

NEWSLETTER

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

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Effect of a participatory intervention with women's groups on birth outcomes and maternal depression in Jharkhand and Orissa, India: a cluster-randomised controlled trial

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Global recognition for child healthcare

Sumitra's power of words that saves babies

Read more below

New Delhi, March 8: The future in Parliament hasn't stirred Sumitra Gogoi yet but to celebrate women's empowerment on another battlefield -- saving the lives of babies -- the 28-year-old mother of two girls is the co-ordinator of a self-help programme in

Throwback 2010: 10 Years of Ekjut Trial

Findings from this collaborative research was published on 8th March 2010(International Women's Day) in *The Lancet*. This initiative in 200 villages and subsequent work has led PLA in the lives of women and children in more than 100,000 villages in underserved districts of India for survive, thrive and transform.

COVID 19 Vaccination: Leaving No One Behind

Rural and marginalized population are more likely to be left out of COVID 19 vaccination drive and the hesitancy among people may also keep them away. Elderly and individuals with co-morbidities in hard-to-reach areas of Jharkhand are being escorted by Ekjut colleagues to the vaccination booths.



Survive:

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) monthly meetings along with other community engagement programs, resumed in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. Several rounds of virtual and small group discussions at different levels were held prior to the resumption of PLA meetings in the community keeping the COVID situation in mind. PLA meetings therefore started with discussions on COVID 19 followed by the usual meeting content. Trainings of Sahiyas (ASHAs) from the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Sahebganj and Gumla were initiated with the customised module for smooth interaction in the community.



‘Problem-solving’ and ‘decision making’ is what the Participatory learning and Action (PLA) meetings imparted to the women attending the regular meetings

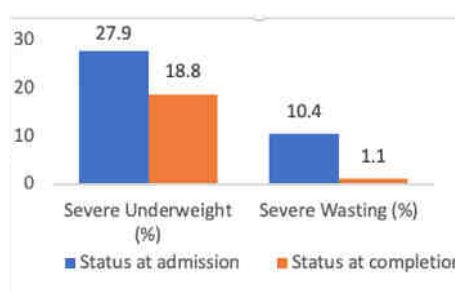
In a remote village of Jharkhand, a desperate husband approached the ‘Ojha’ (traditional healer) for help to deliver the placenta after 2 hours of childbirth. As luck would have it, a participatory group meeting was happening in the same village and the ‘Ojha’ reached out to the group members for assistance to save the woman. A scurry of activities followed – some fumbled with their phones to find connectivity to call the ambulance, while others ran to support the woman and the new born baby. They found the exhausted mother lying in a pool of blood with the uncut umbilical cord and materials for rituals all around her. One participant recalled that breastfeeding could help with placental expulsion, and another remembered about gently massaging the lower abdomen, while another rushed to wash hands and find a new blade to cut the cord, and yet another encouraged the mother to drink water. All this happened simultaneously within minutes and while they anxiously waited for the ambulance, the woman cried out loud when the placenta delivered. Gradually the bleeding reduced and she recovered and asked for more water.

Story as told by Munni Bodra to interns – Dr. Neha and Dr. Dhiraj



Thrive:

Virtual training sessions on toy-making and Language Development were conducted for crèche workers and coordinators of Samarpan and Savera organizations spread across 6 different sites of Koderma and Giridih districts in Jharkhand. Toys such as rattles, puzzles, number wheels, stacking the rings, getting a ball through a hole and different face masks were made by the team members. Participants enjoyed this new method of training and the contents. Crèche workers also restarted serving hot meals to children in small batches outdoors while maintaining hygiene and physical distancing, and provided eggs and dry snacks at their doorsteps.



During the period from March '20 to Feb'21 when crèches being managed by Ekjut in Keonjhar, Odisha (supported by WCD & DMF) and in West Singhbhum, Jharkhand (supported by AEIN) were temporarily closed due to COVID 19, all the children (n=1200) were provided with monthly Take Home Rations including eggs along with regular visits by the creche workers to their homes. Improved nutritional status was reflected in the Anthropometric measurements (Severe Underweight and Severe Acute Malnutrition) of 560 children who graduated during this period, on attaining 3 years of age, in comparison to their status at the time of enrolment in the creches.

Sukurmuni Devi’s Love for Kids

Sukurmuni Devi, belongs to the HO community and lives in Tapkocha village, West Singbhum. Due to the low socio-economic status of her family, she could not avail school education but that did not limit her to perform her duty as a crèche worker. She knows how much children love playing with toys made by her; so when crèches were temporarily closed during the pandemic situation, she continued making and distributing handmade toys and spreading happiness among the kids.

Story as told by Debay Hembrom



Transform:

Adolescents growing their own Vegetable Basket:

Under the Jharkhand Initiative for Adolescent Health (JIAH) intervention, youth facilitate monthly PLA meetings with adolescents from the villages and actively participate in nutrition-focussed discussions. In these talks they focus on the food groups available in the villages, dietary diversity, healthy foods and promotion of nutrition and kitchen gardens in school and their backyard. The impact of these practices could be seen during COVID 19 lock down phases when more than 540 adolescents developed small kitchen garden in their homes with fruit bearing plants and vegetables for regular consumption which improved dietary diversity of the family during the period of limited availability.



Ekjut Urban Resource Centre continued to provide inputs to improve quality of services in the shelter homes for the urban homeless in Ranchi and Dhanbad, cities of Jharkhand. During the post covid time these centres doubled as hubs for connecting the Vulnerable communities with their entitlements.



In Search of Dignity: Malhar Kocha Slum

Around 100 families living in Malhar Kocha slum, Ranchi depend mostly on rag picking as their livelihood. Due to lack of ration cards, most of them could not avail ration provided by the Government. As support to affected persons, Ekjut put efforts to get Aadhar and ration cards issued by the government at the earliest. The team also organised ration, hygiene kits and masks.



Webinars: Two examples of Several Such..

On World Mental Health Day 2020, Ekjut together with Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), academics, psychiatrists, civil society organizations, community members, caregivers and persons living with mental illness came together to deliberate in a lively webinar. Ekjut service users shared their lived-in experiences as a part of the Social Contact Program.



Hosted by The School of Public Policy's(SPP) Womxn's Network at London School of Economics and Political Sciences(LSE) Dr. Nirmla Nair shared her insights of how an NGO can partner with women to implement successful projects and other realities of working at the grass-root level.

Events:

Grassroot workers of Ekjut-India shared stories of survival, transformation and resilience from the heartlands of India covering the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan using the power of photography. The Murthy Nayak Foundation and Ekjut along with the Photography Promotion Trust trained dedicated field workers in the art and nuances of photography through online workshops and sessions for over two months during the COVID-19 lockdown!



Awards:

Ms Neeky, District Coordinator, Ramgarh was felicitated as “Front Line Corona Warrior” by the District Administration for her in person engagement in COVID 19 surveillance measures in the district.



Mr. Malaya featured as the first #humansofaen in 2021 as felicitated by “AEIN - Aide à l'Enfance de l'Inde et du Népal” for his involvement and contribution in the fields of nutrition, education and youth empowerment.