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From the Secretary’s Desk

Dear Friends of CINI,

The period July to September 2023 has been very busy across the states of West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Tripura and also Madhya Pradesh (MP), where we recently started operating the tele counselling services known as “Umang Kishore” for school children. This complements our existing “Teenline” tele-counselling services for adolescents. Mental health issues emerged as an important component of our intervention particularly during the COVID 19 pandemic, when lockdown was in force and many children went into depression.

Malnutrition in children and women is still a major concern, particularly in hard-to-reach areas such as the hilly areas of North Bengal. We are pleased to have been able to initiate nutrition intervention services in the remote districts of West Bengal (Darjeeling, Kalimpong, South 24 Parganas), Jharkhand (Khunti) and Odisha (Koraput) with support from Axis Bank Foundation, complementing government supported ICDS and preventing anaemia in school children through the WIFS programme.

CINI is making inroads in raising awareness on drowning of children below 5 years after baseline study in Sunderbans in West Bengal revealed a high incidence. Awareness generation and protective measures in and around ponds and water bodies have been initiated and a daylong event was held to mark the event on 25th July, which happens to be the “World Drowning Prevention Day”.

To increase awareness of the basic Child’s Right to Play, a “walkathon” was held on 15th September where children in large numbers walked in solidarity with us along central Kolkata streets. The demand for children to play in open spaces which are fast disappearing in cities was displayed in placards held by them as they walked. More info and pics follow in this newsletter covering many activities from other states. As we are entering into the happy festive season of Puja, Deepavali and Bihu, we wish you peace, happiness and good times with your near and dear ones.

Dr Samir Chaudhuri
Founder-Secretary
Even a small amount will make a difference
Nurturing Mental Well-Being During Puja Celebrations:
A Guide for Adolescents and Young People

Here are some tips to ensure a mentally healthy Puja celebration:

1. Set Realistic Expectations: Understand that perfection is not necessary. Allow yourself to enjoy the festivities without feeling overwhelmed by the need for everything to be flawless.

2. Prioritize Self-Care: Amidst the hustle and bustle of Puja, don’t forget to take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat nutritious meals, and make time for relaxation and exercise.

3. Stay Connected: Puja is a time for family and community. Engage with loved ones and friends, share your thoughts and feelings, and seek support when needed.

4. Mindful Participation: Focus on the spiritual aspects of Puja. Engage in rituals with mindfulness, allowing yourself to be present in the moment and appreciating the spiritual significance.

5. Balanced Social Media Use: While sharing Puja moments on social media is common, avoid excessive comparison with others. Remember that not everything shared online reflects reality.

6. Set Boundaries: If Puja-related stressors arise, don’t hesitate to set boundaries. Politely decline commitments that may overwhelm you.

7. Volunteer and Give Back: Engaging in acts of kindness and community service can be a fulfilling way to celebrate Puja and boost your mental well-being.

8. Seek Guidance if Needed: If you find yourself struggling with your mental health during Puja or at any other time, reach out to a trusted adult, counselor, or mental health professional for support.

9. Practice Gratitude: Take a moment each day to reflect on what you are grateful for. This simple practice can promote a positive mindset.

10. Enjoy the Festivities: Remember that Puja is a time for celebration and spiritual growth. Embrace the joy, the colors, the music, and the traditions with an open heart.
CINI’s work was published in the World-Wide Child Participation Map of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children. With her strong belief in children’s agency, child participation is one of the three strategic priorities of the Special Representative. Among the few child participation initiatives from India that are in the child participation map of the UN SRSG on Violence Against Children, CINI’s work on child participation is published as "CHILDREN AS PEER LEADERS TAKING FORWARD ADVOCACY".
Training on The CINI Method:

Senior team members of the organisation who have been practicing and facilitating Child Friendly Communities, Child Friendly Systems and Child Friendly Organisations in their respective fields shared their experience in two days ‘Training of Trainers’ session on it at CINI Chetana Resource Centre. Dr Samir Chaudhuri, Dr Eliana Riggio, Dr Indrani Bhattacharyya and Ms.Nilanjana Ghosh conducted insightful sessions for all participants.
Shining Bright: Neha Chik Baraik's journey from local hero to national inspiration

Neha Chik Baraik, the brave girl of Kumargram block, Alipurduar district rescued 3 trafficking cases and in the last few months she prevented 1 child marriage with the help of block and district administration in her locality. For this noble cause towards the society last year, she was awarded with Women Achievers Award from Department of Women and Child Development & Social Welfare. Since that time, she engaged herself in this field and started working as a volunteer of CINI. Again, today she has been awarded with "Nakshatra Samman Award" in Kolkata by a renowned news channel 'TV 9 Bangla' for her noble deeds.
The community-level Nutrition Month celebration, held under the theme "Healthy Diet Going Affordable for All," various field units of CINI celebrated the month. The events emphasized on the importance of accessible, balanced diet and nutritious food choices. Nutrition demonstration camps were organised to demonstrate the preparation of delicious and nutritious meals on a low budget, creative recipes that used affordable and locally available ingredients.

National Nutrition Week was celebrated in 59 Madrasahs, 21 Schools under the project area of ‘Strengthening of Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) Among Adolescents in West Bengal’. There were six districts where the celebration took place i.e. Murshidabad, Birbhum, Uttar Dinajpur, Cooch Bihar, Kolkata and South 24 Parganas, focusing anemia, diet diversity & menstrual hygiene through Quiz & Elocution Competition, Recipe demonstration & poster making competition.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI): The MoHFW, GoI, launched Mission Indradhanush in December 2014 as a special drive to vaccinate all unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children and pregnant women. IMI focuses on reaching zero-dose children aged between 0 and 5 years and pregnant women who might have missed any vaccine doses in the national immunisation schedule. IMI 5.0 will be held in three phases across the country. CINI supported the district authorities with permission from the state level to reach out to zero dose or partially vaccinated children to counsel the family and vaccinate the children. Under Arogya & Axis Bank supported project in districts like in Birbhum, Murshidabad, Darjeeling & Kalimpong, CINI reached out to 1660 zero dose & partially vaccinated children out of which 1624 got vaccinated.
Poshan Mah Celebration in Assam: CINI marked the observance of National Nutrition Month (POSHAN Maah) in the Tamulpur ICDS block, Bodoland Territorial Region as part of the Oracle project during September 2023. Impact events were organized to promote awareness on malnutrition, spreading information dietary guidelines for pregnant women, best practices for feeding infants and young children, and recognizing danger signs during pregnancy, among others.

Major Community Awareness drive for good nutrition practices in Odisha: Poshan Maah was celebrated during the month of September at 73 Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in Bissamcuttack block with the support from (IndusInd Bank) IBL and Senapati Trust and with active participation of 1487 community people including pregnant and lactating mothers, caregivers, adolescents, SHG members and PRI representatives with an aim to raise awareness about the importance of nutrition especially for mother, children and adolescents and to promote positive nutrition in the communities.
Nutrition Conclave -- Empowerment through nutrition: A Nutrition Conclave was organized at Keonjhar, Odisha in presence of Sri Ashish Thakare, Collector, Keonjhar, Mr. A. B. OTA, Senior advisor, UNICEF, Dr Sunil Kumar Agarwalla, Pro. Paediatrics, Dr. Priyanka Dixit, Asst. Professor, TISS, Mr. Swapan Bikash Saha, PD-Nutrition, CINI, Mr. Sourav Bhattacharjee, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF, Ms. Saswati N. Mohapatra, State Head, Odisha, CINI and other delegates. At Balarampur, Murshidabad, in partnership with the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, inaugurated Poshan Month & Mission Life 2.0. A three-day exhibition from September 12th to 14th, 2023, were attended by 200 children, adolescents, and young people.

Awareness generation at five districts of North Bengal: Conducted Awareness generation on Nutrition, balance diet which includes hands-on cooking demonstrations and meal planning sessions, one-on-one nutritional counseling sessions for pregnant women and adolescents to address their specific dietary concerns. Also generated awareness through Tableau.
Nutrition Mela at Uttar Dinajpur: Pusti Mela at Itahar block office premises, Durgapur gram panchayat, different AWCs in 4 blocks – Itahar, Hemtabad, Raiganj & Kaliyaganj. A total of 19 such activities were carried out on a large scale, where mass awareness generation (over 1000 people reached) took place on malnutrition and healthy food habits. All the activities were carried out jointly along with the district ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) cell. Mothers, adolescents and youths demonstrated tri-colour foods.

At Kalatalahat GP of Diamond Harour II block of South 24 parganas district
National Nutrition month was observed through different awareness generation programme collaboration with Block administration, Panchayat, Health, ICDS and School departments. Throughout the month 14 nutrition demonstration and children screening camps were organised.
Under Arogya World Diabetes Prevention programme, (All Schools Program) Nutrition Month also has been observed at 10 different schools in Purba Medinipur district. Sub Inspector of School (Contai II Circle), 57 teachers including Head Masters and Nodal Teachers of health and 1544 Children have participated in the programme. They celebrated the programme through rallies, awareness campaigns, drawing competitions, quiz competitions, making posters, nutrition demonstrations etc.

17 Nodal Teachers orientation programs have been organized by CINI Diamond Harbour Unit under Arogya World Diabetes Prevention - All School Programme in collaboration with block administration and Health and Education Department of Purba Medinipur district. BDO (Block Development Officer), Joint Block Development Officer, Savapati, Saha Savapati, Sikhsha Karmadhakha, BMOH (Block Medical Officer of Health), Sub Inspector of Schools, Rastriya Bal Suralsha Karyakram Medical Officer, Sikhsha Bandhu, PHN (Primary Health Nurse), Senior PHN, Anwesha Counsellor were present as a guest speaker and they added their valuable comment on this program.
World Breastfeeding Week celebration in Odisha: World Breastfeeding week was celebrated at Anganwadi center level and block level with support of the Particularly Vulnerable Target Group (PVTG) and Non PVTG communities and the ICDS functionaries, from 1st August to 7th August 2023 at Odisha. The programme was celebrated in 51 AWCs and Bissamcuttack block with active participation of 1073 community people and 54 ICDS functionaries including Ms. Sushila Sabara, CDPO (Child Development Project Officer) Bissamcuttack, Supervisors, AWWs under IndusInd Bank supported Project). The programme was celebrated in 24 AWCs under Khambesi PHC in presence of 390 community people under Senapati Trust supported project. The programme was celebrated in 89 AWCs under Khambesi PHC in presence of 1136 community people. Community level campaign for VHSND (Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day) strengthening has been conducted in 103 villages with participation of 111 male members and 1092 female members, 1092 including 104 pregnant women and 130 lactating mothers under The Hans Foundation supported project).

World Breastfeeding Week was observed in Assam as part of the Oracle project: In the Tamulpur ICDS block of Baksa district. The team organized a series of events, including women’s group meetings covering topics such as early initiation of breastfeeding, the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, and various breastfeeding techniques. Additionally, the team distributed informative materials in the Assamese language on e-Rickshaws.
Talking Doll Campaign: Like every year, CINI organized various awareness programmes to increase breastfeeding among working women in different blocks under CINI Diamond Harbour Unit programmes. As Kolatalahat GP is situated near the Falta Economic Zone, working women were engaged in awareness programmes for fathers meeting, mothers meeting, rally, quiz competition, drama, talking doll show.

Breast feeding Corner in Berhampore, Murshidabad: A special breast feeding corner was inaugurated to provide a dedicated and comfortable space for lactating mothers. The week witnessed the active engagement of over 2200 participants, including expecting mothers, new mothers, adolescents, and children.
Special Days Celebrations

World day against Child labour:
CINI was invited to participate in a Workshop organised by The West Bengal Labour Department at Kolkata on August 22, 2023. Manisha Bhattacharya, Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Swati Chakrabory from CINI, Mrs. Sudeshna Roy, Chairperson, West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights and other dignitaries were present.

International Youth Day Celebration :
Recognizing youth as an integral and diverse community that we actively engage with, International Youth Day with the theme “Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World” was celebrated with remarkable vigour and enthusiasm across 11 districts of Assam in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) under MCGL India- Yash programme. Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW) under Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission (ASRLM), Police and Principals of Schools and Colleges with youths from the communities as participants graced the event.

A Special Raksha Bandhan Utsav in North 24 Parganas : In an empowering move to break the chains of gender stereotypes, North 24 Parganas district recently witnessed a unique celebration of Raksha Bandhan Utsav. With the participation of over 2000 students, the event aimed to challenge and rewrite traditional narratives surrounding the festival.
Raksha Bandhan, Teacher’s Day, Grandparents Day and Independence Day Celebration At Cyril Academy
Kanyashree Day and Teacher’s Day Celebration at Murshidabad:

Kanyashree Day, celebrated with fervour across all blocks of Murshidabad, both in schools and communities, served as a vital platform to champion the cause of girls’ empowerment. Teacher’s Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm in 10 learning centres, bringing together a total of 300 participants. The day commenced with an insightful talk to the students, emphasizing the significance of the occasion and paying tribute to the illustrious Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, whose birthday we commemorate on this day.

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons and National Sports Day observation in North Bengal:

The World Day Against Trafficking in Persons was observed annually on July 30 to raise awareness about human trafficking and to promote and protect the rights of trafficking victims. All the tea gardens under the project celebrated this day keeping in mind the theme 'Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind'.

National Sports Day was first celebrated on 29 August 2012 on the birthday of legendary hockey player, Major Dhyan Chand. The children were categorised to different sports as per their interest and were made to compete with each other. The children were really happy and excited to be a part of such an activity. They happily enjoyed and made this event a successful event.
Events of this quarter

Kolkata walked for Child Friendly City:
CINI led a Walkathon to make Kolkata as a child friendly city. The 1.8 Billion Campaign which has ignited a phenomenal response of 0.15 million youth voices! They rallied for quality education, skills, and employability.

Independence Day Celebration by the children of IICCHAA & UJJAN projects
CINI’s UJJAN and ICCHAA programmes celebrated a special event marking CINI’s 50th anniversary. This Pre-Independence Day celebration provided a platform for adolescents to express themselves through art held on 14th August. Eminent artists Shirsa Das and Goutam Chattopadhyay reviewed the artwork, offering valuable suggestions.
On 27th September 2023, at Kasba Chittaranjan High School, Kolkata - CINI education team organised a Science Fair: “Where Curiosity meets Creativity”. The event exhibited the participation of 150 students and 50 teachers from 16 Public schools and 14 CINI learning centres. This remarkable gathering not only showcased the creativity, innovation, and scientific prowess of young minds but also succeeded in its core mission of reigniting a passion for science among students in classes 6 to 8.

CINI participated in the 5th BICON International Conference on Alternative Care in Kathmandu, Nepal

The 5th BICON International Conference on Alternative Care for Children in Asia 2023 was held in Kathmandu on 06-07th Sept’2023 and our colleague from Jharkhand Unit, Mr. Subhadeep Adhikary presented a session on “Community Approaches in India” highlighting the importance of community-based prevention mechanisms in preventing child separation, addressing child protection issues and promoting family-based care.
“Young Ambassador Program” at Immanuel International Academy, Siliguri, Himali Boarding School, Siliguri, St. Augustine School, Kurseong, Father Leblond School, Bidya Bharati School, Mominpur and “Fundraising Session” at Salesian College, Siliguri, Doon Heritage School and Godwin Public School, Siliguri.
CINI-TEENLINE became a part of “CHETONA” programme (2022-2023) organized by Kolkata Police to promote “NO to Drug” campaign with Government schools in Kolkata.

Art and Play Therapy by CINI-TEENLINE for the adolescents of CINI-UJJAN

Six-Day Training for Adolescent Peer Educator at Ambuja Cement Foundation, Howrah

Capacity Building of Self-Help Group Leaders for Child Care Centre on Early Childhood Care & Development, Child Protection and Emergency Care
Mr. Solomon J Manohar, Senior Manager and Harshvardhan Dhawan, Vice President of Axis bank Foundation visited Kalimpong I and Rangli Rangliot block on 30 and 31st of August. Mr. Meghendra Banerjee and Mr. Marine Mukherjee from CINI senior Management and Program staff of Health and Nutrition Project were present during the visit.
As a step forward to make CINI’s work on gender more inclusive, CINI ventured into its queer engagement through GBV project in Assam. Assam’s leading queer activist Rituparna Neog was invited on board to collaborate.

Community level campaign for strengthening VHSNDs were conducted in 103 villages of Odisha with participation of 111 male members and 1092 female members including 104 pregnant women and 130 lactating mothers.

The ongoing Duare Sarkar camp at Murshidabad has witnessed a remarkable engagement of peer leaders and adolescents across all the blocks, in managing 104 such camps.
Stories of Change

A Kanyashree won over early marriage

This is the story of Sima of Gobardanga, Uttar Dinajpur. The class X student of Rampur Indubala Uccha Bidyalaya was used to get annoyed by a man of her locality with a marriage proposal. To get her out of the situation her parents arranged her marriage with some other man. But the reality was either way she had to face an early marriage.

Sima had no other way but to share the information with her school teacher and to the Kanyashree club members on 30th June 2023. After getting the information from Kanyashree club and from the nodal Teacher, CINI team immediately reached the school. And at the same time, Sima’s situation was shared with District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO), Child Welfare Committee (CWC), District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), Police and Block Development Officer (BDO) Raiganj. Along with the Block officials, Police, teachers and Kanyashree Club members visited to Sima’s house. They Counselled her parents about the bad effects of early marriage, early pregnancy and related discussion to make their parents understand about the ill effect of child marriage and convince her parents to stop the it.

Information was shared with police about the boy who harassed her mentally for further action. The chairperson of the Village Level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC) also assured CINI team members about the safety of the girl. Sima’s parents assured with a written declaration about her studies and to postpone marriage till 18 years.

A message went down to the whole community with the intervention. As Sima won over early marriage hurdle and continued with her studies, the adolescent girls and their parents became aware of the evils and laws of early marriage.
Where there is a hope, there is a way

Two children accompanied by their mother were going to their native village from Sealdah Station. In the meantime, she went to washroom with her younger child while the one was busy playing with cell phone. One of the strangers approached to the elder child and offered him toffees & mobilized him to move out from the station. The child went outside with the stranger & in the meantime the mother came from the washroom and started searching his son, as she was unable to trace out her son’s last location, so she informed the Sealdah GRPS. The Sealdah GRPS informed CINI’s rescue team & with joint collaborative efforts CCTV footages were revealed. It ultimately helped the possible pathways of the kidnapper. After searching for more than 2 hours the rescue team traced the child near NRS hospital & with due production before the Child Welfare committee the child was finally placed to his family members.

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