



PHRN NEWSLETTER

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Dear friends and colleagues,

We are glad to share our newsletter for the period April – June 2024. We continue to demonstrate our efforts toward our committed goals. Our team has shown their dedication in implementing projects on various themes across states, which is highly appreciated.

During this phase, we gained more experience through our ongoing projects in Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Delhi. The currently ongoing Mental Health Literacy Project in Delhi saw active participation from the community as well as young aspiring public health professionals. Our team participated in various workshops and meetings such as Author's workshop for the "Improved Nutritional Outcomes", donor partners meet and social protection for nutrition community of practice (SP4N-COP) among others.

During this period, Odisha saw the successful inauguration of several new creches and training and orientation of creche caregivers. Additionally, efforts were made for providing capacity building support to partner organizations on childcare, nutrition, first aid, sanitation, etc.

Various success stories from the field indicated the importance of collective efforts by community for ensuring a healthy and nurturing environment for children. The team participated in the partners' meeting on June 27th and 28th, 2024, that brought together various stakeholders to review the progress and plan the future of the initiative.

In Chhattisgarh, under the Gender-Nutrition program, training and capacity building workshop was organized for creche workers. Trainings were also conducted with field team for undertaking dietary diversity rapid survey. Field visits were conducted by TDH team to engage with youth and adolescent groups to assess the project's impact and address critical issues such as gender equality, health, nutrition, and hygiene.

Through the various kinds of work happening in multiple states, PHRS has been able to identify the strengths and weaknesses, and gaps where there is work lying ahead to be fulfilled. Once again, heartfelt congratulations to the entire team for their endeavours in the past few months. Wishing us all more power to continue on this winning streak with hope, trust and a genuine intention for collaborative work. Thanks to all donors and partners.

EDITORIAL

NEWS FROM SECRETARIAT

Mental Health Literacy Project Workshop with students from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Internship programme
Child food poverty: nutrition deprivation in early childhood
Social protection for nutrition community of practice (SP4N-COP)
Author's Workshop for "Improved Nutritional Outcomes"

NEWS FROM ODISHA

Creche implementation and training updates
Community meeting in Badatadra village leads to plans for new crèche house
Reviving the Dantilingi-2 crèche: A tale of community unity
Support to partner organisation: April - June 2024
Pidua village unites to overcome challenges and open new crèche
Instant crèche space selection and inauguration at Railima
Rural crèche initiative partners meeting: June 27th & 28th, 2024, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

NEWS FROM CHHATTISGARH

Two days field visit to Surguja district by TDH
Creche workers capacity building training at Lundra Block
Dietary diversity rapid survey training for PLA facilitators

STAFF NEWS

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

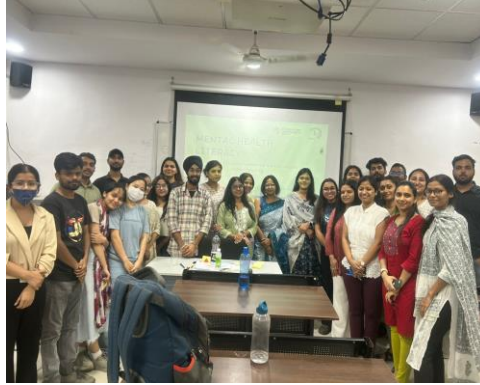
Mental Health Literacy Project



The MHL project supported by De Montfort University has taken off on the field. The baseline study was completed by May 2024. Community meetings were conducted with adolescents, women, and youth groups in the New Seemapuri area of Shahdara. These meetings covered the basics of mental health, mental health disorders, stigma, and self-care. The community meetings saw positive participation from all age groups. The participants made posters and creative art to share their experiences on the topic.



Workshop with students from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University



A one day workshop was conducted in Ambedkar University with students pursuing Master's in Public Health on 22nd May 2024. The workshop aimed to create awareness on mental health literacy. The session was facilitated by Dr Rupa Prasad and Ms. Rishita Maiti. Sessions were conducted on basics of mental health, mental health disorders, stigma related to the issue, and self-care and professional help approaches. Group activities were also conducted in the form of case study assessment, role plays, and poster making to understand the perspectives and learnings of the public health students.



Internship Programme

PHRS hosted Dr Srishti Sudan as an intern from 8th April 2024 till 30th April 2024. She is pursuing Master's in Public Health from Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai. During her time in the organization, she was engaged in the MHL project-collection of qualitative and quantitative data and data entry. She was also involved in analysis of qualitative data.

Ms. Divya Agrawal was placed in PHRS as an intern between 25th April 2024 till 25th June 2024. Ms. Divya is pursuing Post Graduate Diploma in Hospital and Health Management from International Institute of Health Management Research, Delhi. She was actively engaged in the MHL project. She was involved in data collection for the baseline study, data entry, undertaking field notes and report writing during community meetings, and engaged during MHL workshops with AUD students. Additionally, she also documented case studies from field and undertook other organizational activities.

PHRS is hosting Ms. Gyamar Pakchi for a one-month internship. She is pursuing a Master's in Public Health from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi. She has been involved in the MHL project undertaking field visits, data collection, data entry, and documentation of community meetings.

Child food poverty: Nutrition deprivation in early childhood

Dr. Vandana Prasad was part of the external advisory group for Unicef's report on Child Food Poverty. The global report examines the status, trends, inequities and drivers of child food poverty in early childhood, including the impact of global and local food and nutrition crises. It focuses on low- and middle-income countries, where most children living in child food poverty reside, and on the implications of child food poverty for undernutrition and poor development. Few of the major findings of the report are:

- Globally, one in four children (27 per cent) are living in severe child food poverty in early childhood, amounting to 181 million children under 5 years of age.
- Globally, progress towards ending severe child food poverty is slow, but some regions and countries are proving that progress is possible and is happening.
- Severe child food poverty is experienced by children belonging to poor and non-poor households, indicating that household income is not the only driver of child food poverty.
- Children living in severe child food poverty are missing out on many nutrient-rich foods, while unhealthy foods are becoming entrenched in their diets.
- The global food and nutrition crisis and localized conflicts and climatic shocks are intensifying severe child food poverty, especially in fragile and humanitarian settings.
- Severe child food poverty is driving child undernutrition: the percentage of children living in severe child food poverty is three times higher in countries with a high prevalence of stunting.

Author's workshop for "Improved Nutritional Outcomes"

Dr Rupa Prasad and Mr Shahnawaz Khan attended Author's workshop for the "Improved Nutritional Outcomes" volume on 28th and 29th of April, 2024. The workshop took place at the Indian School of Business, Mohali campus.



The workshop started with a welcome and introduction by Dr Amarjeet Sinha followed by an overview on community-based nutrition action by Dr Vandana Prasad and Dr Dipa Sinha.

Post that the participants gathered in knowledge café to present their ideas

Social protection for nutrition community of practice (SP4N- COP)

Dr. Vandana Prasad attended the 6th meeting for social protection for nutrition community of practice (SP4N-COP) at Unicef. The meeting focused on creating social protection pathways for nutrition in India. It drew insights and lessons from partner members and shared best practices regarding social protection. The meeting started with an update from previous SP4N-CoP meeting and actions taken. Post that knowledge was shared on the following areas:

- Review on cash transfer programmes in India by Aditya Naskar from J-PAL.
- Impact of cash transfer on dietary diversity of pregnant and lactating women by Namita Wadhwa from IPE.
- Food fortification to deliver on nutrition by Sariqua Yunus
- Global perspective on SP4Nutrition by Annalies Borrel from Unicef
- Regional perspective on SP4Nutrition by Jessica Owens from Unicef

on various topics in an interactive and participatory way. This fostered meaningful conversations, exchange of ideas, and collective exploration of complex topics.



NEWS FROM ODISHA

Rural Creche Initiative

Creche implementation and training updates

Between April - June, significant progress was made across multiple phases of creche implementation. The first phase saw successful operations in 10 creches, with supervisors diligently enrolling children, conducting anthropometric measurements, and providing necessary support to caregivers. In the second phase, 7 new creches were inaugurated and activated in K Singhpur, receiving strong support from the local community, Frontline Workers (FLWs), and ICDS officials.



During the third phase, efforts focused on identifying suitable villages, resulting in the establishment of 13 new creches, with 9 inaugurated in May and the remaining 4 inaugurated in June 2024. Supervisors continued their vital role in enrolling children, conducting measurements, and guiding caregivers. The fourth phase aimed to initiate 10 new creches, successfully inaugurating 9 by the end of June, with one scheduled for July. Logistics support ensured timely distribution of materials and equipment.



Training and orientation activities were pivotal during this period. Creche caregivers of the third and fourth phase creches received three days of residential training. Creche supervisors underwent MIS training in Rayagada, and a virtual meeting introduced the Shishughar application. A tool for assessing training needs was developed and shared with APF. Refresher training sessions and comprehensive induction programs were conducted, enhancing the skills and confidence of old creche caregivers of the Rayagada and Bissamcuttack blocks. Overall, the diligent efforts of supervisors and caregivers have ensured the effective functioning of 39 creches in Kalyansingpur block, fostering a nurturing and healthy environment for children's development.



Community meeting in Badatadra village leads to plans for new crèche house

On January 24, 2024, a significant community meeting was held in Badatadra village. Mothers and various community members gathered to discuss the functioning of the local crèche. During the meeting, the need for improved facilities was highlighted, particularly focusing on an old school building in the village.

The villagers reached a consensus to demolish the old school building and construct a new crèche house at the same location. Despite the enthusiasm, some repair work was still needed on the existing structure to ensure it could properly serve its new purpose.

In a generous move reflecting her commitment to the village's future, Mrs. Runi Kadraka, a samiti member of Narayanpur Panchayat, donated Rs. 2,40,000 towards the repair and refurbishment of the crèche house. Mrs. Kadraka assured the villagers that more support and benefits for the crèche would be forthcoming in the days ahead.

This initiative marks a significant step forward in improving early childhood care and education in Badatadra village, demonstrating the power of community involvement and dedication to the welfare of children.

Reviving the Dantilingi-2 crèche: A tale of community unity and determination

In August 2018, the Dantilingi-2 crèche opened in a kutcha house, serving 14 children. Six months later, the building was damaged. The crèche found temporary refuge in a pucca house for a year and a half until the owner reclaimed it. The crèche then operated in a rundown private house until June 27, 2023, when heavy rains damaged it too. On July 1, 2023, the crèche moved to a small room in a CCG house.

Seeking a permanent solution, villagers approached the headmaster, who advised them to contact the BDO. A community meeting was held on July 30, 2023, and a resolution signed by villagers and the sarpanch was presented to the BDO, who promised a swift solution. The sarpanch pledged funds for a new crèche building, and construction began.

Despite challenges like high demand for labor and masons, the community persevered. Traditional customs delayed progress, but work continued. By the end of the month, the new building was nearly complete. PHRS team followed up regularly.

On July 6, 2024, a meeting with the house owner resolved misunderstandings, leading to repairs. By July 8, 2024, the crèche was fully operational again. The villagers celebrated their unity and thanked the district team for their support. Their collective effort ensured the children had a safe, nurturing environment once more.



Support to partner organisation: April - June 2024

Throughout the reporting period from September 2023 to May 2024, the Rural Creche Initiative made significant strides. Starting on September 1, 2023, the initiative saw the handover of 72 creches to partner organizations. This effort was meticulously coordinated by PHRS and APF, ensuring all stakeholders, including creche workers, were well-informed. The transition included

sharing vital documents, certifications, and login credentials for the eKalika application. By February 1, 2024, another 20 creches were handed over to Karrtabya and Porevarthan, with comprehensive support and orientations.

Training and orientation programs were pivotal during this period. From April 5-7, 2024, a three-day residential training was conducted for caregivers from six Gram Vikas creches in Koinpur, Gajapati. Led by PHRS's Manas Padhy,

the training covered childcare, nutrition, first aid, and record-keeping. On April 9, a virtual meeting with Gram Vikas introduced the Shishughar application, enhancing child listing and anthropometry processes. Further orientations included a two-day program for Karrtabya's team in Kalahandi (April 22-23) and another for Porevartan's team in Malkangiri (May 1-2), led by Shahnawaz Khan, PHRS and Subhasish Panda, APF, focusing on creche management and addressing malnutrition.

May 2024 saw several comprehensive caregiver training sessions. From May 8-10, Swasthya Swaraj organized a training in Thuamulrampur, Kalahandi, which included practical demonstrations and interactive activities on malnutrition, infant feeding, hygiene, meal planning, first aid, and creche committee establishment. EKTA held a refresher training from May 20-22 in Koraput, and SOVA conducted another from May 28-30 in Koraput, both focusing on reinforcing caregivers' skills in managing creches and ensuring proper nutrition. These sessions, led by experts from PHRS and supported by supervisory teams, equipped caregivers with essential knowledge and skills, ensuring high-quality care for children in the creches.



Creche caregivers refresher training for EKTA



Creche caregivers training for Swasthya Swaraj

Pidua village unites to overcome challenges and open new crèche

On May 30, 2024, a pivotal meeting was held in Pidua village to discuss the opening of a new crèche. The gathering saw the participation of every villager, along with some additional community members. Amidst lively discussions about the crèche, a generous villager offered his house to be used for this purpose. However, the house required significant repairs, including flooring, plastering, and fitting doors and windows. The house owner was given time to complete these repairs.

During a follow-up visit by the PHRS team, it was discovered that the repair work had come to a halt. Upon inquiry, the house owner revealed, with much sadness, that he had lost four buffaloes over the past few days, resulting in a financial loss of approximately Rs. 2,50,000. Due to this unexpected setback, he could no longer afford to continue the repairs. At that point, only the backdoor installation was pending.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the PHRS team convened a meeting with the villagers. They discussed possible solutions to complete the crèche. During the discussion, an elderly villager mentioned an old school building in the village that had a usable door. It was decided to approach the headmaster (HM) to obtain the door for the crèche.

Thanks to this collaborative effort, the villagers managed to secure the door from the old school building. The door was then fitted into the crèche, paving the way for its inauguration. This success story is a testament to the resilience and unity of Pidua village, demonstrating how community spirit can overcome even the most unexpected challenges.



Instant crèche space selection and inauguration at Railima

Railima, a village located 14 km from Ksingpur block headquarters and 2 km from Sunakhandi Gram Panchayat, is home to a PVTG community with 47 households, including 43 ST and 4 SC families. The ST community lives in two colonies, separated by a 1 km road. Despite the distance, Agwandi children and school students regularly attend classes. While Railima has a primary school, upper primary and college students travel to Ksingpur. The village also hosts an Agwandi center, though its workers reside in a nearby village. ASHA workers, who live in Railima, play a crucial role in local health activities.

The Railima community invited the PHRS team to discuss the opening of a crèche. During a scoping meeting, attended by the PHRS Bhubaneswar team and APF staff member Santunu Sir, the decision was made to open the crèche despite the village's small population.

Subsequently, three meetings were held to select a Crèche Caregiver (CCG) and an appropriate space for the crèche. The community decided on a small poultry farm that needed two brick walls. The committed community quickly completed the construction, and the CCGs received three days of training at Japakhal. The inauguration of the crèche was scheduled for June 28, 2024.

On the inauguration day, our team discovered that the initially chosen space was not ready. The community had arranged a new location in an old school building, but it was in poor condition. After discussions, they found an OPNIP community building, though it was filled with the village's sound system, grain, and large utensils. Demonstrating strong resolve, the villagers cleaned the space with support from our team, a task that took two hours.

Following village rituals, an elderly priest conducted a worship ceremony. The crèche was then inaugurated by the village sounta. This event showcases Railima's community spirit and determination, turning challenges into a successful crèche inauguration.



Rural crèche initiative partners meeting: June 27th & 28th, 2024, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

The Rural Crèche Initiative Partners Meeting, organized by APF, took place on June 27th and 28th, 2024, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This significant event brought together various stakeholders to review the progress and plan the future of the initiative. The meeting featured detailed presentations on the status, activities, innovations, and challenges faced by different organizations. Highlights included the introduction of the new Sishughar Application and updates on crèche MIS, offering valuable insights into the nutritional status of children enrolled in the crèches.

Key discussions focused on ensuring proper infrastructure and logistics support, including housing, assets, toilets, and water supply. Financial updates and discussions on field challenges provided a platform for addressing concerns and sharing solutions. Sessions on monitoring, supervision, and data-driven decision-making emphasized the need for meticulous oversight to maintain high standards of care. Capacity building was another crucial topic, with extensive discussions on training caregivers and supervisors to handle their responsibilities effectively. Early Childhood Development (ECD) was emphasized, focusing on the holistic development of children in the crèches.

Community participation was identified as a vital component, with strategies discussed on effectively engaging local communities to support the crèches. Integration with health services and the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) and referral systems was also addressed, highlighting the need for a coordinated approach to child care and development. The meeting underscored the importance of continuous improvement, collaboration, and community engagement in enhancing early childhood care and education across the region. The active participation and diverse presentations reflected a strong collective commitment to the initiative's success, setting a clear path forward for the effective operation and expansion of rural crèches.



NEWS FROM CHHATTISGARH

[Gender Nutrition Project](#)

[Two days field visit to Surguja district by TDH Team](#)

On June 29, 2024, TDH team visited the Lundra block of Surguja district. The visiting team, which included representatives from TDH Pune and Germany, as well as Chaupal's leadership, aimed to engage with youth and adolescent groups to assess the project's impact and address critical issues such as gender equality, health, nutrition, and hygiene. The day began with an in-depth group discussion at Sikilma village, where the team interacted with local youth and adolescents. The discussions provided insights into the project's benefits and highlighted current challenges faced by the community. Key topics included gender equality, sports, health and nutrition for youth, and hygiene practices.



The team then visited several kitchen gardens to observe the progress and discuss with beneficiaries the support they received through the project. This visit demonstrated the project's tangible impact on improving food security and nutrition at the household level. The beneficiaries shared their experiences and the positive changes in their dietary habits, attributing these improvements to the project's interventions. In Gangadad village, the team met with millet farmers, including both men and women, to understand their current status and the challenges they face in millet cultivation.

The discussions revealed important insights into the struggles of smallholder farmers and the project's role in providing millet seeds and technical support. The team also addressed women's health and nutrition issues, emphasizing the importance of utilizing Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in the villages to improve overall well-being.



Meeting was also held with Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) facilitators and block coordinators to discuss field challenges and project achievements.



On June 30, 2024, the visiting team observed activities at two creches in the Lakhanpur block, Ledradand and Lipangi. The team interacted with creche workers and mothers to understand the benefits derived from the creche. These interactions highlighted the positive impact of the creche services on early childhood development and the well-being of children and their families.

The visit concluded with a meeting at the Ambikapur Chaupal office, where presentations were made on dietary diversity survey findings, the way forward, millet farming, and organic kitchen garden practices. The donor team provided feedback on the project activities, acknowledging the progress made and suggesting areas for further improvement. This meeting underscored the project's achievements in promoting dietary diversity, sustainable agriculture, and community health.



Creche workers capacity building training at Jagarnathpur, Lundra Block



A three-day creche workers refresher and capacity-building training, organized by PHRS. It was organized from 12th to 14th June 2024 at the Jagarnathpur Training Centre in Lakhanpur Block, Chhattisgarh. The training brought together 40 dedicated creche workers, 7 PLA facilitators, along with project coordinators, MIS personnel, and the Block Coordinator. Led by the esteemed senior resource person Mr. Rajesh Srivastava, the training focused on essential aspects of creche operations, emphasizing growth chart measurements, and health-related documentation. The meticulous attention to the needs of children under three, including aspects like food, hygiene, vaccinations, and education, set a strong foundation for the participants.



Dietary diversity rapid survey training for PLA Facilitators

A one-day training session on the dietary diversity rapid survey was conducted on 10th June 2024 at chaupal resource center, Lundra Block. The training aimed to equip PLA facilitators with the necessary skills to capture seasonal food consumption patterns among project beneficiaries. A total of 36 participants attended the training, including 30 PLA facilitators, 3 block coordinators, 2 project coordinators, and 1 MIS officer.

The session was led by Srikant Behera, Project Coordinator, PHRS who provided comprehensive guidance on using the dietary diversity rapid survey tool. The field team has commenced the survey in designated villages to accurately capture the seasonal food consumption patterns of the beneficiaries. A demonstration session was also conducted to address any challenges and ensure clarity on the training content. This training marks a significant step in enhancing the project's ability to monitor and improve dietary diversity among the communities.



STAFF NEWS

Dr. Vandana Prasad, Principal Technical Advisor- PHRS has been engaged by Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business for co-editing volume dedicated to nutrition outcomes.

S.No.	Name	Designation
The following colleague have joined PHRS		
1.	Rushyashruna Jyoti Kumari	Creche Supervisor, Ksinghpur, Odisha
The following colleague have left PHRS		
1.	Saik Fojilalli Doula	Programme Coordinator, Malkangiri, Odisha

Public Health Resource Network (PHRN) is a growing network of individuals and organizations with the perspective of strengthening technical and management capacities to take action towards the common goal of 'Health for All'. Its main objective is to contribute and strengthen all efforts directed towards the goal of 'Health for All' through promotion of public health, social justice and human rights related to the provision and distribution of health services, especially for those who are generally left underserved. PHRN is currently working directly in the states of the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha and has contributed to the on-going work of strengthening public health systems in other states through its partnerships with other institutions. Public Health Resource Society (PHRS) is the core group that has initiated the network. PHRS is a national level organization that is registered in Delhi under Societies Registration Act 1860 (Act XXI). It comprises of a small group of members and full timers that provides leadership to the network as well as functions as its secretariat.

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