

Saksham Regional Institute for Capacity Building and Evaluation

Annual Report

April 2023 - March 2024

The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and the National TB Elimination Program (NTEP) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) have been designated as the Primary Recipients (PR) by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) for strengthening the national level efforts in addressing HIV/ AIDS and TB, respectively. The primary recipients, NACO and NTEP have roped in Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) as the Sub Recipient (SR) for implementing the project in five zones across India- East, North, South, West and Central. TISS has partnered with five Regional Institutes for Capacity Building and Evaluation (RICE) as the Sub-Sub Recipients (SSR) for the same. College of Social Work (Autonomous) is the implementing partner for West Zone which includes the States of Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and the District of Mumbai.

Saksham Project is implemented in two different areas: Saksham Pramaan – for HIV prevention and Saksham Pravaah for TB Elimination:

(a) **Saksham Pramaan-** Capacity Building and Evaluation of HIV/ AIDS Targeted Intervention (TI) & Link Workers' Scheme (LWS); and

(b) **Saksham Pravaah-** Capacity Building of the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) staff on psycho-social aspects of TB and counselling.

Project Staff

- **Principal Investigator** - Dr. Lidwin Dias
- **Faculty In-Charge (Program)** - Ms. Reny Rajan - (January 2022 - 14th October 2023), Ms. Anjana Parmar (15th October 2023 - present)
- **Finance and Administration Officer** - Ms. Saloni Mulam
- **Finance Consultant** - Ms. Silveia Chettiar
- **Regional Coordinators (Saksham Pramaan)** - Ms. Kalpana Gaikwad, Ms. Esther Fernandes (August 2022 - April 2023), Mr. Anirudh Narayanan (June 2023 - present)
- **Capacity Building Coordinator (Saksham Pravaah)** - Mr. Praveen Kachhap
- **Support Staff** - Ms. Sarla (December 2022 - June 2023), Ms. Birja (July 2023, February 2024 - March 2024), Mr. Rajesh (August 2023 - January 2024)

Saksham Pramaan : Evaluation of TI & LWS projects under SACS

The project works closely with SACS/DACS in these states for training of evaluators, scheduling of evaluations and debriefing of evaluations. Our team makes regular visits to all stakeholders concerned in the project.

Project activities follow a cyclical pattern each quarter, where Quarter 1 (Apr- June) focuses on reporting, quality check of evaluation reports, finalizing the reports with SACS, yearly documentation of the previous quarter evaluations and uploading of all the reports for NACO. Simultaneously, the planning of the regional training, including finalizing the venues, sending out advertisements for empanelment of new

evaluators, etc. Quarter 2 (July- Sept) comprises of mobilizing new evaluators, arranging logistics for the regional training, co-ordinating and conducting the regional training of evaluators, documenting the entire process, following up with the participants for reimbursements, meeting with SACS for any upcoming TI/LWS evaluations. Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) comprises of meetings for planning and calendar finalization for evaluations with SACS, assigning evaluators to states and TIs. Quarter 4 (Jan- Mar) comprises of actual evaluations where RICE team conducts monitoring visits to a certain percentage of TIs and also monitors the submission of reports to NACO.

In the year 2023-24, the following major activities were conducted:

- The year began with completing the documentation of the previous year's evaluations including quality checking of tools and narrative reports as well as field visit reports of the evaluation supervision visits. All the reports and documents were converted into standardized formats, organized and uploaded to the drive for access.
- A substantial time was also spent in resolving queries and errors raised by KSAPS, were resolved eventually with the involvement of the RICE team.
- A major task was the updation and correction of the Empaneled Evaluators list along with TISS. Each evaluator's profile was crosschecked and verified alongside the updation of the National Tracker with the data of TIs and crosschecking and verification of each TI's indicator-wise data with the evaluation score sheet.
- The RICE team also completed the drafting of the 2 sessions allotted to them in the National Training Manual on TI and LWS Evaluation after a series of meetings, literature review, multiple drafts and revisions and constant correspondence with TISS. Towards the end of the quarter, the team also prepared Powerpoint presentations on the sessions. The team used various charts and diagrams to summarise the content and effectively deliver the training. After receiving suggestions from TISS, the RICE team revised and resent the presentations.
- The RICE team also followed up with MSACS regularly through emails over the delay in the reimbursement of the evaluators and eventually managed to resolve the issue.
- In July, the RICE team conducted a 3-day Regional Training for new consultants at Dr. D.Y. Patil Institute of Management and Research, Pune which saw the participation of 20 programmatic and 4 finance consultants from various social development and academic sectors. The month of July was majorly focused on preparing for and conducting the Regional Training, including budgeting; onboarding and scrutinizing new consultants; finding and arranging a venue; accommodation; travel for participants; correspondence with participants; reading and understanding the various guidelines, IEC materials and reports; collating data from and printing the various documents for the IEC materials; developing an agenda for the training; communicating with SACS for necessary permissions and information; communicating with and arranging resource persons; and finally conducting the training. For the regional training, the feedback forms, pre-post test questionnaire, certificates were redesigned based on previous experiences..

After completion of the training, the RICE team promptly compiled all the reports, feedback, pre-post test questionnaire and submitted them and duly processed all the payments, honorariums and reimbursements.

- The RICE team had multiple level meetings with MSACS for 10 evaluations in October 2023. Along with the planning the evaluations and the calendar preparation, the RICE team also contacted evaluators for their availability, empanement and self-declaration/undertaking. During the evaluations, the RICE team also conducted two monitoring visits to Beed and Nashik. Post the evaluations, the quality check of the reports was done and the data was entered systematically.
- The RICE team began the process of calendar preparation for the January/February 2024 evaluations from November 2023. For the same, meetings were held with Karnataka SACS, Goa SACS, Maharashtra SACS and Mumbai DACS for gathering Strategic Information and planning the evaluations. The team also empaneled 96 programmatic and finance evaluators for evaluations in 134 TIs across the three states and one district. An online refresher training was conducted in January 2024 prior to the evaluations, which was attended by 81 evaluators across four batches.
- The evaluations for Maharashtra and Mumbai were conducted in January 2024 for 113 TIs and the RICE team conducted monitoring visits to 7 TIs in and around Mumbai. Post the evaluations, the month of February was busy with conducting debriefing meeting for the completed evaluations, reviewing and quality checking the evaluations reports, completing data entry for the tracker and indicator wise file. Simultaneously, the calendar finalization and empanelment process for the Goa and Karnataka evaluations were completed and the briefing meetings were conducted online.
- The Goa and Karnataka evaluations were completed in March 2024 and a similar post-evaluation process was followed including debriefing meetings, report checks and data entry. The project closing activities were also initiated and completed, consisting of summary reports, organizing of data, uploading all evaluation reports and sharing feedback.
- The RICE team also participated in a meeting with TISS and the new Saksham PD in January and an Annual Review Meeting with NACO and TISS in February to discuss the progress so far and the way forward for the programme.

Achievements

- The “Self-Undertaking / Declaration by Evaluators” which was first proposed and drafted by the RICE team was officially published by NACO at the national level in the ‘Guidance Document for conducting External Evaluation of TI and LWS through TISS & RICE in States under NACP’ along with a letter from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) dated 28/07/2023. The pan-India document clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of NACO, SACS, TISS and RICE and mentions the name of CSWNN and the project staff.
- The RICE team, through its multiple meetings and regular communication with the SACS has managed to build a good rapport with the officials.

- Breaking many years of tradition, the RICE team managed to persuade MSACS to conduct Evaluation De-briefing meetings at the State-level and ensure their involvement in the Briefing meeting, as per NACO's guidelines.
- The RICE team collaborated with the President of the Maharashtra Association of Social Work Educators (MASWE) for ensuring involvement of academicians for the regional training. The RICE team was able to empanel many Professors, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and PhD-level consultants for the regional training in July.
- The RICE team also collaborated with Dr. D.Y. Patil Institute of Management and Research for the regional training with regard to venue, accommodation, travel and other logistics. It opened the doors for further collaborations at the academic level.
- For the regional training, the RICE team invited staff members from the NGOs as resource persons to share their experiences about the functioning and services offered by their TIs. This was beneficial not just for the participants but also for the NGO staff as they felt motivated and validated.
- The RICE team corrected, cleaned, re-verified and standardized the entire data for the previous two years- including the indicator data and reports of 251 TIs and data of 194 evaluators.
- Before the project, Evaluations used to be scheduled, monitored & supported by respective SACS. Most of the identified evaluators (few) went about evaluating in several states and would also continue/discontinue a project based on their local experience or directives from SACS. Since the project began, RICE team has managed to create a pool of new and trained evaluators and empanel them to conduct un-biased and impartial evaluations.
- Over the course of the project from November 2021 to March 2024, the RICE team received 533 applications and managed to create a pool of 244 evaluators, of which 170 evaluators conducted evaluations. 186 evaluators were trained across 12 batches of regional training and 4 batches of refresher training. A total of 392 TIs were evaluated, for which quality checks and data entry was done on a pan-India tracker. 36 monitoring visits were conducted during evaluations across the three states and one district and 88 meetings were also conducted with various SACS, NACO and other agencies for various purposes.