



Together, building healthier communities

NEWSLETTER

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

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Throwback 2017

Celebrating 15 Years of Ekjut through the Lens:

In Nov' 2017, Ekjut completed 15 years of its humble efforts in bringing change and building resilience amongst the marginalized and underserved communities living in some of the remotest districts across the country. This was celebrated as "Photo Journey" by collating moments captured through the lens of eminent photo-journalist and Padmashree Sri Sudharak Olwe and Award winning German Photojournalist Helena Schätzle. The occasion was graced by the Honourable Governor Smt. Draupadi Murmu, Padmashree Mukund Nayak, Simon Oraon, and eminent sculptor Shri Haren Thakur, and Smt Arti Kujur, Chairperson, JSCPCR. The event spread across three days, had several panel discussions chaired by experts such as Late Devjeet Sharangi, Prof. Audry Prost etc. where they spoke on issues ranging from equity to economics to food sovereignty. A photography workshop conducted by Shri Sudharak Olwe for the students of mass communication was enjoyed and attended with much excitement. Contribution of individuals associated with Ekjut from the initial days was acknowledged with a token of appreciation while 10 such posters portrayed ekjut's ongoing work under different verticals.



Survive:

Scale up of PLA in Jharkhand:

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) monthly meetings resumed in the field October 2020 onward, totalling to more than 7 lakh meetings starting from 2016. The PLA module is further contextualised in light of Covid 19; where pregnant and aged women are discouraged to participate as per protocol, new meetings are added to the existing one pertaining to COVID appropriate behaviors, preventive measures for individuals with focus on those suffering from non-communicable diseases (Blood Pressure, Diabetes, etc.), more emphasis on wash and hygiene and overcoming vaccine hesitancy etc.



Kangaroo Mother Care for Low Birth Weight Babies and to Survive Hypothermia

Sunita resides in the Oberiya village of Ranchi district and attends PLA meetings regularly. Knowing the importance of timely antenatal check-ups, she followed three such but unfortunately had a preterm delivery at the 7th month of her pregnancy. The baby was 1.25 kg at the time of birth and Sunita followed what she had learnt about caring for preterm



babies by participating in PLA meetings. She kept him wrapped and gave kangaroo mother care 3-4 times a day, took diverse food and exclusively breastfed the child. She recalled the importance of breastfeeding and did not give pre-lacteal and strictly followed the immunization schedule as per the MCP card. Within 2 months, her son gained weight and was 3 kg. Now her in-laws and other villagers too understand the importance of Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) and how to take proper care of a low birth weight baby. Sunita also helps Sahiya for better engagement and participation of the community while conducting PLA.

Thrive:

Community-led prevention of Severe Acute Malnutrition (CPAM) in Jharkhand

The National Health Mission, Jharkhand-led Community-led Prevention of Severe Acute Malnutrition (CPAM) intervention started in December 2020, mandates at improving nutrition of children under three years by combining 1) the participatory learning and action (PLA) monthly meetings focussed on nutrition, 2) improving quality, coverage of home visits and counselling by ASHAs and 3) service strengthening. To be implemented in a phase-wise manner, starting with 6 learning blocks in year 1 and scaled up to the entire state of Jharkhand in successive 3 years, in this initiative, trained ASHAs will facilitate PLA meetings at the village level to improve nutrition-related practices at the individual, family, and community levels, furthermore to conduct home visits focussing on reaching to the underserved. An orientation session of NHM officials, the training of master trainers and Sahiya Sathis on initial 8 PLA meetings is completed all across the 6 districts in the month of September 2021.



Blessing in the Disguise



Sharing responsibilities at home and engaging with the child in early childhood care and development activities by male family members is important and recommended as well. There are many children like Lovely, Beauty and Akash’s whose fathers work as wage earners at the mining site and their laborious schedule leave little room for them to spend time with the family. . During the lockdown when their livelihood was affected they were forced to stay at home. Realising the situation, they utilized the time at home with children and remain engaged in supporting their wives in household chores, helping kids to reach their developmental milestones.

Lovely’s father Ramesh, says, “We have never cared much about our children at home because they used to get these activities and services at centres. Since, there is no work after the lockdown I spend some quality time with my daughter. It makes her happy and I feel relaxed too. After work starts then also I will continue playing with her whenever I will get time.”

Story as told by: Prabas, Odisha

Transform:

Mobile Library: Walk the talk in the time of Web

The contributions made by the Yuva saathis during the pandemic in bridging the digital divide through creative integration of online platforms for education and informal coaching in their villages has been exemplary. The latest addition is the concept of mobile library arising from brainstorming with the Yuva saathis using a new approach that is fun-filled and goes beyond textbooks. With the idea of exposing children to the concepts of geography, social sciences and environment, taking suggestions from youth these posters will be displayed in prominent places that will shift to different villages in rotation. On such poster was displayed in Ambrai village of Khuntpani block to understand the solar system, where the *Munda ji* (Village Headman) and teacher liked the initiative and said "In the present time it is a welcoming effort to develop creative knowledge that the children can easily imagine through pictorial representation."



Journey of Sumitra Gargai:

The BetterIndia Community, captured the journey of Sumitra Gargai on 11th September 2021 on the online version. It shared the story of how a personal tragedy made Sumitra Gargai, a woman of Jharkhand’s Ho tribe, work with Ekjut, civil society organisation to fight taboos around mental illnesses and depression in rural India. She is associated with Ekjut for last 18 years.



Engagement of adolescents during the pandemic:

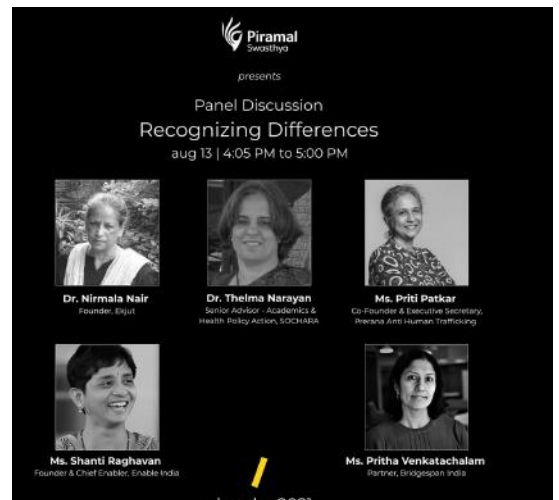
With the help of Yuva Sathis 5358 adolescent boys and girls could attend informal coaching and online education through online portal of education department till date whereas 3807 (2083 girls and 1724 boys) adolescents participated in the digital quiz event. Yuva saathis were trained to use pulse oximeter for identification of covid positive cases in the community, motivating them through PLA and short videos designed to overcome vaccine hesitancy, appealing for COVID Vaccination and assisting health workers in record keeping as well. 938 farmers altogether now follow multi- cropping and sustainable farming practices whereas ~400 farmers could be linked to the agriculture office for seeds and pump sets under the livelihood promotion component of the program. Not limiting to these, >10000 vegetable saplings got distributed to young adults and farmers in 50 villages and sustainable agriculture, backyard nutrition gardens were practiced by 3125 adolescents.



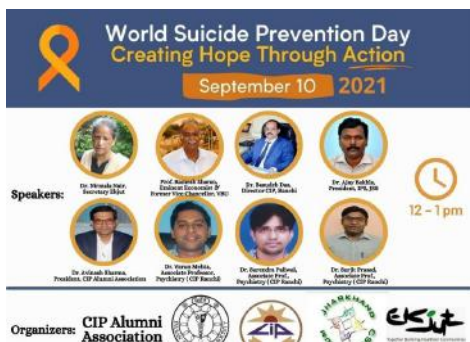
Webinars & Conferences

Recognizing the Differences: Panel discussion by Piramal Swasthya

Dr. Nirmala Nair, Cofounder, Ekjut was invited as one of the panellists in the discussion on Recognizing the Differences. The session aimed to bring forward the insights from experience of working with the tribal community, people with disabilities, and sex workers. The capability and preparedness of our health ecosystem to engage with marginalised groups in an empathetic manner, the junctures at which it fails and reasons behind was discussed.



Creating Hope through Action:



On September, 10th marking the “World Suicide Prevention Day”, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi, Ekjut, Indian Psychiatry Society, Jharkhand and other Civil Society Organisations Forum organised an online discussions on “Creating Hope through Action” with the focus on suicide prevention in the community across the state. The panellists emphasised the importance of support groups, community work along with institutions and community organisations to help in and connect with persons in distress.

It also emerged that we need to work collaboratively on the ground to address determinants of suicides including mental health and deaddiction .