

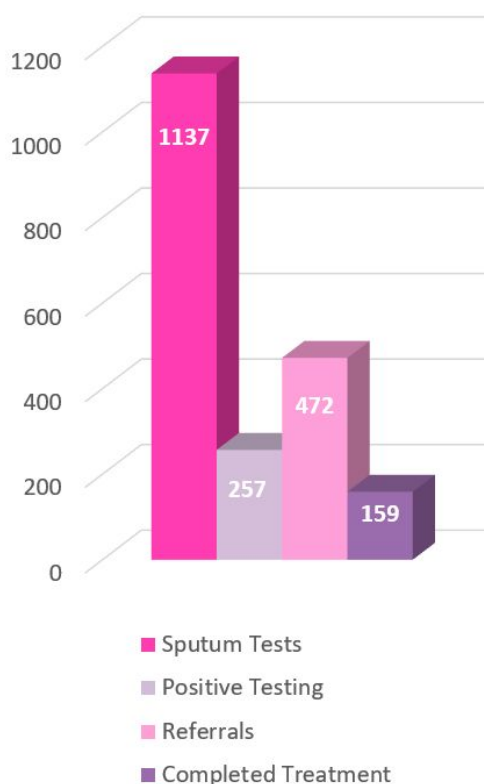


# Project Axshya: Collaborating in Fight Against Tuberculosis



## Key Figures

Axshya Testing



## Background

The complexity of tuberculosis (TB) in India requires a concerted effort: multiple stakeholders, across all sectors, working together to tackle it. The Union's Project Axshya, working in partnership with seven sub-recipient partners, a network of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and over 15,000 community volunteers, provides innovative TB interventions designed to serve traditionally hard-to-reach and at-risk populations in India. The collaborative approach has been adopted by Project Axshya to help to expand access to TB information and services, increase the accountability of service providers and empower communities.

### Combatting the burden of TB

Blossom Trust participated in the first phase of the Axshya project, which ran from 2010 until 2015. This first phase intended to build a strong network of NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs) to help combat the burden of TB. The project began with support from CHAI in Virudhunagar district and REACH Chennai in Kanchipuram district, both of whom are partners in the Global Fund to fight Aids, TB and Malaria through the GFATM-9 project.

### A multi-layered approach to prevention and treatment

The Axshya project was conducted by Blossom, with a multi-layered approach, to ensure maximum impact. Sensitisation meetings were held in high risk communities, predominantly targeting smokers and HIV positive groups, generating awareness on potential lifestyle changes to combat

## Results

Awareness meetings in high-risk communities have targeted TB positive groups, to encourage them and help them to change their lifestyle in order to fight the disease. Between 2010 and 2015, more than 300 meetings were organized in the communities. Referral of TB suspects for sputum collection helped achieve early diagnosis, contributing to a higher patient cure rate. A total of 472 patients were referred through this project. 1137 people were tested for TB through the support of our project team, and 257 patients were tested positive and started receiving treatment. 159 patients had completed treatment at the time of the assessment. Using our network of TB patients, we continued to advocate for the rights of TB patients at local, state and national level.

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the disease and how to recognize the symptoms. Staff were trained, not only on how to inform communities about treatment and prevention, but also on how to address stigma and discrimination and how to encourage treatment continuation. Referral of suspected TB cases for sputum collection has helped in the early diagnostic stages, therefore leading to greater numbers of cured patients. The Axshya project consisted of an additional cultural programme element, with the Blossom Trust EduClowns supporting the sensitisation efforts of the project team.

## Fighting TB through collaborative initiatives

India has the highest death rate of TB in the world. To address this, governments, NGOs and communities need to work together. Project Axshya provides a platform to facilitate this collaboration. Blossom was invited to join this partnership by signing a letter of commitment with TB Care and Control (TBCC), a civil society network working at the national level. The Director of Blossom Trust attended the national meeting in Delhi, and was then signed on as a Consultant with the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (UNION - South East Asia). The aim of this collaboration was to strengthen the District TB forums formed during Axshya by REACH and CHAI NGOs across the state of Tamil Nadu, using the Rainbow TB Forum as a model for implementation. Rainbow TB is a statewide network, originally set up by Blossom, of TB advocates.

## Collaboration under project Axshya have reached almost all states in India:

