

Swades Foundation inks MoU with Maharashtra Govt to improve healthcare

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Expanding area of operation for healthcare across State



Swades Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Maharashtra on 27th August 2019, which will expand its area of operation across the state of Maharashtra. Previously, its area of operation was restricted to just six blocks of the Raigad district. However, given the outstanding work of the Swades Foundation in the areas of Anaemia, Eye Care, Paediatric Care, Hygiene and Nutrition over the past three years, the Public Health Department of the Government of Maharashtra wants it to take up this good work across the State.

In 2016, Swades Foundation announced a strategic partnership with the Public Health Department of the Government of Maharashtra to implement crucial health interventions in six blocks of the Raigad district. In an acknowledgement of the stellar work done over the past three years, the Government has now inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will enable Swades Foundation to implement these health interventions across the state of Maharashtra.

The Foundation has been striving towards an anaemia free geography and can be credited with rolling out India's biggest pilot programme on Therapeutic management of Anaemia, which was subsequently adopted by the Government. Over the course of three years, 75% (4,151 out of 5,518) of the children who completed medication are cured of anaemia and an additional 10% children have (584 out of 5,518) shown increased levels of haemoglobin. Further, about 2,000 more children are currently under treatment. Across the six blocks, it also conducted Anaemia awareness campaign in over 1,100 schools and anganwadis and trained 324 anganwadi workers on nutrition and best nutrition practices.

Besides anaemia, the Foundation has worked tirelessly in the areas of paediatric vision, hearing and cardiac health. It has partnered with the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karykram and Block Health Team to organise 23 health camps which benefitted at least 18,000 children across the Raigad district. It has also helped improve eye care amongst adults, screening at least 2,80,000 individuals. This was further bolstered through a distribution of spectacles and conducting cataract surgeries amongst those in need of intervention. To improve hygiene outcomes, it distributed IEC posters of best hygiene practices at the Gram Panchayat level and provided hygiene kits to schools, as part of a hand wash programme, at the school level.

Speaking on the occasion, Zarina Screwvala, Co-founder, Swades Foundation said, *"We have a wonderful partnership with the Public Health Department of the Maharashtra Government with whom we have worked in Raigad district since 2013 on both Health & Nutrition and formalized into an MOU in 2016. With the renewal of our MoU, we hope to create the first (preventable, iron deficient) anemia free blocks and dramatically reduce SAM & MAM while creating strong community empowerment programmes to ensure sustainability. This will be a matter of great pride for all our 300+ strong team at the Swades Foundation."*

Dr Anup Kumar Yadav, Commissioner (Health Services) & Mission Director (National Health Mission), Public Health Department, Govt. of Maharashtra – India, further added, *"The Public Health Department of Maharashtra is committed to the health and wellbeing of all, and realises the potential of a Public-Private Partnership to complement the efforts of the Government in delivering holistic health services. With the aim of taking this forward and encouraging NGOs' participation, we have signed a MoU with Swades Foundation. We appreciate Swades Foundation for their work in the Raigad district, in assisting the government to counter health issues like cataract, anaemia and malnutrition. With this MoU, we expect them to extend similar services all over the State with the same conviction and commitment. I wish them luck and express our willingness to encourage such collaborations with all stakeholders who wish to support the Government in realizing its dream of making Maharashtra the healthiest state in India."*