

Implementation of Harm reduction: Prevention, Health-Care and Treatment Services among Women who use Drugs.



Background

Nepal has a limited harm reduction (HR) services for Women who use Drugs (WWUD). In this context, Nepal successfully got the harm reduction (HR) project funded by ViiV Healthcare, a UK-based pharmaceutical company. Recovering Nepal (RN) started the HR services in three districts for WWUDs.

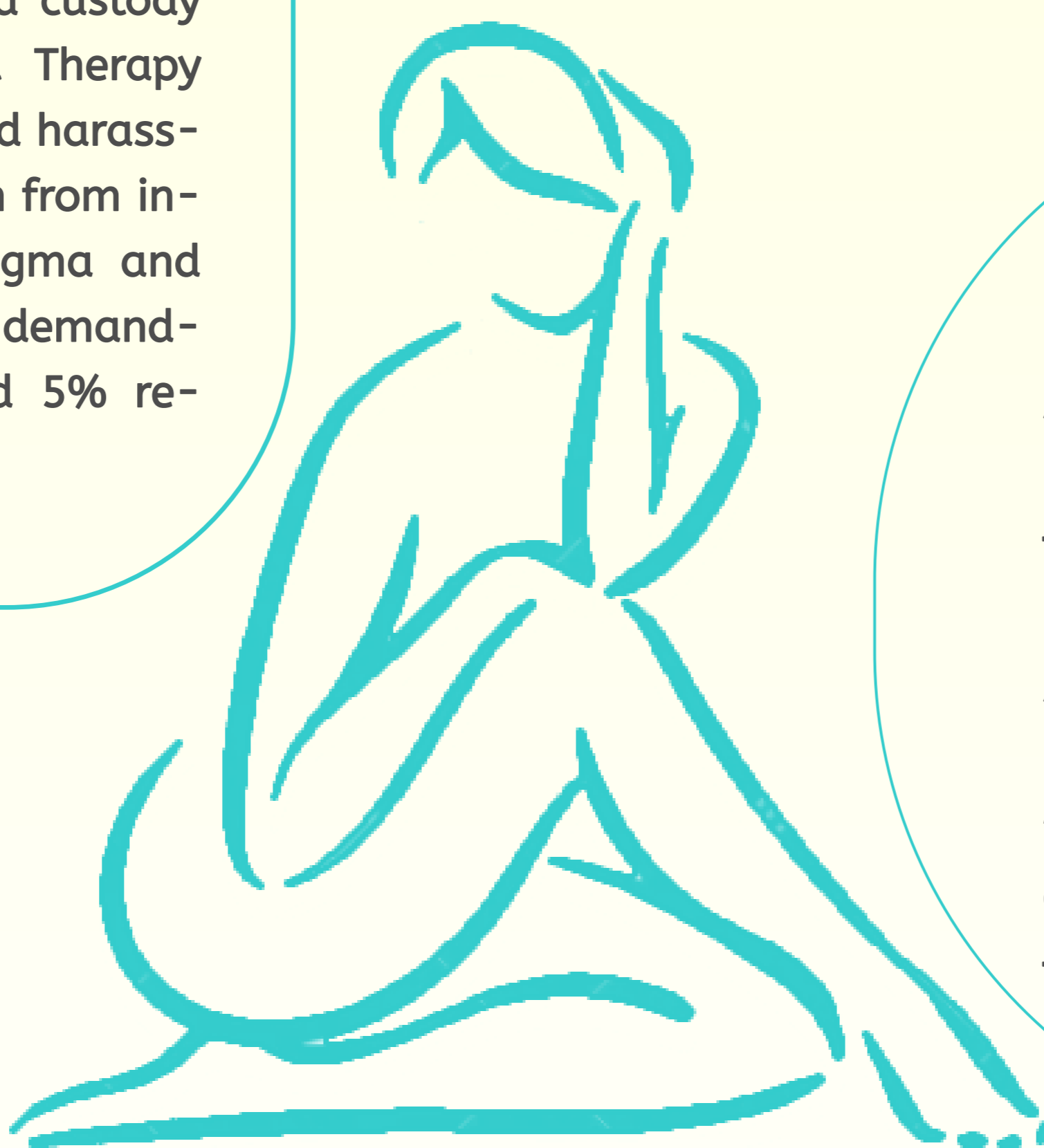


Methods

RN implemented gender-specific HR services; Needle Syringe Exchange Program tailored for WWUD. In coordination with the government, NCASC (National Center for AIDS & STDs Control) for HR commodities. In 11 months we have been able to identify new WWUDs and have provided services to 555 WWUDs. The project also includes the HTC, SRH, referral to ART & documentation of violence, and peer-led and community-led HR services. Besides HR services, we have also conducted surveys among our clients.

Results

We came across more WWUDs and more vulnerable yet marginalized communities & neglected even from the national HIV/AIDS program. There is an urgency for HIV literacy, BCC and counseling, IEC on HCV, B, enlargement of existing HR services geographically. Survey among 555 WWUDs showed 85% requested the sustainability of existing HR services, 15% requested gender-sensitive services with additional services like legal action against all forms of violence & harassment, child custody and women-friendly Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT). Among those 85%- 25% showed harassment cases from police, 25% violation from injecting & intimate partners, 25% stigma and discrimination in hospital settings, 5% demanded women-friendly OAT services and 5% requested free rehabilitation services.



Conclusions

Project outcome showed an immediate call to scale-up gender-sensitive HR services along with PHC in service sites. OAT also enabled us to view the increasing trend of HIV infection & the overlapping cases of sex work among WWUDs. The national consultation was also proposed to Global Fund: Save the Children (PR) to scale up gender-friendly HR services for WWUDs.