went for tests. The results revealed I had MDR-TB, a dangerous form of tuberculosis. My family and I were terrified.

Humana staff reassured us, explaining that timely treatment could help me recover. My father worried about the stigma and my future, but they encouraged him to focus on my health. At the hospital, we faced another challenge — I was denied medicines because my Aadhar card was not from Delhi.

However the project team insured their support to me and convinced the doctors to start the treatment. Only then did the hospital provide medicines for two weeks. During this time, I returned to my village. The Humana staff continued to guide me remotely, ensuring I received the necessary medication.

Today, my health has improved significantly. I thank them for giving me a second chance at life.

From despair to hope: How collective effort helped Rajkumar reclaim his life

Rajkumar, a 40-year-old resident of Motia Khan, Paharganj, struggled in silence with symptoms of tuberculosis. It was during a TB screening that his sister, Neetu who is a Saheli, mentioned his condition to Chanda, a dedicated TASA from the SWEET project. Recognising the urgency, Chanda promptly took Rajkumar to the hospital, where his diagnosis confirmed TB.

Chanda supported him through the TB treatment process, ensuring he received proper care. But just as things seemed to improve, another hurdle arose – Rajkumar was unable to secure a job due to not having an Aadhaar card. Despite his efforts, his attempts to obtain one had repeatedly failed.

This time, the SWEET team, led by Chanda and supported by fellow TASAs, stepped in once more. In just 15 days, they facilitated the process of obtaining Rajkumar's Aadhaar card, unlocking his access to employment opportunities. With their help, he secured a job and regained the ability to care for his family.

This story is more than just a personal victory for Rajkumar or Chanda. It is the triumph of SWEET, every TASA, and their unwavering commitment to transforming lives and uplifting society.



About us

Humana People to People India is a development organisation registered since 21 May 1998 as a not-for-profit company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. It is a non-political, non-religious body that works as part of civil society to strengthen the capacities of underprivileged people and groups to create better lives.



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