

Project Management

HST had started its activities in an organized manner in 1994. However for lack of professional expertise support from within the community, documentation and development of project management tools had to wait. A drawback that the organization faced was though it had a large number of gay men who were professionally qualified as friends it had very little support to help maintain records, document itself effectively and professionally run the organization. It worked on trial and error basis and made corrections after learning from its past mistakes.

Financial Management Systems

In the initial days Rakesh Modi who was and is still one of the pillars of the organization would look into the accounts of the organization and kept proper records of transactions. After he left for USA in 1998 there was little support to maintain even basic accounts of the organization. Ramesh Menon and Kasturi Gupta who then managed the HST center were given training by Vivek in basic book keeping and a chartered accountant was appointed to maintain the books of accounts

But it became very vital that not only financial management system need to be put into place but project management tools will have to be developed to effective management of the projects.

The process of developing financial systems within the trust premises began with the FHI-USAID grant being sanctioned in February 2001. The current chief executive Vivek agreed to devote three hours a days for five days a week to the trust accounting work. He introduced Tally 5.4 package and started developing systems of effective maintenance of books of accounts. He took Tg. Vasanthi under his training and taught her how to write vouchers correctly and what precaution needs to be taken while write books of accounts. Vasanthi was also trained to work on Tally 5.4 and efforts were made to streamline filing of returns to the charity commissioner and maintaining various registers that are needed at audit points. A full time accounts executive who looks into entire accounting work including preparation of monthly statement of expenses that are submitted to the donor agencies is now managing the work that was managed by the chartered accountants.

The books of accounts undergo and an internal audit every three months by the Chief executive at the trust office and reviews of the accounts are done at regular intervals.

Management Information Systems : (MIS)

In the month of September 2002 HST started the process of developing its own MIS. In a day long meeting under the supervision of Vivek the entire team of HST deconstructed Humsafar trust and its various activities. The deconstruction resulted in the entire work area of HST and the volume of work that is being done at HST. Based on the deconstruction various points of each component was worked out to draw necessary

information at each stage. The information that the organization will need from each component formed the foundation stone of the present MIS of HST.

The Chief executive then alongwith the administrator Girish Kumar worked a design for MIS for each component of the program and then the same design was implemented using simple excel sheets.

Some important rules were borne in mind while developing the MIS. It was clear that despite all the work happening Humsafar still did not draw professional managers to come and work within the organization as working in a MSM organization is still considered a stigma even within the community. Humsafar over the years has nurtured its own inhouse talent and young men who started out at outreach workers have shaped into very good managers. The MIS was developed using simple formats so that any staff member using them could do it with ease. It was also decided that the MIS would be reviewed periodically and if change needs to be made in any format it would be corrected and modified formats would be introduced.

Today the HST is regularly training various other NGO's in setting up their MIS and increase efficiency of their projects.

The MIS formats of HST are also available on a CD on request.

Community Advisory Board (CAB)

The community advisory board was set up recently to make HST more accountable to the community. The CAB consists of 15 members representing LGBT community and meet once every three months.

At the CAB meetings the board presents the quarterly activities to the CAB members and takes the feedback from the community. The CAB has full right to make suggestions and recommendations to improve the functioning of HST programs and critically examine the functioning of the HST.

3) Crisis Management Cell

The Crisis management cell consists of 12 members who are outreach staff of HST. The main function of crisis management cell is look into the crisis situations faced by the outreach staff at worksites. In situations where outreach workers get into trouble with hustlers, cheaters, police problems and opposing groups the CMC jumps into action and helps resolve crisis situation. The services of the CMC are also available to the members of MSM community.

Advocacy Panel

The advocacy panel consists of 10 dedicated outreach staff. The Advocacy coordinator coordinates the activities of the group. The panel works in tandem with the outreach team in identifying areas where sensitization about HIV/AIDS and sexuality issues are required. Different members of the group manage identification of key contact person of a group/organization, management of IEC and BCC material, presentation and condom demonstration.

Friday Workshop Panel.

The Friday Workshop Panel is a group of 10 outreach workers and Drop-in Center Incharge moderated by the administrator of HST. The panel meets every Saturday to discuss the session for Friday and accordingly work is assigned amongst all members to have a successful Friday evening week after week. The panel keeps in mind that they need to mobilize community for the workshop and drop-ins to the Drop-in center on regular days too. The panel organizes cultural programs twice a month and discussions on issues of sexuality and health and human rights every alternate Friday. The panel also explores idea's for the Sunday High sessions with Nitin Karani, the moderator of Sunday Highs and look into the arrangement of the Sunday high sessions held every second and fourth Sunday of the month.

Street Theater Group

One of the most effective tools of HST advocacy is the street theater. HST has group of seven Outreach workers who write, direct and act in the street plays performed by the group. One of its main successes is "Surakshit Safar".

Surakshit Safar, street play is play consists information about HIV/AIDS. The play has some vulnerable characters whose life becomes unsafe due to various reasons. It is facilitated by one narrator (sutradhar) who guides the story. It depicts how the characters in the play eventually change their risk behavior and adopt healthy living after sensitization by the sutradhar and increase their health seeking behavior.

These street plays also have a MSM character in the play. Surakshit Safar has been appreciated by masses and recommended by other social organizations like FPAI, Action India, Republican party of India and PSI.

The street theater group records the audience reactions and gives out IEC materials to the audiences. A report is filed in the office along with the feedback received during the performance.