



Together, building healthier communities

# NEWSLETTER

*"Ekjut" means together for a cause/Not for profit/Partnering with rural communities on themes of Survive Thrive Transform*

DECEMBER

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## Throwback 2009

On 9th of December 2009, 12 years back to the date the first Ekjut trial was disseminated at New Delhi in the presence of Ms. Syeda Hameed that was attended by academicians, civil society organisations, funders and public health professionals.



## Survive:

On the 9th of December 2021, National Health Mission (NHM) Jharkhand in association with Ekjut, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Sattva Consulting organised a dissemination to share the outcome and learnings of the state wide scale up for improving maternal and child health. Facilitated Learning and Action Groups (FLAG) programme that adopted the Participatory Learning and Action Approach (PLA) was portrayed as a successful community-driven programme that could be replicated in different states as large scale ups.

### Webinar on Strengthening Maternal and Newborn Health outcomes through robust community participation

Outcomes and learnings from Facilitated Learning and Action Groups (FLAG) programme, a community-driven programme for Maternal and Newborn Health in Jharkhand

9TH DECEMBER, THURSDAY 10:30 AM

 Mr. Arun Kumar Singh, IAS ACS cum Secretary Health, Govt. of Jharkhand	 Mr. Ramesh Gholap, IAS Mission Director, NHM Jharkhand	 Mr. Hemant Kumar Meena, IFO5 Deputy Secretary, NITI Aayog	 Dr. M. A. Balasubramanya Advisor, Community Processes and Comprehensive Primary Health Care, NHRSC	 Dr. Anant Bhan President, International Association of Bioethics	 Ms. Akay Minz State Program Coordinator, NHM Jharkhand
 Mr. Gurjeet Singh Road, Social Audit Unit, Jharkhand	 Dr. Hassan Haghparast-Bidgoli Associate Professor, Health Economics, UCL London	 Prof. Audrey Prost Professor, Institute of Global Health, UCL London	 Dr. Tanja Houweling Assistant Professor, Global Health Inequalities, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam	 Prof. Rakhal Acharya Menon Center for Health Science and Studies, Sri Chitra Tirumal Institute of Medical and Science Technology	 Prof. Anthony Costello Fanner Director, Dept. of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health, WHO
 Dr. Prasanta Tripathy Co-Founder, Ekjut	 Dr. Nirmala Nair Co-Founder, Ekjut	 Dr. Hemang Shah Director, Child Health and Development, CIFF	 Dr. Suneetha Kadiyala Professor, Global Nutrition LSHTM, London	 Ms. Vasudha Chakravarthy Partner, Development Solutions	 Dr. Sapna Desai Associate, Population Council, New Delhi
 Ms. Aarti Mohan Co-Founder & Partner, Sattva Consulting	 Mr. Hemanta Pradhan Program Officer, Ekjut	 Dr. Parabita Basu MIS (GIS) Officer, Ekjut	 Mr. Raj Kumar Gope Team Lead, Ekjut		



Mr Arun Kr. Singh, IAS. Additional Chief Secretary Govt. of Jharkhand appreciated the effort of the entire team especially the ASHAs in achieving another milestone of improving maternal and child health status across the state.

## MoU with NHM Uttarakhand

For supporting the rolling out of Participatory Learning and Action initiative in five districts of Uttarakhand (Uttarkashi, Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar, Tehri and Bageshwar) a non - financial MOU has been signed between National Health Mission, Uttarakhand and Ekjut, where Ekjut will be the technical agency for the development of content, tools and training of NHM team.



## Thrive:

### PLA in Rajasthan: RAJPUSHT

Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC), one of the key interventions introduced by National Rural Health Mission, ensures community participation at all levels, support in health activities, implementation and monitoring with action based planning of health programmes. In the context of Rajasthan, the heterogeneous nature of the community due to the rigid caste and socio economic background of the population makes mobilization and community action a challenge. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach and its tool can bring populations together for a common goal beyond the inequities.

In a joint effort of National Health Mission, Ekjut, IPE Global and CIFF, PLA approach is being piloted to strengthen the existing platform of VHSNC in five districts (Baran, Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and Udaipur) of Rajasthan. It aims to improve health indicators and uptake of responsibilities by the action committee in the villages. In this quarter we were able to capacitate the staff of NHM at the block and sector level cadre and ASHAs on the methodologies to impart their learnings to the community to empower and bring the desired result.



## Transform:

Annual Review and Reflections with the Adolescent Health Initiative Team for the year, 2021 completed with the following updates:

- 5952 adolescents have raised small nutri- gardens in their backyards
- 3932 girls have been followed up with health workers for getting IFA tablets, sanitary napkins and for menstrual hygiene practices.
- 6680 adolescent boys and girls were encouraged to continue education through informal coaching and small study circles.
- 74 persons with psycho- social disabilities were identified and facilitated through a community based rehabilitation programme being supported by mental health care team.



### Reunion with the family:

Weak, wobbly and disoriented, she was found wandering on the Chainpur - Ulidih road. During the next five days of her stay in Chakradharpur, Jharkhand, she was looked after, was provided shelter, food and company by Pratima, Sumitra, Lakshmi and Kuly through guidance by the Ekjut's Mental health team. She was confused about her home address, and through many rounds of conversations in her own dialect we were able to shortlist her possible locations in Purulia district of West Bengal. Happy to share that she is now reunited with her family in her village home. Her sister in law said that she had a dream that she was alive and will be brought back soon!

2017 Mental Health Care Act reminds us about the rights of persons with mental health issues and the responsibilities of the duty bearers -every person with mental illness shall have a right to live with dignity, the right to community living and the right to protection from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, to be protected from all forms of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse. As an organisation mandated to provide treatment and care to persons with Psychosocial disabilities, we are bound by these provisions.



### Covid Relief



As per Government norms, Anganwadis remained closed since, the 1st phase of lockdown was announced and the guidelines were followed for the creches run by Ekjut in Jharkhand and Odisha as well. Creches cater to the health and growth needs of young children (6-36 months) along with the other activities that are aligned to enhance their cognitive development. For the entire period with the creches remaining closed, families continued to get dry ration for the children at their doorstep (Total creches 21, Total kids - 1453, West Singhbhum 420, Bundu 15 and Orissa 1018 ) to ensure the nutritional intake during these tough times. Creche workers continued visiting homes and discussing with the parents about care for the children to prevent undernutrition. The dry ration included Rice, Pulses, Oil, Sugar, Sattu, Eggs, Soyabean, Potato, Hand wash and Soap. Sharing responsibilities at home and engaging with the children in early childhood care and development activities by male family members is important and recommended as well.

### Vaccine Hesitancy

Vaccine hesitancy was another challenge being faced by administration owing to the myths prevalent in the society. PLA approach based meetings were organised in the villages to generate awareness about COVID appropriate behaviour and to overcome such hesitancy. Referring the case of team at Chakradharpur, upon invitation by the administration provided support to AAA cadre in organising vaccination camps, administering of vaccine and to help with the documentation. In total 288 such PLA meetings were organised in Khuntpani and Chakradharpur blocks of West Singhbhum district where ~ 189 vaccination camps were organised and



207749 persons (18+ target group) were successfully vaccinated with the 1st dose.

## Webinars & Conferences

### Samvaad- A Tribal Conclave

As a key speaker, our colleague Ms. Sumitra Gagrai, spoke about the importance of mental health among people in the tribal communities specifically after COVID-19 pandemic. She stressed about the important determinants of mental health, such as employment, nutrition and gender discrimination. She concluded by urging Government and other community organisations to work on mental health issues.



### Early Childhood Development Workshop

Ekjut colleagues were invited to present their work on Early Childhood Development (ECD) at a district level workshops to talk about the importance of ECD and nutrition in early years. The workshops were organised with the purpose of building the capacity of key government functionaries on the importance of ECD and bringing together various government and non-government stakeholders for strengthening the component of ECD in existing nutrition programs in West Singhbhum district.



### Important Engagements:



489 Civil Services Officer Trainees of 96th Foundation Course were trained for their Field Study and Research Programme to understand the realities and complexities of rural life. Ekjut colleagues shared 4 plenary and 16 parallel hands-on tools and methods sessions to:

1. Assess the socio-economic-political dynamics that exist in a village;
2. Recognise the importance of the need to learn from the villagers in evolving people based solutions to local problems;
3. Evaluate the spatial and temporal changes that have occurred in the village in terms of quality of life resulting from governmental and non-governmental interventions.
4. Evaluate the working of various village level institutions, formal and informal, in terms of participation and effectiveness

