

Sustaining Hope

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ADRA India's Newsletter

August - December 2022



Message from the Editor

Dear Reader,
Another year comes to a close. The year 2022 was a year of continuity for ADRA India. We strengthened our existing programmes by scaling them up and enhancing their efficacy. We expanded our reach to support more people in need across the country. We had our periods of highs and lows, but we were fortunate to meet our goals. And none of this would have been possible without the true passion and commitment of our teams - from the ones working from their offices to ensure sustenance to those braving the extreme seasons to be on ground with the communities. And of course, none of this would have been possible without the tremendous support extended to us by our donors, our partners, and our audience. We extend our gratitude to each one of you for making sure that we are able to look out for the ones in need.

Cycle Rally to Create Awareness on Mental Health



ADRA India organized cycle rally in New Delhi, sessions and rallies in Uttar Pradesh to commemorate World Mental Health Day 2022.

International Humanitarian Aid Worker, Carl Wilkens, held an interactive session on aspects of mental health with participants of cycle rally

30 participants from all walks of life cycled for the cause in New Delhi

ADRA India in partnership with V4A Cycling & Running Club hosted a 30-km Cyclothon on October 09, 2022 to commemorate World Mental Health Day. Around 30 participants from all walks of life rallied for the cause. The Cyclothon was followed by an interactive session by Carl Wilkens, Humanitarian Aid Worker, Storyteller and International Speaker. Carl Wilkens chose to serve in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide. Wilkens shared his experiences while living in Rwanda during the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. Awareness sessions and rallies were also organized in Uttar Pradesh. World Mental Health Day is observed on October 10 to mobilize efforts in support of mental health. This year, World Health Organization (WHO) campaigned on the theme 'Make mental health for all a global priority'.

ADRA India Upgrades Medical Facilities at Shimla Sanitarium Hospital

--> **ADRA India identifies need to upgrade Shimla Sanitarium Hospital, provides vital medical equipment**
--> **ADRA India's team visits Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand hospitals to inaugurate OGP's provided during COVID-19**

ADRA India recently reached out to the Shimla Sanitarium Hospital (SSH) with medical equipment and other facilities for the upgradation of the hospital. The organization provided Automatic Biochemistry Analyzer, Immuno Analyzer, and other lab equipment such as Advance Coagulator, Nycocard Reader, and Urine Analyzer to the hospital. SSH is now one of the only two hospitals in Shimla with some of this equipment. It will help the hospital perform hematology and other tests much more quickly and efficiently.

After ADRA India provided medical equipment during COVID-19 to hospitals across India, it identified the need for better healthcare facilities at the Shimla Sanitarium Hospital.

Separately, ADRA India's team launched two Oxygen Generation Plants in Nuzvid, Andhra Pradesh and Ranchi, Jharkhand. These OGP's were donated to the hospitals as part of ADRA's COVID-19 Response.



NEWS & UPDATES

ADRA Honours Marginalized Children for Completing High School Against All Odds



Under the Remedial and Inclusive School Education (RISE) Project, ADRA India honoured 8 children from Anna Nagar, who are the 1st batch of students from the Scheduled Tribe community to complete their 10th class education. ADRA gifted them with a bicycle each along with a medal. To motivate the other school-going children, ADRA India distributed uniforms, stationery items, school bags and sandals among 180 students; 20 Students who exhibited their talent through arts and craft were rewarded with gifts as well. The event aimed at creating awareness on the importance of formal education and child labor.

Smart Classrooms Set-up in Government Schools



ADRA India Installed Smart Classroom in three government high schools in Thirukandalam, Vengal and Anna Nagar areas of Tamil Nadu under the Project 'Promote Safe School and Smart Classroom'. Each smart classroom consists of a touchscreen smart board, desktop computer, projector and audio speaker set-up. Teachers were trained on imparting digital education through these classrooms. This will assist disadvantaged children with improved learning opportunities and support teachers in finding creative ways to impart knowledge to sustain their interest in learning.

ADRA India's Fight Against Polio



ADRA India participated in Polio Campaign organised by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in Uttar Pradesh in September. ADRA India assisted in setting up polio booths, administering polio doses, polio awareness sessions, tracking of newborns & missed children, and intervention of families apprehensive about vaccination. ADRA India's Bulawa Tolis also went around the villages calling fellow children to get vaccinated. On World Polio Day on October 24, ADRA India organized several activities with nomadic & other marginalized communities. We planned awareness sessions with different groups such as Community Action Groups, mothers, community leaders and influencers, etc.

ADRA Restores Handpumps, Toilets in Flood-hit Assam



With support from European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, ADRA India and Caritas have undertaken community-level restoration and rehabilitation activities in Assam to respond to the floods that started in June this year. This includes repairing and restoration of Hand Pumps and toilets destroyed due to the floods. The sites were reconstructed as per the community-level Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Resilient infrastructure standards. The handpumps will provide access to safe drinking water and the toilets will ensure basic level of safety, dignity and hygiene for the communities in critical times of need such as flooding as well.

ADRA India Supports Refugees with Livelihood Training and Support



Organic Kitchen Garden training provided as alternative livelihood opportunity to 10 families in Yenambakkam community, Tiruvallur District. They were also trained in preparing organic manure. ADRA India provided 145 Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu with livelihood skill Trainings. These trainings included aari embroidery work, baking, digital marketing, AC mechanic and computer trainings such as Python, Tally, SAP MM, JAVA, Mechanical CADD, Cloud AWS. The organization provided job placement assistance to the trainees. 16 refugees were given business entrepreneurship assistance to engage in income generation activities.

#LETSTALKPERIODS



- ADRA India conducted Menstrual Health awareness and pad promotion programmes with women and adolescent girls in the tea gardens of Assam. These sessions were conducted in government-organized health camps. ADRA team talked with school girls on the importance of menstrual hygiene such as using sanitary pads instead of old rags. ADRA participated in 10 camps between August - December 2022, reaching out to 2500 girls and women.
- The women workers of the Sanitary Napkin Unit set-up by ADRA India installed their stalls at these camps to promote and sell their low-cost sanitary pads. The sanitary pad unit is run entirely by local women, with support from ADRA. The women have been trained on manufacturing pads as well as marketing and selling them.
- ADRA's Assam team held meetings with school principals and directors of university departments to create awareness about the sanitary pads being manufactured at its pad-making unit. A total 14 meetings were held with the education institutes. Also, 8 grocery and medical shops were approached and were given pads for promotion and sale.
- A two-day awareness workshop was organized on Menstrual Health Education for adolescent girls in Barpeta and Mandia villages, Barpeta District of Assam. The programme was facilitated by menstrual health expert Ms. Kabita Ghimire, a social entrepreneur and sustainability enthusiast. The workshop reflected on how girls relate to menstruation and its associated rituals. Period products & awareness materials were exhibited at the venue to destigmatize periods & encourage the girls to embrace periods as a natural phenomenon rather than treating them with shame and silence. The facilitator also introduced the girls to more sustainable products, which can serve as alternatives to disposable sanitary pads. The programme was a zero-waste event. All the dry waste generated during the event, including food packages, tetra packs, etc. was collected, packed and sent for recycling to Guwahati.
- Under Public Health Promotion Activities, 500 commodity vouchers for hygiene items were distributed among adolescent girls in villages of Barpeta District.

STAFF FEATURE

Purabi Borah has been working with ADRA India since 2018 as Field Coordinator in the tea gardens of Assam. The community she works with addresses her as "ADRA Baideu" (ADRA's Sister). From "Assam Childhood Immunization and WASH Improvement Project" in 2018 to now "Fresh Hope for Girls Project", Purabi has been dedicated to ADRA's work. Through her work here, Purabi has gained experience in Self-Help Group formation and its functioning both at the community and administrative levels. Purabi has expertise in developing awareness material. During COVID-19, she developed several IEC material, which was used extensively by state government departments. She also has experience giving voice-overs for All India Radio.

"With ADRA I have grown every day. By working with ADRA, I have gained working knowledge on several topics including Immunization, WASH, Family Planning, Breastfeeding, livelihood, Menstrual health, etc. ADRA India has great capability to bring mass change in the community and to spread happiness among all," Purabi shares.

CASE STORY

ADRA India is helping #BreaktheStigma around periods in rural India



Elima posing for a picture

"Pador babohar mor babe bortoman adhik aramdayok aru poriskar-poricchonno..... ADRA India mor swasthya bikhoyor upor anushilonor logot mor samajot poriborton anichhe jotur bikhoye aami hacheton nachhilo (The use of pad is more comfortable and hygienic for me at present. ADRA has brought changes in my practice as well as awareness in my society)," says Elima Khanam, an 18-year-old girl from Kawaoimari 9 Block, Barpeta District of Assam. Her words resonate the words of young girls across her village. Elima is a class 9 student, who aspires to be a teacher and has a vision to ensure that every child in her community can read and write.

When ADRA India started Public Health Promotion sessions in her village after the Assam floods of 2022, Elima became a keen participant of many of those sessions. One such session was on Menstrual Health Education (MHE) conducted in the neighbouring village. "When I heard about that session from Libid Da (Field Coordinator), I became very curious and volunteered to participate. Attending that session was the best decision that I made," remarks Elima.

Due to their poor socio-economic status and lack of awareness, Elima and her family were using old rags during periods. Elima did not see value in investing in sanitary napkins. The stigma surrounding menstruation further held her back from accessing period products freely. In many parts of the country, especially in rural areas, there is shame associated with menstruation. The sessions on MHE helped destigmatize periods for Elima and other young girls. She understood the need to have positive hygiene behaviour, and learned the proper way of using and disposing a sanitary pad. She learnt about health risks that can arise from unhygienic period practices.

ADRA India also provided commodity vouchers to adolescent girls impacted by the floods, to buy hygiene and other essential items. The MHE sessions helped Elima to go to the shop and purchase period products without any hesitation. The commodity voucher gave her a chance to buy and try sanitary napkins.

Elima is thankful to ADRA India for the services rendered and looks forward to more such educative sessions.



Young girls purchase sanitary pads with commodity vouchers given by ADRA India

OPINION

Operationalizing Cash Based Assistance in Rapid Humanitarian Response to people affected by floods in Assam



By Eshani Choudhury
Project Manager

Talking about importance of cash-based programming in humanitarian assistance, Eshani writes, "cash transfers has a huge impact on shaping the future of humanitarian response work as it has the potential to uphold the dignity of the affected community, build local capacity and address protection risks.

The annual monsoon floods in Assam took an unprecedented shape in the month of June and July 2022, with the scale of the flooding exceeding past records. Incessant showers in the state resulted in breach of embankments and dykes inundating villages and towns, displacing communities and causing 197 fatalities across the state.

ADRA India led a consortium, with funding from European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), to respond to the immediate humanitarian needs of the flood-affected communities in Barpeta and Cachar districts. Cash and Voucher based assistance were an important component of the project, which aimed to enhance food security of the affected communities and meet their immediate needs with regards to hygiene & sanitation.

As a humanitarian worker, I have been deployed in different parts of the country to respond to the most vulnerable in their time of need. This is the first time I have been directly overseeing a project, where cash transfers play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of the community affected by disaster. Known as the "more dignified form of assistance", cash-based programming enables individuals to have an agency over the money, i.e individuals have the choice to utilize the money to meet their most pressing needs rather than being reliant on standardised relief commodities, which might not supplement to their immediate needs..

Our intervention in Barpeta saw more than INR 22 million in cash-based programming support benefitting 143 most vulnerable households belonging to the minority communities. As a result of our support, families have been able purchase food items, pay off their debts at grocery stores, repair their house damaged by flood, afford medicine and treatments at hospitals and purchase amenities to enhance their income and better secure their livelihood.

In my opinion, cash-based programming in Barpeta has been vital in supporting the affected community's stride to recovery, prevent them from adopting negative coping mechanisms, stimulate the local economy and support protection needs. However, it is to be noted that operationalizing cash-based programming has its own set of challenges, especially when it comes to identifying the right beneficiaries for the assistance whilst avoiding slippages and ensuring safe transfers. Regular monitoring on the part of the field implementation team is necessary to avoid misappropriation of the amount handed over to the beneficiaries. Other factors such as role played by local media, political influence and religious groups, etc. need to be considered while implementing a successful cash transfer programme. It is essential to clearly communicate the rationale and the process adopted by the implementing agencies to the local stakeholders such as the district administration, panchayat representatives and persons of influence to avoid any discrepancies in the process and prevent any sort of disinformation.

To enhance a successful cash-based programming, implementing agency and staff needs to be mindful of the local power dynamics and make the assessments based on proper and diligent groundwork. Flexible & adaptive organizational policies and systems further act as a catalyst towards creating a conducive environment in a way that the outcome of the humanitarian actions are more relevant, time-bound and context-specific and ultimately adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, the fundamentals of humanitarian action.

GALLERY

Global Handwashing Day

ADRA India celebrated Global Handwashing Day with school children, children from government Anganwadi centres, and mothers' groups in several district in Uttar Pradesh and Assam. The ADRA teams created awareness about th benefits of handwashing and proper ways of washing hands.



Children in Tamil Nadu were given training on hand hygiene under the 'Promote Safe School and Smart Classroom' Project.



WATCH: ADRA INDIA'S COVID-19 SUPPORT TO HOSPITALS



ADRA responded to the second wave of COVID-19 by supporting and strengthening hospitals. ADRA donated critical medical equipment, along with life-saving Oxygen Generation Plans. The film revisits a few hospitals to understand the impact of ADRA's timely support.

NEW PROJECT: "Poverty Alleviation and Community Empowerment through access to improved livelihoods and social protection (PACE)" Commencing on November 1 2022, Project PACE is being implemented in select villages of Tamil Nadu with marginalized communities. The aim of the project to enhance the capacities of local communities for advocacy and engaging with local institutions in demanding effective service delivery to the most vulnerable; and to promote sustainable livelihood opportunities and social inclusion among poor & margialised households.



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