



PHRN NEWSLETTER

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Dear friends and colleagues,

We are glad to share our newsletter for the period July - September 2024. We continue to demonstrate our efforts toward our committed goals. Our team has shown their dedication to 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. During these months our team members from various states participated in several workshops, trainings, and visits. These include participation in the national consultation on the need, demand, and effectiveness of childcare models for under-3 children in Kerala and Odisha; roundtable discussion on building inclusive and responsive care models; financing quality childcare facilities in India, among others. We also conducted trainings on basics of child nutrition for partner organisations and presented the findings of our research study entitled – A Study to Determine the Factors Affecting Treatment Adherence for Hypertension and Diabetes in Different Contexts at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

In Delhi, we successfully completed the Mental Health Literacy project.

In Odisha, PHRS team participated in Poshan Mah celebration, Breastfeeding Week celebration, National Deworming Day observance. The team participated in dissemination program on 'Promoting investment for under-three children in Odisha'; and exploring pathways towards food and nutrition security in Odisha & formation of State Advisory Group for Collation for Food and Nutrition Security (CFNS).

In Chhattisgarh, under the Gender-Nutrition project, half-yearly review meeting was conducted, along with monthly creche review meetings, and training sessions on PLA modules.

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.

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NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Capacity Building Workshop for Terre Des Hommes (TDH) Partners

A three-day workshop was organized by Terre Des Hommes on capacity building of partners from 23rd July 2024 to 25th July 2024. Dr. Rupa Prasad, Executive Director, PHRS and Ms. Rishita Maiti, Programme Coordinator, PHRS from PHRS attended the workshop in Bhopal. Sessions were conducted on themes such as- Expansion of democratic spaces by children and youth, Status of education of migrant and marginalized children, Transformative Gender Approach, Opportunities of climate adaptation and mitigation, Mental Health Literacy, Effective communication for CSOs, etc. Eminent speakers such as- Mr. Biraj Patnaik, Executive Director, NFI; Prof. Amman Madan, Ajim Premji University, Bhopal; Ms. Seema Kurup, Eka-The Communication Collective, Bhopal; Dr. Rupa Prasad, Executive Director, PHRS; Dr. Subhashchandra Pande, Sr. Environmentalist; Navnath Gore, Programme Officer, TDH; Dr. Asha Mukundan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS); Mr. Sampat Mandave, Programme Coordinator, TDH was part of the workshop.



Workshop on Mental Health Literacy (MHL) With Public Health Professionals and Adolescents

Sessions on Mental Health Literacy (MHL) was undertaken by Dr Rupa Prasad at Bhopal on 24th July 2024. Public health professions and adolescents and young adults from different Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) such as Terre Des Hommes, Chaupal, PRERAK, Paryavaran Mitra, Vacha, Pratham, MUSKAAN, Vikas Samvaad, TISS, ADHAR, PRASOON, Synergy Sansthan, etc, attended the session. The participants shared their experiences, and cases of mental health issues they come across in the field. The group participated in various activities related to mental health. They also shared various self-care activities they undertake to take care of their mental health.



Mental Health Literacy Project

In the months of July and August, a post-intervention study was conducted under the MHL project. Interviews were conducted based on the standard questionnaire developed by De Montfort University, Leicester. Adolescents and young adults of New Seemapuri, Shahdara, East Delhi were approached and a total of 209 participants were surveyed. The knowledge and awareness related to mental well-being, disorders, and stigma were assessed. Currently, the final project report is under process.

Internship Programme

Ms. Gyamar Pakchi was placed in PHRS as an intern from 25th June 2024 to 25th July 2024. Her one-month internship was a part of her course on Master's in Public Health from Dr B. R. Ambedkar University, Delhi. She was involved in the MHL project, undertaking data collection, meetings with the community, and report writing.

PHRS hosted Dr. Rajan Kumar Shah as an intern from 1st July 2024 to 31st July 2024. Dr. Rajan is pursuing Master's in Public Health from Indian Institute of Public Health, Shillong. During his internship he was part of the MHL project in Delhi. He was involved in community meetings on mental health, undertook data collection for post-intervention study, and report writing.

National Consultation on Need, Demand, and Effectiveness of Childcare Models for Under-3 Children in Kerala and Odisha

Dr. Rupa Prasad attended the National Consultation organized by Mobile Creches on 26th September 2024 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The event disseminated findings and insights from the study titled, "Need, Demand and Effectiveness of Childcare Models for Under-3 Children in Kerala and Odisha". This study specifically focused on examining the demand, status, and conditions of creche provision for U-3 children in two states in India, with a focus on public-funded creches. It has attempted to understand the unique needs and demands of childcare in the context of U-3 children and examined models for such care and their impact in Odisha and Kerala through a detailed look at the situation in two districts in each of the two states. Both gender concerns and ECD concerns have formed the basis for the questions addressed.

Training on Child Nutrition

An online training was organized by PHRS on 6th September 2024 to build the capacity of members of National FORCES network on child nutrition. Sessions were conducted on- first 100 days, basics of nutrition, nutrition during pregnancy, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), Signs and symptoms of malnutrition among children, and government schemes and policies related to nutrition. Speakers/facilitators of the workshop were- Dr Rupa Prasad, Executive Director, PHRS; Dr. Vandana Prasad, Principal Technical Advisor, PHRS, Mr. Shahnawaz Khan, Senior Programme Coordinator, PHRS, and Ms Swagata Tarafdar, Programme Coordinator, PHRS.

Presentation of Research Study: To Determine the Factors Affecting Treatment Adherence for Hypertension and Diabetes in Different Contexts at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

PHRS was invited to share the findings from the study- To Determine the Factors Affecting Treatment Adherence for Hypertension and Diabetes in Different Contexts at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on 20th August 2024. The meeting was led by Ms. Aradhana Patnaik, IAS, Joint Secretary (Regulations), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India and team; and Maj Gen (Prof) Atul Kotwal, National Health Systems Resource Centre and team. From PHRS, Dr Vandana Prasad, Dr Rupa Prasad, and Ms. Rishita Maiti were part of the meeting. A detailed discussion was followed on the study findings and recommendations.

Workshop on Financing Quality Childcare Facilities in India

Dr Rupa Prasad and Ms Rishita Maiti attended the Workshop on Financing Quality Childcare Facilities in India on 24th August 2024 at Tango Hall, Ambassador, New Delhi. The workshop was organized by Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) and Mobile Creches, New Delhi. The study is an assessment of resources needed to support quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres across different settings. Key speakers of the workshop were Sona Mitra, Director- Policy and Research, IWWAGE; Amneet P. Kumar, Commissioner and secretary to Govt. of Haryana, WCD; Sunil Kumar Yadav, Director, NULM, MoHUA; Ritu Diwan, President, 64th National Conference of ISLE' Monika Banerjee- Thematic Lead- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research, Mobile Creches; and Divya Singh, Senior research Manager, IWWAGE.

Roundtable discussion on Building Inclusive and Responsive Care Models

A round table discussion was organized by Shram Aur Hum on 19th September 2024 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Dr Rupa Prasad was present as one of the speakers for discussion on the session 'Towards Building Inclusive and Responsive Care Models' under the theme of 'Informality, Precarious Work and Care'. The roundtable session raised critical questions on envision for a robust framework for building care models and sharpen our understanding of the essential elements that should be part of an inclusive and responsive care model. It gathered diverse stakeholders to enrich the policy discourse on creating scalable, inclusive, and responsive childcare models. Through in-depth discussions, principals were established for benchmarking and standardizing care models while refining approaches to care delivery.



Invitation to the Centre for Transforming early Education and Child Health (TeEACH) at Western Sydney University

The Centre for Transforming early Education and Child Health (TeEACH) at Western Sydney University invited Dr. Vandana Prasad, Principal Technical Advisor, PHRS, for an international conference on - Southern Knowledge Symposium: Education, Sustainability, and Social Change, from 9th to 11th September. The event included leading researchers from Australia, New Zealand, India and Indonesia. Dr Vandana Prasad was a guest speaker for a round table workshop to discuss the transformation of early childhood health and education services in the context of indigenous communities.



NEWS FROM THE ODISHA

Rural Crèche Initiative Review Meeting

The second Review and Coordination Meeting of the Rural Crèche Initiative (RCI) was held on July 9th, 2024, in Rayagada, chaired by Dr. Vandana Prasad, Principal Technical Advisor, PHRS. Dr. Rupa Prasad, Executive Director, PHRS, and the state and district teams were present to assess programme progress.

Mr. Shahnawaz Khan shared updates on crèche handovers, while Swati Das highlighted challenges in setting up 39 new crèches in Kalyansingpur, commending the team's efforts to complete the task within the timeline. With most crèches now operational, the focus shifts to regular functioning, follow-ups, and referrals.



Mr. Satya Patnaik shared monitoring findings and Mr. Debduitta Rout discussed the nutritional status of children, with a detailed review planned for next month.

Dr. Prasad led a session on Dietary Guidelines for Indians, with Shahnawaz Khan contributing insights on improving nutritional standards. Dr. Prasad emphasized the need for deeper community involvement and encouraged the team to strengthen local engagement.

The meeting concluded with a call for co-learning and collaboration among partners to enhance the programme's impact and streamline future efforts.



Poshan Maah Celebration



In September 2024, Poshan Maah was celebrated across crèche villages in Rayagada, Kalyansingpur, and Bissamcuttack blocks, focusing on nutrition awareness. Our supervisory team, along with crèche caregivers, organized meetings to discuss essential topics such as Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, the significance of tri-color foods, and the concept of food diversity. These sessions encouraged active participation from pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, and Self-Help Group (SHG) members. Additionally, community-supported poshan rallies were conducted to further promote the importance of balanced nutrition and healthy eating habits. This initiative aimed to empower the local community with vital knowledge about nutrition, fostering healthier lives for all.



Dissemination Program On “Promoting Investment for Under-Three Children in Odisha”

A dissemination program was organized by Mobile Creches, PHRS, and Forum for Creches and Childcare Services (FORCES) at the Centre for Youth & Social Development (CYSO), Bhubaneswar on 30th July 2024. The objective of the dissemination program was - to share the insights of the study captioned “Need, demand, and effectiveness of childcare models for children under the age of 3, in selected states of India” with key stakeholders of childcare system, and to understand the criticality of care for under-3 children in Odisha with a focus on the effectiveness of varied models of childcare in the state and how different stakeholders can be engaged together for public provisioning of childcare for under-3 children.

The study dissemination program was attended by a number of civil society organizations and representatives from the government, NIN, and other line departments. The program was moderated by Dr Vandana Prasad. At the outset, there was a self-introduction by the participants. The introductory session was facilitated by Ms Swati Das, PHRN Odisha office. The context setting was by Ms. Chirashree, Mobile Creches, New Delhi.



The study was conducted in 2 blocks each in the districts of Sundargarh and Rayagada including one of the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) supported creches under Govt of Odisha.

During the dissemination, there was a brief presentation followed by a Panel discussion with key stakeholders of the childcare system on critical issues and support for under three children focusing on poor and marginalized children in the state. Members of the panel were Dr. Vandana Prasad, Principal Technical Advisor, PHRS; Ms. Priyadarshini, ECCD expert, WCD Department; Ms. Dipti Ranjan Gantayat, OPNIP, Dept of SSD, Govt of Odisha; Mr. Sanjib, EKJUT; Ms. Chirashree, Mobile creches, Delhi. The speakers/experts and the participants had given priority to children under-3, scaling up different childcare programmes and advocacy with different state and national government to enrich and mainstream the childcare program.

Support for Kitchen Garden Initiative in K Singhpur creches

Kitchen gardens at all creches are set up as a means to include different vegetables daily throughout the year. During the inauguration of the crèche at Moneiguda on 16th January 2024, our chief guest Mr. V. Varaprasad Rao, Zilla Parishad member of K Singhpur block praised the crèche program and was happy to note that the creche would promote the consumption of vegetables by the children from a young age. In this context, he promised to provide seeds for setting up kitchen gardens in all the crèches and pledged personal funding to support the initiative.



Following continuous efforts by the PHRS team, on 18th July 2024, Mr. Rao provided seeds, which have been distributed to several crèches. This marks the beginning of a valuable kitchen garden initiative aimed at enhancing nutrition for the children in our care. We are grateful for the ongoing support from local leaders and the community as we work towards better child development.

Breastfeeding Week Celebration

Breastfeeding Week was celebrated from August 1st to 7th, 2024, across crèches in the K Singhpur, Rayagada, and Bissamcuttack blocks, focusing on the importance of breastfeeding and maternal health and the week-featured educational activities for caregivers and mothers, covering key topics such as breastfeeding techniques, proper child positioning, kangaroo care, and the benefits of colostrum.



Crèche caregivers, in collaboration with Anganwadi workers (AWWs), shared critical IYCF messages using PLA picture cards. The event saw active involvement from ASHA workers, supervisors, and CDPOs, enhancing outreach efforts. Rallies were also organized in villages to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding for mothers and infants, reinforcing the campaign's key messages at the grassroots level.



Support to Partner Organizations (July - September 2024)

From July to September 2024, we continued to strengthen our partner organizations under the Rural Crèche Initiative:

- **Handover of Crèches:** 10 crèches in Malkangiri were handed over to CYSD in July, and 1 crèche in Khairput was handed over to Asha Kiran in August. Seven trained block coordinators were transferred to ensure seamless operations.
- **Training Programs:** Multiple training sessions were conducted, including MIS application training, orientation for the teams of CYSD and Asha Kiran, refresher trainings for crèche caregivers from Karrtabya, Porevartan, 3 days residentila training for Jagruti, Swasthya Swaraj, and others, focusing on child care and record-keeping.
- **Supportive Supervision:** Supervision visits provided hands-on guidance, addressing challenges in nutrition, child development, and sanitation.

More training and support activities are planned to enhance crèche operations and maintain high-quality care.

National Deworming Day Observance – August 10th, 2024

On August 10th, 2024, National Deworming Day was observed in line with the Government of Odisha's directive, with a mop-up round scheduled for August 17th. Crèche caregivers ensured that all children received their deworming dosage on time. In crèches across villages like Oduguda, Kataguda, and Moneiguda in K Singhpur block, and Guruthi and Kumbhikota in Rayagada block, ASHA and Anganwadi workers (AWWs) they administered Albendazole syrup directly to the children.

In other villages, caregivers accompanied children to the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) for deworming sessions and assisted in door-to-door visits, ensuring that all children, including those unable to attend the crèches, received their deworming treatment.

Exploring Pathways Towards Food and Nutrition Security in Odisha & Formation of State Advisory Group for Collation for Food and Nutrition Security (CFNS) State Chapter

PHRN was invited to the members' convention of CFNS held at the Centre for Youth & Social Development (CYSD) on 30th August 2024. The objective of the conference was to explore pathways towards food and nutrition security in Odisha to support and guide CFNS State Chapter for formulation of policy recommendations, developing knowledge products with the collaboration of CSOs, addressing burning issues in convergence and partnership agenda with the CFNS state chapter on various issues, like food and nutrition security, climate Action, Environment Protection, developing Sustainable FPO/FPC in Odisha. The conference was participated by a number of CSOs, policymakers, and government representatives from across the state. Mr. S.N. Patnaik had participated in the event on behalf of the PHRN Odisha office

The event was chaired by Mr. N.M. Prustry, Board Vice Chairman, CFNS, Delhi; Mr. Jagadananada, Mentor and Co-founder of CYSD; Mr. Prasant Hota, President, JSPL, Odisha; Mr. Rangalal Jamuda, IAS Former Commissioner, Odisha State Food Commission and Secretary, CFNS Delhi; Dr Ambika Prasad Nanda, Head of Tata Steel SSR, Odisha, the Assistant Professor of IIPH, Bhubaneswar; and Dr Sabaramati, SAMBHAV.



The speakers highlighted the various issues and challenges that the state has been facing in areas of food and nutrition, maternal and child undernutrition including obesity, the way the food and nutrition eco-system is getting destroyed with the advent of the major global food producers, the issue of manufactured malnutrition, prevalence of NCDs among tribal community (through the study of CINI, FOPL, food vigilance, HH level food sufficiency, cultural and psychological barriers of the tribal community in respect of food pattern, bio-fortification, climate resilience crops etc. At the end of the session Mr. Sanjeev Nayak, State Program Officer, CFNS Odisha summarized the discussions and declared that the selection of new members to the CFNS's advisory body will be done in the next meeting due to the absence of important members of the CFNS in the conference.

NEWS FROM THE CHHATTISGARH

Half-Yearly Review Meeting

A three-day half-yearly review meeting was held in Ambikapur, Chhattisgarh, from 27th to 29th August 2024, under the project 'Gender Nutrition: Equal access to sufficient and healthy food strengthens the food security of women and small children'. Attendees included representatives from Terre Des Hommes (Mr. Sampat and Mr. Navnath), Chaupal (Mr. Gangaram, Ms. Sarita, Block Coordinators, and 30 PLA facilitators), and PHRS (Mr. Shahnawaz, Ms. Rishita, Mr. Wesal, and Mr. Srikant).



Key highlights:

- **Field Visits:** The team visited three creches (Dhoba Kochhar, Devbhudu, and Kusu) in Lakhanpur block, Surguja district. Discussions covered challenges with anthropometric measurements, creche worker appointments, and engaging communities in creche-related activities.
- **Community Meetings:** Meetings with youth groups and monitoring committees in villages addressed challenges such as sports infrastructure, early marriage, girl-child education, and nutrition.

- **Project Review:** A detailed discussion on the project's progress from January to June 2024 covered nutrition, growth monitoring, and strategies for creche sustainability. The importance of government engagement in taking over the creches was emphasized.

The meeting concluded with a growth monitoring orientation for PLA facilitators and Block Coordinators, focusing on improving data quality and regular monitoring.



Creche Workers Monthly Review Meeting

On 23rd and 24th August 2024, creche workers' monthly review meetings were conducted in Devbhudu and Lipangi centers of Lakhanpur Block of Surguja District as part of the BMZ Gender and Nutrition project. Creche operation and functions were reviewed. The team developed an action plan to tackle various challenges and shared experiences and best practices from the various creches.



The sessions were facilitated by the Mr. Srikant Behra, Project coordinator, PHRS and Mr. Wesal Ahmad, MIS officer, PHRS. This meeting also served as an exposure visit for the creche workers to understand the workings of the most effective creches in the project. One of the discussion topics was a demonstration and group exercise on meal planning and creche timetable activities. Two creche workers from different creches formed a group and shared meal planning and maintaining the timetable at their respective creche centres. To increase attendance in the creche centre, the creche workers were instructed to increase the home visits and effectively conduct monthly parent meetings. A total of 40 creche workers, 8 PLA facilitators, and block coordinators, were present in the meeting.



Training on Participatory, Learning, and Action (PLA) Modules

A refresher training on PLA Modules- Social determinants of malnutrition, and food and nutrition was conducted on 17th September 2024 at the Chaupal Resource Center, Lundra Block, Surguja District, Chhattisgarh. The training focused on reinforcing the knowledge and skills of 30 PLA facilitators and 3 Block Coordinators, helping them to effectively implement the modules in 100 project villages. The training was led by Mr. Srikant Behera. The sessions covered key topics - significance of food and nutrition in reducing malnutrition, the importance of a balanced diet, tricolour food, demonstrated through practical activities. The team participated actively during the session and shared the obstacles faced during field implementation of the PLA modules. Action points were reviewed, and corrective measures were suggested to address these challenges.



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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