



# Peer Educators: Supporting Transgender Communities in Kanchipuram



## Key Figures



**510 TGs**

underwent STi Clinical testing



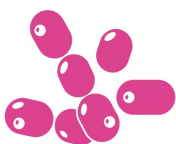
**290 TGs**

tested for Syphilis



**250 TGs**

tested for HIV



**111 TGs**

underwent community based screening for HIV



**18 TGs**

provided with saving accounts

## Background

Trapped in a cycle of poverty due to LGBTQ+ stigma and discrimination, it is nearly impossible for transgender individuals to find employment in India. In addition, UNAIDS research (2017) demonstrates how social exclusion leads to a lack of education and poor sanitation. With few options to support themselves, many transgender individuals in India are forced to take up dangerous sex work. As a consequence, the transgender community is vulnerable to physical abuse, sexual violence, and HIV/AIDS. A targeted intervention towards the transgender community is thus needed to work toward the larger government goal: ensuring that every person living with HIV has access to quality care and is treated with dignity.

## Behavioral Change

The Targeted Intervention programme targets Transgenders (TG) in collaboration with TNSACS focuses on the transgender population in Kanchipuram. Interventions include condom promotion (distribution + behaviour change communication) and the creation of a toll-free helpline number for High-Risk Groups to register complaints on stigma and discrimination. The respective District AIDS Prevention and Control Units (DAPCUs) will take the primary action. Blossom also utilises diverse strategies such as health camps and syphilis testing to identify persons with STIs/HIV so transgender individuals can receive the healthcare they need.



## Results of 2019-2020

Within the fiscal year 2019-2020, a total of 510 people were tested for STIs, of which 250 for HIV, and 430 trans people were screened for tuberculosis. Next to this, Blossom supported 18 trans people in setting up a savings bank account, obtained 10 voter ID cards and supported 18 trans people to get government insurance. Currently, we are focussing on the distribution of condoms, educating the transgender community about HIV/STIs and providing counselling to those in need. Complementary to these interventions, there is a toll-free helpline number for high risks groups to register complaints on stigmas and discrimination.

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## Peer Educators

Blossom has employed 7 peer educators to support more than 300 TG's in the local TG communities of the Kanchipuram District. The Peer educators enables members of the TG community to effect change among the local communities. It is considered to be one of the most effective and sustainable tools for changing group behaviour. Together with the Peer educators, Blossom has hosted several screening camps in 2019 and 2020. Peer educators play an important role in the implementation of the program, as they build trust and establish credibility with the vulnerable groups and provide a vital two-way link between the project staff and the community. Due to the peer educator team, we are seeing positive responses to the interventions such as condom promotion and STI testings. Moreover, the peer educators play a vital role in promotion of advocacy for the acceptance of the TG community.



## What is next? Community Committees.

Thanks to the positive impact that the peer educators are making in the local TG communities, Blossom Trust will further strengthen the TG communities by uniting them into Community Committees in which the peer educators will be playing a vital role. A big part of the community committees is advocating for the acceptance of the TG Community, with which they are aiming to further influence policy, at the level of an organisation, the government or society. By doing so, we are aiming to build the capacity of the TG community and strengthen their position in society.