

Himalayan Anti Aids & Anti Narcotic Drugs Society (HANDS)

Annual Report

2017-2018

It is easy to slip into the feeling that to stop and look back over what has already occurred is a wasted exercise. It seems like it is always “full speed ahead” in the fight against Substance Abuse with so much to do and no way to slow down. It is important for us to pause and reflect on our accomplishments, our “do-it-better-next-times,” and our plans for the future. We should recognize and celebrate the achievements of our organization, our workforce and the individuals we serve. We should be learning from our mistakes, measuring our efforts, and adjusting our plans and strategies accordingly. That’s the essence of continuous improvement and one of our fundamental values. Evidence of our progress and positive impact on those we serve are documented throughout this report. I hope this report broadens your understanding of the important role that HANDS has in the lives of individuals, families, and the community in the entire region of Kalimpong.

Prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover from substance abuse and its dependency. Together we can make a difference in preventing illness, providing evidenced based interventions and fostering desirable environments in individual lives and in the lives of their families to promote recovery. Changes in the treatment landscape have opened ways for people to enhance needs for positive behavioral change just like any physical needs. Over time, these changes should lessen stigma and discrimination and lead to increased access and understanding towards people suffering from substance abuse. The faster people receive help, the better the outcome in helping them to get back to main stream society.

Since Kalimpong has a diverse population of various socio economic backgrounds, it is more important than ever to have a charitable approach so as to motivate every suffering substance abuser and his family to seek treatment and generate hope and encourage healing. HANDS has set the following priorities to emphasize specific goals and strategies to carry forward its treatment module in the most effective manner in the following ways:

- **Focus on prevention and early intervention**

HANDS in association with Bal Suraksha Abihyan (BSA), an organization run by the Sisters of Cluny organized an awareness program on Child Labor caused by parents abusing substances.

Like every year the youth of UCNi had organized a Counseling Seminar on Education and Life Ethics and HANDS has been a part of the program to make the youth aware of substance abuse and its ever growing problems globally, especially amongst the youth.

HANDS had organized an awareness program for the peer leaders of Mungsong Cinchona Plantation youth organization. The program was held mainly to teach peer leaders how to identify, approach and help substance abusers.

Piranhas Club a renowned self-help social organization was holding regular coaching classes for the students of their locality during the prolonged closure of schools in the agitation period. HANDS was there to impart knowledge and awareness on drug abuse and HIV Aids to the students.

The local community of Nandu Gaon, Sikkim had invited HANDS to hold an awareness program on Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. The HANDS team stressed mainly on Alcohol abuse which is more prevalent in the rural areas, enabling them to identify their problems and bring about effective solutions.

Like every year, HANDS does not let go of any opportunity in reaching out to the masses and bringing about help, support and solution. World AIDS day has been exactly one of these international events where the staff and volunteers go out to various officials like the Municipality Chairman, Police Department Officer In charge and the masses, ask two minutes of their time and pass the message of HIV/AIDS and its mode of transmission to each one of them.

Physical Fitness Centre, a youth organization of Kalijhora, NH10 had organized a Marathon followed by a seminar on various social issues. The very theme of the entire event was "Say no to Drugs", hence HANDS had a vital role in taking the seminar forward. People of all ages of that locality participated in the seminar with a lot of interest and received essential information on the subject.

Bal Suraksha Abihyan (BSA), an organization run by the Sisters of Cluny had organized their Annual Children's Cub Gathering. Children from all over the region including the doors, plains and Sikkim had participated in the event in big numbers. BSA and HANDS have always partnered in giving about awareness in

these two social causes of Child Labor and substance abuse as substance abuse is the root cause of child labor in most cases.

HANDS in association with a West Bengal Government undertaking Tribal welfare board for the Limbu community had organized an awareness program at their community center at Kalimpong. A large number of people of all ages, from the Limbu Community attended the program and were made aware of the horrors of substance abuse, be it Alcohol or Drugs.

Another awareness program in association with BSA was held at Rongpu Primary School, NH 10, Sikkim Border for the school children. Since the participating children were very young, HANDS team spoke at lengths about the root causes of substance in the families and the effects it had on the personality development of a child, which was received well by the students and teachers.

Yet another awareness program was held at Mungsong Primary School in association with BSA. HANDS presented the children of Mungsong Primary school with the organizations power point presentation and the very attentive children were very responsive in the interactive session after the presentation.

- **Promote a recovery-oriented curative treatment**

With the notion of making the patients understand the spiritual side of all religions CMA (Christian Motorcyclists Association), a group of young dedicated Christians on motorcycles celebrated Easter with the patients.

As the ultimate goal of every patient in the rehabilitation center is to be a responsible and productive member of the society and nation at large the Rehabilitation Center observes national events like Independence Day and Republic Day in full force only to inculcate a sense of patriotism and responsibility towards his family and nation

To make one feel at home and learn to celebrate festivals happily without the use of substance and Alcohol, HANDS celebrates festivals in the Rehabilitation with all merry making and dance

In making every patient a responsible family member and respecting the social/religious beliefs of his family, HANDS celebrates Christmas and this time too, young members of the Christian Motorcyclist Association were kind enough to conduct the celebrations.

HANDS celebrates the achievements of its organization even in the most challenging circumstances. Kalimpong and the entire hill region had been paralyzed with prolonged closure and strikes in the Gorkhaland agitation period, where the lives of the masses had been crippled for three and a half months. In this phase HANDS could not close down its rehabilitation centre as the in patients could not be set free with incomplete treatment evident with behavioral disorder. Despite of all these complications in running a residential organization , the rehabilitation sustained this dark phase and continued rendering help to the needy.

Fighting substance abuse and bringing about recovery in an abusers life dint just have individual benefits but it brought about upliftment to the entire family and the society at large. With this strategy and achievement in mind HANDS partnered with a charitable organization named Bal Suraksha Abihayan (BSA) run by Cluny Sisters, working with such children as the parent of the abused and battered child would in most cases be a chemically dependent person.

With all the above mentioned endeavors, team HANDS had a very successful year in reaching out, making each and every possible youth aware hereby preventing curiosity to prevail over a positively motivated mind. Apart from this task, HANDS kept the day to day treatment in the residential rehabilitation centre going along with constant monitoring and after care of old patients at the day care centre and making the wayward responsible and productive members of the family and society.

The figures as pre the performance chart and registers are as follows:

Rehabilitation Centre

Patients treated in the rehabilitation centre: 56

Chemically dependent: 29

Alcoholics: 17

Poly (Both):10

Total no of patients succeeded after discharge: 40

Out of which its categorized as (Alcoholics- 11, Chemically dependent – 25, Poly – 4)

The annual success rate of the rehabilitation centre in percentage is – 71.42%

Day Care / Drop in Centre

Patients treated in the Day Care Centre: 202 (out of which 87 individuals on a regular basis)

(Regular)Chemically Dependent: 43

(Regular)Alcoholics: 31

(Regular)Poly (Both): 13

Family Classes in Day Care Centre

Total No of family classes conducted on a weekly basis (every Saturday): 36

Total No of family members attending classes: 203