



## RAPID FUNDING ENVELOPE FOR HIV/AIDS: TANZANIA



# ONE YEAR LATER: SHREE HINDU MANDAL HOSPITAL'S INCREASED CAPACITY



On a narrow, bustling street in downtown Dar es Salaam, Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital's laboratory waiting room is crowded. Dr. Ramaiya Kaushik, the hospital's Assistant Medical Director and head of HIV/AIDS services, expresses confidence about the hospital's ability to serve its many patients, "If I need viral load, I just do a viral load—I don't have to send a sample in, hope it is treated properly, and wait weeks for a result. I can have lab results immediately." Just over a year after concluding its project with the Rapid Funding Envelope (RFE), Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital's continued results are promising. Of the nearly 1,500 HIV/AIDS patients it is treating, more than half have been referred from other hospitals and clinics, a testament to Shree Hindu Mandal's commitment to offering the best possible care.

Founded in 1953, Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital is a private, 65-bed facility set among the alleys of Dar es Salaam. The hospital offers a full range of services, including maternity, surgical care, and pediatrics. Just three years ago, Shree Hindu Mandal hospital was treating approximately 350 HIV/AIDS patients. After expanding and improving its capacity, services, and infrastructure, the hospital is now caring for 1,500 persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Kaushik has played a pivotal role in the hospital's expansion. Seeing the increasing numbers of AIDS patients, the hospital established an HIV/AIDS Treatment Centre. Dr. Kaushik's goal is to establish Shree Hindu Mandal as a "Centre of Excellence" for comprehensive HIV/AIDS management. Three essential elements were needed to achieve this goal: patient access to accurate information and quality counseling services, including voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services; a strong infrastructure, including sufficient space, and properly placed, well-trained personnel; and essential equipment, especially the laboratory equipment needed for accurate testing and monitoring. Dr. Kaushik and the hospital's administrators turned to outside help, including applying for grants to help the hospital strengthen all these components. This was when Dr. Kaushik learned about the RFE.



With the help of RFE funding, Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital can now offer HIV/AIDS patients the highest quality of laboratory testing services.

The RFE provides civil society organizations in Tanzania an opportunity to take part in the national response to HIV/AIDS. It is a partnership between the Tanzania Commission for AIDS, the Zanzibar AIDS Commission, and 10 international donors (see list below). The Leadership, Management and Sustainability Program of Management Sciences for Health provides technical oversight for the RFE, while Deloitte & Touche provides grant management and financial oversight.

Dr. Kaushik sighs, remembering his first RFE application in 2003. "We were rejected because we did not have a track record or a partner with us who had a track record who could guide us." When an application is rejected, RFE staff provides information on why it was rejected, and feedback on how to make their application stronger. Staff at Shree Hindu Mandal paid attention. They reapplied for a grant

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six months later, this time partnering with the Tanzania Public Health Association, a group with a solid track record of receiving and successfully implementing development grants.

In 2004, Dr. Kaushik coordinated the hospital's RFE grant to improve its VCT clinic, upgrade its HIV/AIDS testing and monitoring equipment, and to train staff. With experienced partners and a strong sense of determination, the programme was a success. Ten counselors were trained, enabling the VCT centre to offer services six days per week as opposed to the previous three days per week. Two of the newly trained counselors have been trained to in turn train additional counselors, helping the hospital sustain its human resources. The VCT centre was also linked to the antenatal and maternal and child health units to offer prevention of mother-to-child transmission services. Just upstairs from the HIV counseling room is what has become one of the most advanced private hospital laboratories in East Africa. The lab is capable of performing HIV tests quickly and accurately, and has the equipment necessary to monitor a patient's viral load.

Another benefit of successfully implementing the RFE project has been the increase in Shree Hindu Mandal's ability to apply for—and win—grants to further build their capacity and infrastructure. “When you apply to any other organization for assistance,” Dr. Kaushik explains, “they would like to know what similar projects have you done, how you fulfilled it, were you accountable for all the funds, and did you achieve all the objectives which you wanted to, so having the RFE grant there as part of our track record has been a solid foundation for us to build on.”

Since completing its RFE grant, the hospital was asked to assist in implementing a Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria grant aimed at creating a partnership with organized networks of persons living with HIV/AIDS to identify individuals who are HIV positive, need care and treatment, and cannot afford treatment. The hospital is also participating in a programme with the National AIDS Control Programme to provide free anti-retroviral drugs to patients who cannot afford them, and is also receiving funds to treat patients with opportunistic infections. Dr. Kaushik has also been in talks with Family Health International and the U.S. Agency for International Development to get additional assistance in capacity building.

In late 2005, Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital, under Dr. Kaushik's guidance, successfully applied for a second RFE grant. Renovation has begun to create a larger facility within the hospital for the laboratory, which will house additional equipment that can diagnose opportunistic infections. A resource facility, complete with Internet-enabled computers,



As Assistant Medical Director, Dr. Kaushik's leadership has helped strengthen Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital's capacity in treating patients with HIV/AIDS.

a library, and audiovisual equipment, is also being added to allow for sustained training of hospital staff.

In addition to handling a larger patient load than ever before, Dr. Kaushik is able to offer a full array of laboratory services to patients, improving their quality of care. “It's very gratifying to see somebody who was once extremely sick, and with the knowledge, tools, and drugs you have in your hands you are able to make this person wake up and be healthy enough to go back to work. That is my driving force.”

For Dr. Kaushik and Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital, the experience applying and implementing the RFE project will stay with them into the future. Knowing the resources exist to enable them to reach more people with services, and knowing how to acquire those resources has broadened the hospital's ambitions. Dr. Kaushik explains their future aspirations: “We have a plot of land which is about three and a half acres where we are planning to build a new hospital; one that will be a much better facility, much larger, which can accommodate more patients than this building which was not designed to be a hospital originally. So our immediate aim is to start construction and when we do that, we will be able to serve our country and our people better.”

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