



## **Darjeeling Ladenla Road Prerna**

**Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

### **Vision Statement**

Darjeeling Ladenla Road Prerna believes in a world that sees the need to live as one family where the environment is preserved and protected, where conscious efforts are made to remove unjust structures while striving to build a just and humane society.

### **Mission statement**

Our mission is to build sustainable human communities in the Darjeeling hills and the adjoining areas by promoting peoples participation, gender equality and living in harmony with the environment.

### **Goals**

- i. Promote, facilitate and strengthen people's organisations.
- ii. Promote sustainable agro-ecology and appropriate technology
- iii. Undertake Development and Environment Education with educational institutions and community based organisations.
- iv. Provide support to other organisations.
- v. Undertake research, development and dissemination on developmental issues pertinent to the Darjeeling Hills with special focus on conservation and climate change.
- vi. Promote well being of children and communities through health and mental health interventions especially in partnership with educational institutions.

## Activities Undertaken:

### 1. SARs-CoV-2 Pandemic and Lockdown.

With the COVID19 Pandemic and the measures undertaken by the Government of India and State of West Bengal all socio-economic and educational institutions went into lockdown from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. DLR Prerna prioritised the gravity of the pandemic and its impact on communities, thus, interventions were contextualised to the prevailing pandemic, needs of communities and the organisational mandate and capacities. The team worked from home and kept team safety as a priority and also converged interventions during the lockdown.

DLRPrerna attended a COVID-19 training offered by the State Inter Agency Group that was translated into Nepali, contextualized to Darjeeling, and delivered twice online, one on April 14 and one on April 15 2021. The training was offered to community leaders and representatives, NGO's and teachers.

A rapid appraisal was conducted by DLRPrerna to assess the current needs and concerns of our community partners. The results of that survey are in a report entitled "*Situation Report on COVID-19 and Lockdown Impact in Rural Areas of Darjeeling District*". It has been submitted to Chairperson GTA, Principal Secretary GTA, DM Darjeeling, and the MLAs. The document was also quoted in a number of media houses including [The Telegraph](#).

The team decided that making key messages on COVID19 was important so that information communication and educational material is contextualised and made accessible to the Darjeeling Himalaya. These communication material were circulated through social media, such as DLR Prerna Facebook page and Whatsapp groups within our community partners, organisations and institutions as well as the network of Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative and Darjeeling Kalimpong Volunteers Group (established for COVID19 response) and the WB State Inter Agency Group. Some of them were converted to flyers too and sent out at hardcopies.

Some key messages were:

Video explaining CORONA Virus for kids in Nepali and screened on [YouTube](#) and FAQs poster on COVID19 in Nepali, collectively done with Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative.

Video series that sought to deliver concrete skills that could be deployed to protect communities from virus transmission and engage with children and caregivers around their emotions. These messages intersected Mental Health, Nutrition, Hand and Respiratory Hygiene, COVID awareness and safety, Menstrual Health and Hygiene.

These messages were also shared by popular local social media sites like The Darjeeling Chronicle and DTV.

## 2. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:

a. *Providing access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene in Tea Estates of Darjeeling* - supported by Jal Sewa Charitable Trust, WaterAid

Team: Swastika, Anamika, Subash, Kareena and two community workers- Manish Subba and Inam Rai.

In partnership with Twinings and WaterAid India over a period of two years we aim to partner with the communities of Nagrifarm and Barnesbeg Tea Estates to improve access to clean water and improve health and hygiene in the two estates.

Activities Undertaken:

WASH hardware intervention

- 7 units of Grey Water Management systems were built at household level and two schools. This grey water management system was built with a permaculture design with a natural filtration process.
- Roof Top Rainwater Harvesting completed at Younker's Academy and Model High School Nagrifarms.
- Installation and improvement of urinals, handwashing stations in 4 schools
- Retrofitting of toilets- 45 new technology designed pits evapotranspiration and biogester completed at household level. 223 people gained access to safe and hygienic sanitation facilities.
- Spring protection and source improvement work completed at Barnesbeg catering to 1489 people.
- Spring-shed and improvement of Springs at Bhaley Dhunga- Teenacre community of Barnesbeg
- Construction of water tanks and piped water connection intervention was done in three villages of Nagrifarms catering to 580 people.

Government linkages and leverage

The team has built strong linkages with Block departments with both Sukhia Pokhari and Bijanbari. Through the scheme MGNREGA, the team leveraged funds for springshed and construction of 4 new water tanks Nagrifarms and one rainwater harvesting tank in Barnesbeg.

Software Intervention

- Hygiene awareness on WASH with tea plantation workers, samaj members, school students of Barnesbeg and Nagrifarms. Awareness session on safe drinking water, safe sanitation and good hygiene were some of the topics that were discussed in the hygiene awareness session with the workers in the tea weighment areas. These sessions were also conducted during the community meetings covering both the workers and non workers population.

- Hygiene messages which includes critical times of handwashing, safe menstrual hygiene management, steps of handwashing -wall paintings in Schools of Barnesbeg and Nagrifarms.
- Formation of Sustainable Menstrual Hygiene (50 women and girls) Peer Educators and refresher training and quarterly meetings conducted.
- Pre monsoon water quality testing done by youth volunteers at all 21 villages of Barnesbeg and Nagrifarms
- Refresher training on water quality and distribution of water quality kits to all 21 villages.
- Online sessions on Covid-19 safety and prevention conducted with key samaj representatives of communities and direct messaging by Community workers to the community people. Through this awareness 88 community members were reached.
- Online session on Sustainable Menstrual Health conducted with 16 students of Schools of Nagrifarms and Barnesbeg tea plantation.
- Solid Waste Management awareness was conducted with 15 samaj representatives of Nagrifarms.
- Development of IEC materials on key messages on WASH and Covid-19. Community workers conducted awareness through posters on safe Covid-19 practices and prevention.

Campaigns- World Water Day 22nd March 2021 celebrated with 62 school children and focal WASH teachers of Nagrifarms and Barnesbeg tea plantation, Global Handwashing Day 18th Oct 21 and online celebration of World Menstrual Hygiene and Maasika Mahotsav(period festival) celebration 28th May Day 2021 where 40 people gained knowledge on sustainable menstrual health and hygiene management.

Endline survey was conducted to understand the impact of the WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) intervention. The Endline survey covered two aspects of worker's survey- i) Workplace and Household level using a simple random of 25% which looked at the worker's WASH facility at workplace, access to water sanitation and hygiene facilities at household and the worker's productivity and quality data, and workplace level data linking it to the reduction in absenteeism of workers. These findings will help define the Return On Investment (ROI) component from their WASH investments made and ii) KAP (Knowledge Attitude and Practice survey which aims to capture toilet use, hand and personal hygiene, food hygiene and Menstrual Hygiene Management practices using a simple random of 10%. The KAP survey was conducted with 64 workers Tea Estate) and 224 Worker's survey- workplace and household. The team also completed Key Informant Interviews with the Management which involved the General Manager, Munshi and Compounder from the health department.

**3. Comprehensive Health and Hygiene Improvement Program (CHHIP)**  
funded by Broadleaf HEA - USA, Vadham Teas India Team: Kriti and Ujjain and 5 School Health Activists, Nima, Mariyam, Satyam, Sushma, Sushmita, Devi and Avishek.

CHHIP is a health education and improvement program with the following three interrelated components implemented and/or facilitated by trained, community-level School Health Activists (SHAs) : 1) health education curriculum taught in partner schools, 2) health monitoring and early intervention, and 3) improvement of the school health environment.

Partnering with Schools and Communities the intervention negotiated the lockdown in terms of awareness and education. Having SHAs from the community made a great impact in imparting awareness and education support to children as well as the community at large. SHAs took special effort to conduct safe outdoor classes with children in small clusters as the lockdown progressed through the year.

*Objective 1: To improve the health knowledge, attitude, behavior, and skills of children in targeted communities*

#### CHHIP Health Education

The CHHIP Health Curriculum includes a total of 120 lessons covering concepts of basic health and hygiene. The curriculum is based on an active, student-centered learning model and incorporates a great deal of teaching and learning tools to enhance the students' education and joy in learning.

From April to May 2020, the SHAs was able to deliver just 10 lessons of the CHHIP curriculum in partner schools, due to nationwide lockdown. CHHIP Office Hours for SHAs have been implemented to make the CHHIP staff accessible for feedback, lesson preparation and lesson observation. CHHIP conducted lesson observations, CHHIP project officer step into SHA classrooms to observe lessons and give feedback to SHAs.

Priscilla and Kriti facilitated a two-days workshop on the CHHIP workshop for School Health Activists (SHAs), on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The workshop was essential to connect with the School Health Activists and discuss their role in the schools and communities, especially in the evolving context of Covid.

Roshan. Priscilla Kriti and Ujjain facilitated a three days CHHIP Educators Training for 7 SHA and 8 teachers from new CHHIP schools and 3 office staff from Tea Leaf project on 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The objective of this training was to impart adequate knowledge of the CHHIP curriculum by building a better understanding of CHHIP methodology of teaching and properly equip educators with necessary pedagogic skills to implement student-centered and joyful learning in their classrooms.

COMMUNITY	SCHOOLS	YEAR
Marybong Tea Estate	Marybong&Kyel Primary School (public)	2020-2021
	Laxmi Memorial School (private)	2020-2021
	New Light Academy (private)	2020-2021
Lingia Tea Estate	SailaDhura Primary School (public)	2020-2021
Singrimtam (Agricultural Area)	Sai Ratna English School (private)	2020-2021
	Angel English School (private)	2020-2021
Manaydara (Agricultural Area)	Upper Manaydara Primary School (public)	2020-2021
	Sunrise Nursery School (private)	2020-2021
Lingten (Agricultural Area)	Bal Sai Academy (private)	2020-2021
	Padeng Primary School (public)	2020-2021
	Murmidang Primary School (public)	2020-2021
	Kolbong Primary School (public)	2020-2021

	Sahara English Academy (private)	2020-2021
	Karmi Public School	2021
Shelpu (Agriculture Area)	KN Memorial (private)	2020-2021
Ghalaytar (Agriculture Area)	Army School (public)	2020-2021
Latpanchar (Cinchona plantation)	Magnolia English School (private)	2020-2021
Gopaldhara (Tea Estate)	Brindavan Boarding School	2021
	St. Dominic Savio School	
Jungpana-Mahanadi (Tea Estate)	Cambridge Academy	2021
	Little Angel English School	
	Oxford English School	
Mahalderam (Tea Estate)	Village Montessori School	2021

In 2020, the total number of students in these schools was 727. In 2021, the total number of students impacted by CHHIP is 1346.

*Objective 2: To improve the overall health environment of partner schools*

#### Improvements to the School Health Environment

In March 2021, CHHIP provided all CHHIP partner schools with 2 masks per child, soaps, a first aid kit and materials to upkeep the school hygiene. In the 2021 CHHIP constructed 1 toilet, 3 handwashing points and water system at Laxmi Memorial School, Marybong to create a health school environment.

### *Objective 3: To improve the health status of Children*

#### Health Monitoring and Early Intervention

##### De-worming

The team distributed deworming tablets with the collaboration of Primary Health Care of the community at 4 partnering communities of CHHIP i.e Kolbong, Murmidang, Nezi and Padeng on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020. 364 children received treatment for intestinal parasites which is an evidence-based approach to increasing their school attendance and engagement.

##### *No. of events conducted during the year*

#### 1. Health and Covid Safety Workshops

An awareness programmes was conducted on health and hygiene along with Covid Safety:

- On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 24 children and 3 teachers and 2 parents attended our awareness program at Village Montessori School, Mahalderam
- On 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 20 children and 18 adults (including teachers and Samaj representatives) participated in our community awareness programs at Jungpana public ground
- On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 5 teachers attended our awareness program at Brindavan Boarding School, Gopaldhara.

In December 2020 we also facilitated in person teacher specific workshops on “*Making schools safe for all Post-COVID-19*” in 5 partner schools with a total of 32 teacher participants.

#### 2. Nutrition awareness along with pencil bags and lunch bags distribution events:

We distributed pencil bags and lunch bags, generously provided by Vahdam Teas and BYJU’s, to all the students who attended (total: 1,019 students). In addition, two masks per child were provided for students between class KG – IV and one mask per child for students class V and above. Approximately 1500 masks were distributed to students over the 5 programmes. Nutrition and ORS pamphlets were also distributed by our team members to all those who attended the events.

Before distributing the pencil bags and lunch bags, the team conducted an awareness programme on nutrition with the students, where the following topics were discussed: Balanced diet; Local food; Healthy versus unhealthy food choices; Impact of eating foods which contain excess amounts of salt and sugar; Activities that use a lot of energy or a little energy, where the students were asked to skip for a minute to practically experience the use of a lot of energy



The pencil bags and lunch bags distribution and nutrition awareness programme were organised in the following schools on the following dates: Brindavan Boarding School and St. Dominic Savio School - Gopaldhara; Cambridge Academy, Little Angel English School and Oxford English School - Jungpana TE and Mahanadi; Village Montessori School - Mahalderam

### Case Study

*School - Bal Sai Academy, Kolbong.*

*During one of the CHHIP class, SHA NimaChoden Tamang noticed a pencil lead inside one student's ear. Thus, she asked him about how and when did the pencil lead entered his ear, the student replied that he inserted the pencil inside his ear because his ear was itching, during the same time the lead broke inside his ear and remained there ever since. SHA further asked if he had informed his parents or teacher about the mishap but he replied that no one knows about it, so SHA immediately informed his parents and referred the student to Darjeeling District Hospital. The very next day he was taken to the hospital and the lead was taken out from his ear. Thus, now he is healthy and happy.*

## 4. Mental Health:

### **Project Title: Tealeaf Mansik Swastha**

Funded by: Mariwala Health Foundation, Team: Priscilla, Surekha, Arpana and Choden, Catherine

#### Introduction:

Among the various challenges we face today in terms of access to healthcare, access to children's mental health care service has also been identified as a major global health challenge. Of the 20% of children suffer from a mental health condition, 80%-90% will remain undiagnosed, untreated and affected lifelong (WHO, 2010). A fundamental underlying cause of this treatment gap is insufficient human resources. More so there is a significant mental health treatment gap for children in Darjeeling, within the limited existing health infrastructure, cultural beliefs and societal stigma around mental health, access for support and treatment on mental health for communities are lacking, which in turn widens the mental health treatment gaps.

TeaLeaf (TEAchersLEAding the Frontlines) is a research programme with the goal to develop, test, and scale alternative and combined models of education and mental health care that leverage classroom teachers and synergies between the fields of education and child psychiatry to improve the lives of children with mental health struggles. As a mental health program, *Tealeaf-Mansik Swastha* aims to (i) improve access to evidence-based mental health care for children, (ii) improve children's mental health outcomes, and (iii) improve children's wellbeing, development, and academic functioning. Through this intervention teachers are empowered to incorporate simple,

easy-to-use yet evidence-based mental health techniques in their everyday interaction with targeted students.

With the COVID19 lockdown announced on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, by the Government of India and State of West Bengal in an effort to control the spread of COVID-19, all educational institutions in Darjeeling followed the Government notification. As schools in Darjeeling start their school year in mid-February or early March and end in mid-December, the school year had just started when the lockdown was announced, after almost two months of winter break. During the school closure period the following activities were undertaken as the uncertainty of schools reopening were very vague.

Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on Step Wedged –Cluster Randomised Trial (SW-CRT)

With the uncertainty of schools reopening and the timing of such reopening significantly shortening the timeline to complete study and intervention activities as delineated in the protocol for the efficacy SW-CRT the trial has been postponed.

INTERVENTIONS UNDERTAKEN:

a. Behaviour Type and Severity Tool (BTST) collection

22 randomly selected schools participated in the 6-day Teacher Training on Child Mental Health organized in February 2020. After which, enrolled teachers observed the behaviour of their student in a specific grade and completed the Behaviour Type and Severity Tool in March 2020. Each teacher nominated two children to receive targeted intervention and a third child was nominated as an alternate, if at instance a nominated child declines to participate in the study. 26 Tealeaf trained teachers completed the BTST for their whole classes, screening a total of 299 children. Of the 299 children, 52 children (two per teacher) were selected for targeted support.

The team undertook sharing key information education communication materials developed by the organisation within partner schools and communities. The key messages were specifically circulated to teachers and school Principals, which were re-shared among parents and caregivers in the communities. The key messages were developed and shared to disseminate knowledge, build relationships and connection with community members and directly reach out to children.

b. Training on COVID-19 and Mental Health:

The COVID-19 training was offered to community representatives, NGO's and of teachers enrolled in the Tealeaf study, 18 teachers volunteered, 16 from the Tealeaf arm and 2 from the EUC arm, to learn about COVID-19 through this DLRP delivered training.

A review of the DLRP COVID-19 community survey revealed that significant fear existed in the community about COVID-19 and that there was a need for mental health information as it relates to COVID-19, such as facts about COVID-19 to allay fears,

“normal” stress responses during a pandemic, and concrete coping skills one can use for oneself and family to deal with stress, fear, and anxiety. To supplement the State’s material, the DLRP mental health team created the following three one-page reference documents to provide community members with information that they can reference and spread: (1) “Normal” stress and mental health reactions during a pandemic and stay-at-home order, including verbiage to combat COVID-19 stigma; (2) Concrete coping strategies for adults and children; and (3) Statements of support community members can share and sensitive questions they can ask if a neighbour is struggling with stress from COVID-19 (with questions that are trauma-informed and are worded to be mindful of the fact that the stressor is ongoing). Based on these documents, the mental health team designed and delivered a follow-up training on May 19, there were 27 participants in the training.

c. Teachers Workshop on ‘Making Schools Safe for All Post COVID-19 Lockdown:

With the likelihood of schools reopening the school leaders and teachers were concerned about the ways to maintain safety and security of children during the difficult times. To address this concern DLRP designed and delivered a workshop for school Principals followed by a 3-day training for teachers to ensure that schools are safe for children and provide communities with knowledge and materials to safely reopen schools, as well as resources to help adjust behaviours in response to COVID-19. The Principals workshop held on June 12, in this workshop 35 participants were involved in discussions on Physical space and hygiene, Health and wellbeing of students and teachers, Shifts in instruction, and Connecting with the community and rebuilding our school’s community. This workshop was followed by a Teacher training on June 17 to 19, discussion on Student Safety and Wellbeing, Rebuilding Classroom Community and Lessons for teachers and students was carried out for 50 participants. DLR Perna delivered a second round of workshops titled ‘Making Schools Safe for All Post COVID-19 Lockdown’. These workshops were delivered to ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) schools in Darjeeling District, on 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th October 2020. This workshop was intended to provide teachers with support and strategies as they return to school post-Covid shutdown. The workshop covered the following topics: Student Safety and Wellbeing; Mental Health; Rebuilding the Classroom Community; and Students Lessons. The team also created and disseminated a one page fact documents about COVID-19 and mental health.

65 teachers and school Principals participated in the workshop from 20 ICSE schools in Darjeeling District. At the end of the workshop 26 teachers gave their feedback, they were most excited to implement ‘Joyful education like positive emotions, acting, talking and group work’; and ‘Strategies to make students less anxious post COVID’. 69.2% wanted to attend a followup workshop and 84% wanted to recommend this workshop to other schools.

The Tealeaf project team has also supported DLRP’s school health team in delivering an adapted version of this workshop to 24 teachers across 3 primary schools. Training

and support to the network of 21 schools participating in DLRP's school health programme is ongoing in 2021.

d. Publications:

I. Nepali Article Publications

We have broadened our media outreach to include Nepali-language media. This is crucial to ensuring that our content is accessible to the widest-possible audience in Darjeeling and supports our efforts to create broad conversation and awareness around issues of children's mental health. We published four articles in the *Himalayan Darpan*, a local Nepali-language press, to promote a discussion around mental health. The first article was on 'Why we need to talk about mental health?' published in the month of October and the second article was published on 'Importance of recognising emotions and dealing with it' in November 2020, the third article was on 'Why it is important to communicate our feelings?' published on January 2021 and the fourth article on 'Effect of COVID19 lockdown and school reopening' published on March 2021. This article was broadly distributed on DLRPrerna Facebook pages as well.

Article 1

<https://www.facebook.com/493176034169927/posts/1807969492690568/>

Article 2

<https://www.facebook.com/493176034169927/posts/1771137029707148/>

Article 3

<https://www.facebook.com/493176034169927/posts/1857320214422162/>

Article 4

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1902399213247595&id=493176034169927](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1902399213247595&id=493176034169927)

ii. Reframe Publications:

Our article titled "Teachers as Agents of Change: School-Based Mental Health Care in the Darjeeling Himalaya" was published in Mariwala Health Initiative's ReFRAME journal 2020 which highlighted how the teachers negotiate traditional roles and relationships as they become delivery agents of mental health care in a school setting.

iii. Teacher Nomination Manuscript:

Our first peer-reviewed manuscript from the feasibility pilot has been accepted for publication in *Global Health Action*. This manuscript explores the feasibility and accuracy of leveraging teachers to identify children facing mental health challenges. The results of this study support that, with in-service training and decision support, teachers in rural Darjeeling can nominate school-aged children for mental health services with moderate accuracy.

Cruz, CM, Lamb MM, Giri P, et. al. Teacher Nomination of School-aged Children for Mental Health Services in a Low and Middle Income Country. *Global Health Action*. In press, 2020. Will be available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2020.1861921>.

e. Community Conversations - Awareness workshops and Community Visits:

During the lockdown period the team had paused visiting the Tealeaf communities and felt the need to reconnect with them by visiting schools and re-engaging with teachers, parents and community members. The team visited 12 schools in November and 20 schools in December. Visits were not possible however in 9 schools because the schools were continuing online sessions from their respective residential areas and the schools were closed.

In these visits not more than five members were invited to participate, including Principals, teachers, parents and samaj members. The team reviewed the Tealeaf program, changes in the program led by COVID-19 lockdown, updated the Qualitative Interviews and Intervention activities and lastly the future plans of Tealeaf program and discussed ways to assist the schools, teachers and students. This information was also shared with the participants through pre-made materials/flyers that were disseminated at each meeting.

The team came to know that 14 schools were conducting online classes, these schools circulated lessons and homeworks in whatsapp groups. These schools shared that they experienced challenges because of network issues, although they were able to cover a majority of students through online classes. While 18 schools tried conducting online classes in the beginning stage of the lockdown, they were less successful than they hoped to be as parents did not have smartphones or access to the internet and some of the parents were illiterate and couldn't guide their children. As an alternative they started teaching tuitions at the teachers residential areas or in the school itself. Out of these school, 3 schools could not continue with online classes nor tuitions as they have not received any support from the parents.

It was also observed that schools who were conducting tuition classes in their schools did not maintain the COVID safety protocol. Teachers and parents were aware that wearing masks, maintaining social distance and washing hands at regular intervals were important, but they did not feel it was important to follow the protocols; they felt they were safe in their communities from catching COVID. However most of the schools were open to learn ways to implement the safety protocol in their schools and communities.

On an international stage our team took part in a webinar hosted by the Modern India Studies Initiative at the University of North Carolina. This webinar was moderated by Christina Cruz and Michael Matergia with Priscilla Giri and Raj Mariwala as panelists. The webinar explored the impact of the pandemic on mental health in India and more

broadly innovative efforts across India aimed to expand access to quality mental health care.

f. Training on COVID Safety and Classroom Management:

Training on COVID Safety and Classroom Management for Tealeaf school teachers were conducted in 32 schools and 96 teachers participated in the training, in the month of February and March 2021. The training covered topics such as 1) Student Safety and Wellbeing 2) Mental Health 3) Rebuilding Classroom Community and 4) Lessons for Students and Teachers.

g. RESEARCH:

I. Observations of the 6-day Child Mental Health Training

During the 6-day training observations were made and recorded. Some of the observation made are as follows:

- Former experience from Enhanced Usual Care (EUC) training & its implementation

The teachers expressed that after receiving the EUC training they could understand their students better and could also observe a positive change in the student's behavior and academics after implementing what they had learnt from the training and providing better guidance to the students.

- Teacher's relationship with\perception about the student's parents

While the teachers shared their experiences with regard to their interactions with the student's parents they had different types of views. Some of the teachers talked about how some parents listen to whatever they say and it is easier for them to talk about the child's behavior issues. In contrast to this they also mentioned that there are parents who do not agree when the teacher discusses the child's unacceptable behavior.

ii. Surveys & Assessment

KABP survey, capturing the Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs and Practices of the participants related to Mental Health. A KABP survey was conducted using the RedCap public survey link for capturing the general notions of the teachers on child mental health and mental health in general, at the beginning of the training. The survey was anonymous and was to be filled out using mobile phones.

### iii. Feedback session

The feedback session was conducted at the end of the training for both the batches. Two types of methods were used, one was by using google forms and the other was an open group discussion.

A lot of feedback was given by the teachers, some of which are as follows:

- The teachers expressed how they do not get opportunities to attend training as they teach in private schools, so they thought that the Tealeaf training was a good opportunity for them to learn.
- Some teachers thought that as there was a lot of technical content in the training, having a refresher in between the year would be helpful.
- Some shared how they could then think of students who already exhibited some of these behaviours.

### h Registration of Local Ethics committee:

The project team invested their time in writing process notes and field notes of school visits scheduled before the lockdown and created documents such as SOPs and MIS for the project. The team completed data entry of Summative Assessment from 2020 TeaLeaf teachers training. The team has worked with St. Joseph's College Darjeeling and finalised the establishment of the Institutional Ethics Committee.

The registration process of the local Ethics Committee (SJC-NP INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE) under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, National ethics Committee Registry for both Biomedical and Health research (NECRBHR) has been started with submission of required documents (both hard and soft copies).

### i. Qualitative Interviews:

Our research plan reflects our research team's necessary shift in focus to a community-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research questions are derived from the naturally occurring crisis response work our research team is pursuing as leaders in the community. We plan to pursue mixed methods to analyze our data and answer our questions.

In brief, we have divided our response into two time periods, "School Closure" and "Post School Closure". "School closure" period activities are described below. For the "post school closure" period, we plan to continue to deliver the Tealeaf intervention in light of the likely increased need for mental health support for children during and after this pandemic.

For the school closure period, we are studying the pandemic socio-emotional impact on our community, both adults and children. We conducted 36 semi-structured interviews with teachers, their principals, and the caregivers of children in our study from March to August. To quantify the stresses community members face, we administered the Perceived Stress Scale at the end of each interview, a widely used tool in India to

quantitatively capture the stressors and drivers of stress one has experienced in the last month. We initially started with the teachers who volunteered to be in our community training, as previously described. We then pursued snowball sampling to obtain the remaining interviews.

The team reflected on the interview process and applied changes in the strategy. Interactive participants were involved in follow up calls and through them we engaged other community members in the qualitative interviews. For example, we conducted a follow up call with a school principal in a tea plantation, he connected us with the tea manger, community member and youth group member.

Translation and transcription of the 23 interviews were completed by two local translators and 7 interviews by the team. The team and local translators followed the list of guidelines for the translation work and maintained a glossary for recording Nepali words, which were not directly translated to English. This will be key to rigorous contextual understanding and qualitative evaluation going forward.

#### j. Scientific Advisory Committee:

The team formed a Scientific Advisory Committee for the Tealeaf MansikSwastha research program, in December 2020. To establish this committee six experts in the field of mental health in India were requested to join. The purpose of this committee is to provide guidance on conducting community-driven research, scaling innovation, building local human resources/team capacity, disseminating findings to diverse audiences, and interacting with different levels of government.

The first Scientific Advisory Committee meeting held on 17th Dec, 2020. The committee comprised of following members:

- Dr Amar Jesani, MBBS, Independent Researchers and Consultant, Pubic Health and Bioethics, Mumbai; and Editor, Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME)
- Prof Mala Ramanathan, PhD (IIPS, Mumbai), Masters in Medical Anthropology (Amsterdam), Bioethics (Harvard), AMCHSS, SCTIMST, Trivandrum; Working Editor, IJME; Member Secretary, IEC
- Dr Sunita SheelBandewar, PhD (Anthropology) and Masters in Bioethics (Toronto, Canada), Independent Researcher, Pune; Working Editor, IJME; and Director, HEaL (Health, Ethics and Law) Institute of Training, Research and Advocacy, Mumbai-Pune
- Ms. Jasmine Kalha, MA in Social Work (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai), MPhil in Sociology (Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University). Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society, Pune.

The team is currently working with Jasmine Kalha to revise the study protocol to incorporate a stronger focus on implementation science and is revising the protocol to reflect the overall feedback from the Committee.

#### k. Peer-reviewed publications and presentations



As highlighted above, we have two academic publications this quarter (*ReFrame* and *Global Health Action*). We continue to make progress with other manuscripts that are in various stages of peer review:

- Cruz CM, Lamb MM, Giri P, et. al. Perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of teachers serving as mental health lay counselors in a low and middle income country: A mixed methods pragmatic pilot study. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*. doi:[10.21203/rs.3.rs-98098/v1](https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-98098/v1) Status: responding to requests for minor revisions.
- Matergia, M, Giri, P, et. al. Teacher-delivered Child Mental Healthcare in Primary Schools of the Darjeeling Himalayas: A Mixed Methods Feasibility Study. *Global Mental Health*. Status: submitted for editorial review.
- Giri, P. Ethics in Child Mental Health Research. Global Forum on Bioethics in Research. Accepted for oral presentation at the international meeting in November 2021.

#### L. CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Atmiyata Training

The training is an evidence based mental health training that started from 24th oct 2020- 5th Dec 2020. The training was structured as a weekend online session for three consecutive weeks and a check in session on 5th December 2020. The training was completed by the two project staffs Arpana Thapa and Surekha Bhattarai.

The course was a platform where one could express one's ideas and learn from the others as well. As it was a small group it was easy to interact and share experiences and opinions. Apart from sharing our thoughts we also learned new skills and techniques and the ways to achieve it.

- SPIRIT Fellowship

Our team member ChodenDukpa has started the SPIRIT fellowship since August 2020. As a part of the fellowship Choden has been learning about implementation science research and its different frameworks. She has been working on assignments based on explaining implementation science framework, formulation of research objectives and questions, conducting interviews etc. The reading materials and other resources from the fellowship are also being shared with the entire team and discussions about implementation science research are being held among the team members.

### **5. Agro-Ecology, Climate Change: Anamika, Sailesh and Swastika**

#### ***Climate Change Resilient Sittong II Phase II – funded by CASA, India***

The project focused on strengthening resilience of five villages of Mamring and Turyok under Kurseong Sub- Division in Sittong II through a process of community institutional strengthening by conducting trainings and workshops on soil health and its importance ,methods on improvement of soil through different techniques like vegetative composting, vermi- composting; harvesting of indigenous microorganisms and liquid

manure; training on integrated pest management and application of bio pest repellent; special focus on intercropping, seed saving and sharing.

Due to the pandemic and nationwide lockdown the targeted activities were limited to sensitisation on COVID-19 protocol, distribution of relief materials to the targeted families who were identified by the Samaj. Community managed waste resource centers were also constructed. Online sessions on COVID-19 protocol, myths and facts were conducted to the community members from the team members of DLR Prerna.

During the project period the programs were conducted in a close relation with Samaj, Gram Panchayat, health centre and line departments.

#### **6. NMA- Nutrition in Mountain Agro- ecosystems Nutrition Sensitive Mountain Agro\_ ecology- Anamika, Sailesh - Lok Chetna Manch**

The nutrition in mountain agro eco systems II (NMA II), funded by the SDC and the project is implemented by IFOAM- organics international, HELVETAS and FiBL with national partners in five mountains ranges (Himalaya, Hindukush, Pamir-Tian Shan, East-African Highlands and the Andes), with field -level interventions in eight focus countries. NMA has the overall goal of contributing to the improved access to sufficient nutritious food for rural communities in mountain regions. This is to be achieved through a network of actors, facilitating innovation and the diversification of proven agro-ecological and other nutrition sensitive practices.

The project is ongoing at Harsing and Mineral Springs, Darjeeling, Mamring and Turyok under Kurseong Sub- Division, Kolbong and Padeng under Jhepi GP, Maney Dara and Marybong Tea Plantation and 20 low cost private schools.

Under this project 25 RSPs (Rural Service Providers) were selected for the Capacity Development programme and a 2 days second face to face training programme on Nutrition based agriculture was conducted at Mineral Springs. 25 selected RSPs (Rural Service providers) have also started with their Micro interventions such as Nursery, Vermicomposting, Sustainable Menstrual health and Hygiene, Seed saving and sharing, waste management, Kitchen garden, Floriculture. Under this program few agriculture products have been value added such as turmeric and ginger. Under the NMA a pulveriser is set up within the community of Mineral Springs for the process of grinding. One of the beneficiaries set up the tree nursery and sold the saplings to customers and PUR Project agroforestry project as a livelihood model.

The Project impact was evaluated through Minimum Daily Dietary Score on the basis of the diet intake after the ToT of the local food culture.

Under Scaling up Nutrition Sensitive Agricultural Interventions varieties of indigenious seeds were distributed to the farmers of Mineral Springs and Mamring and Turyok. The seed saving and sharing have had a big impact during the 2nd lock down as majority of the community members not only consumed the produce but sold it to the nearby communities of the main town.

The overall evaluation of the project was conducted during the month of September by an independent body. There were two ways of evaluation; by physical presence and over video call from the evaluators. They interviewed RSPs and some of the beneficiaries and one of the team member from DLR Prerna. The evaluation report is awaited.

## **7. Agro-Forestry – supported by Pur Project, France: Anamika and Sailesh**

Agroforestry is the land use management system in which trees or shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. This diversification of the farming system initiates an agroecological succession like that in natural ecosystems and so starts a chain of events that enhance the functionality and sustainability of the farming system. Trees also produce a wide range of useful and marketable products from fruits, nuts, medicines, wood, fuel and household products etc.

DLR Prerna has been partnering with PUR Project based in Paris, France for the Agroforestry programme in Darjeeling over the last six years since 2014. Even with the COVID19 lockdown with the help of our community workers we were able to plant 17000 different local/indigenous species of trees in the villages of Middle Mamring, Lower Mamring, middle and lower Turyok, Gumba gaon and Jogi Ghat of Sittong II Gram Panchayat under Kurseong Sub-division District Darjeeling in different planting models viz. Block Forestry, Intercropping, Boundary Planting (peripheral) while still maintaining COVID19 safety protocols. We were able to undertake this through our long term association with the community as well as our community worker and the nursery owners.

This project was executed in partnership with 70 farmers who were identified during the socialisation meeting. At the inception meeting of the WAVE 2020 the potential beneficiaries were trained on the value of a tree, management of planting parcels, weeding, hardening of saplings, planting and nurturing and after care of the saplings. Monitoring 1 and 2 was also completed during the period and the wave '20 was completed having a survival rate of 80%.

## **8. Farmer's empowerment - supported by Pur Project, France: Swastika and Sailesh**

DLR Prerna is partnering with PUR Project based in France, for farmer's and women's empowerment programmes.

20 each peer educators were identified and selected for both farmer and women empowerment programmes of Sittong II Gram Panchayat, Kurseong Sub-division District Darjeeling who were trained. The selected peer educators for the farmer empowerment programme were trained on different topics such as Integrated Farming System, Integrated pest management, Crops and cropping patterns, Animal Husbandry, Improved Cooking Stove for fuel efficiency, personal health, Food security through kitchen garden. Indigenous varieties of crop seeds were distributed to selected farmers

for growing, seed saving and sharing as a part of crop diversity. The Improved Cooking Stoves have substantially reduced the fuel wood demand and are in more demand from the community members for installation.

These 20 progressive farmers who have undergone these training are playing the key role in disseminating knowledge with the other community members and also creating demonstration models. Till date 20 demonstrative models of Improved Cooking Stove have been installed.

### *Women's Empowerment*

20 peer educators who have been identified and selected have undergone a training on Sustainable Menstrual Health and Hygiene where topics covered were on social stigma and taboos, biological aspect and products which mainly focussed on sustainability in terms of health and environment. This year, refresher training was conducted and a training session on stitching cloth pads was done with the peer educators.

These Peer educators have conducted several awareness sessions on sustainable menstrual health with Self Help group members and women and girls of their community.

An endline survey will be conducted to measure the impact of the program.

### ***9. Support in building resilient North East mountain entrepreneur supported by ICIMOD, Nepal and in collaboration with Integrated Mountain Initiative***

ICIMOD has been supporting IMI from its inception for the Sustainable Mountain Development Summits (SMDS) which bring all the stakeholders engaged in sustainable development in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). DLR Perna is an institutional and core member of IMI. Through its deliberation during SMDSs, IMI has been able to gather specific challenges faced by the mountain communities in IHR. Some of the challenges and issues identified through SMDS VIII deliberations are addressed in the project. The objectives of the project is to address the challenges faced by mountain communities for development and promotion of youth entrepreneurship. Specific objectives are:

- Create a database of entrepreneurs working on agriculture in the North Eastern states
- Profile key entrepreneurs, their products and issues and challenges
- Create a network of mountain entrepreneurs for exchange of information.

An assessment profile was created and in all the North Eastern States of India, including Sikkim a database of entrepreneurs was collated with the state chapters of IMI. The database included Darjeeling and Kalimpong too. The compiled data base has been completed and the entrepreneurs linked via online platforms.

## **10. Development and Environment Education**

a. Zero Waste Himalaya: Roshan, Swastika and the entire team. Supported by European Outdoor Conservation Association and WWF- India

DLR Prerna is a core team member of Zero Waste Himalaya and in partnership with Integrated Mountain Initiative have been facilitating these activities that are in line with the principles and practices of zero waste.

1. Indian Himalayan Workshop on sustainable waste management strategies and planning for the Himalayan cleanup

### 1.1 Sustainable Waste Management in the Indian Himalayan Region - Challenges and Way Forward

The workshop had been scheduled for 21 March 2020 at Delhi on the second day of the IMIs 8th Meet of the Mountain States but was cancelled due to COVID19 lockdown.

With the chances of opening up and ease of travel not possible in the near future, a core group of IMI and ZWH members undertook a process of defining a draft problem statement of waste in the Himalaya and delineating a strategy to address the issue. This document was circulated amongst key stakeholders across the 12 Himalayan States of India as well as the State Chapters of IMI for comments and feedback. The document was also circulated to experts in India for their comments and feedback. Two online workshops were facilitated on the draft document with feedback from the states and also experts on 2nd and 11th June 2020 to further refine the document as well as endorse the final draft of the document.

The process of developing the workshop also included a series of online webinars and events that enabled a deeper discussion for the strategy document.

### 1.2 The Story of Plastic - Screening and Discussion

'The Story of Plastic' movie was made available online from 8 to 12 May 2020 to the IMI and ZWH members as well as to the general public through social media announcements of the screening. Around 100 people screened the movie during this time period. The screening was followed by an online discussion on the film and the issue of plastic pollution on 12 May 2020. The panellists for the discussion were Mr Shibu Nair of Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), Mr. Amba Jamir - Policy Analyst from Nagaland and Ms. Yangchen Dolma - Waste Management Practitioner from Ladakh.

### 1.3 The Himalayan Cleanup Workshop - "Managing waste sustainably in the COVID19 pandemic" - May 26, 2020

On the day of the Himalayan Cleanup May 26, 2020, the lockdown was still in place due to which the cleanup was not possible. A webinar was facilitated instead of the cleanup to understand the current practices of handling waste and the challenges thereof, and how sustainable practices could be built into the existing protocols. Voices from the

waste frontline workers from the Himalaya - Ladakh, Nagaland and Kalimpong Darjeeling highlighted the issues of waste in the context of COVID19. A panel of experts consisting of Ms. Pratibha Sharma from UNDP, Mr. Shibu Nair from GAIA, Mr Harshad Barde from SWaCH Pune responded to the voices of the Himalaya with their suggestions and sharing of practices of sustainability even within the pandemic scenario.

#### 1.4 Comments on the Extended Producer Responsibility Guidelines under the Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016 to the Government of India.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests, and Climate Change, Government of India called for comments on the draft Extended Producer Responsibility Framework under the Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016. IMI and ZWH facilitated a comments document from across the Indian Himalaya through a process of online consultations followed by a workshop on July 17, 2020 that highlighted a need for a mountain lens and recognition of EPR from a complete lifecycle perspective. Other institutions were also approached to review some of the aspects of the Framework and send their own responses. After a series of consultations, the final document was submitted to the Ministry by IMI on the 30th of July 2020.

#### 1.5 Assessment Report on Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in Indian Himalayan Region This Assessment Report was prepared to provide an overview of the situation with regard to the state of Municipal Solid Waste in the cities of Indian Himalayan Region

### 2. Train volunteers from all the 12 mountain states of the IHR

Since on-person training of volunteers from the mountain states was not possible, it was decided that a virtual online course on zero waste would be organised. State Chapters selected youth volunteers/ peer educators and online workshops were facilitated by the IMI and ZWH team over a period of 5 sessions in July and August 2020.

Peer Educators/volunteers had 5 virtual engagements with the ZWH team with additional audio-visual as well textual material on zero waste being provided to the peer educators. The peer educators were also assigned tasks that enhanced their understanding of zero waste and larger policy issues that enabled them to jump start the principles in their own lives so that they could lead by example.

The Sessions were facilitated in this manner:

Session 1: Introduction to Zero Waste Principles 7 July 2020

Session 2: Waste Footprint and its impacts on well being and reducing individual waste 11 July 2020

Session 3 - Understanding policies and gaps - 18 July 2020

Session 4 - Building blocks of zero waste 25 July 2020

Session 5: Communicating for Change 1 August 2020

The Peer Educators were provided with a resource package for further references In the sessions IMI members took part especially in the policy presentation and the last session so that the future activities could be coordinated.

Along with these 5 sessions for Peer Educators across the IHR, 3 separate sessions were facilitated for students of Sikkim and Darjeeling that were targeted to students younger than the Peer Educators.

The Peer Educators are leveraging their circle of influence to increase the zero waste movement in the Indian Himalayan Region. It has the potential for a number of projects for THC related work. 6 pilot projects across the Indian Himalayan Region is being supported that contextualises zero waste action based on the local needs as well as capacities of the peer educators.

## ii. *Maasika Mahotsav*

The celebration of Maasika Mahotsav is an acknowledgement of Menstruation, an important biological change which makes the existence of life possible, yet the culture of silence around menstruation is so complete that most of the girls have no knowledge on menstruation before their first period. The social stigma and societal silence has a negative impact on health issues and mental health. Our celebration focused on sustainable products and challenging the 'plastic pads' also keeping an alarming attention on social stigmas and biological changes which has an adverse effect on mental health if not taken care of at an early stage. Maasika Mahotsav 2020 was observed through online discussion with our community partners. The event tried to include all gender, breaking the silence on periods and taboos and reflected upon the dynamics and influences of other social and religious institutions which have vehemently tried to silence the issues on menstruation. The role of society, subaltern women, patriarchy, media and even the academic institution in breaking the silence on menstruation was also one of the objectives of this session. Menstruators and non menstruators were brought into an open online platform.

The online event on Maasika Mahotsav, 2020, was successfully inclusive as it brought together artists and art in the form of poetry sessions, drawing, sharing positive stories as well as myths about periods. The event ended with online conversations with an open theme on, 'Breaking the silence on Menstruation'.

We also had open discussion along with Zero Waste Himalaya in the peer educators workshops that were shared online through social media platforms. Key messages were developed that were shared via social media platforms as well as directly with your community partners.

## iii. *Plastic Freedom Challenge 2020*

#PlasticFreedomChallenge2020 that calls on individuals to commit a week of plastic free living from 8 August to 15 August went as a successful social media campaign.

## Workshops/Trainings Attended:

a. Indian Mountain Initiative, Sustainable Mountain Development Summit IX, Emerging Pathways for building a resilient post COVID19 Mountain Economy - Adaptation, Innovation and Acceleration 8-14th December 2020 | Virtual Mode. DLR Prerna was a part of the core team that facilitated the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate resilient future for IHR 12 December 2020 Session as well as the 3 Indian Himalayan Youth Summit. We were also part of the SMDSIX communication team.

### **11. Future Action Plans**

1. Partner and strengthen community based organizations. The additional focus will still be on the COVID19 pandemic as it continues and the need to contextualise behaviour and action to the Darjeeling Himalaya remains.
2. Strengthen conservation and sustainable livelihoods programme
  - i. Agro-biodiversity conservation, agro-forestry, nutritional agriculture, slow food, local food culture
3. Strengthen capacity enhancement programmes on sustainable agro-ecology, nutritional agriculture, fairtrade, permaculture and participatory planning.
4. Expand community based HWC management as well as advocacy initiatives through: networking and linkages; lobbying; publishing
5. Strengthen community based water and sanitation interventions
6. Promote school health interventions
7. Strengthen mental health interventions in schools and communities.
8. Zero waste strengthening innovation, expansion and campaigns. Intersects with local food, junk food, food and nutrition security.
9. Climate smart interventions
10. Increase media and online presence
11. Network with national, international platforms and academic institutions



## 12. Note of appreciation

DLR Prerna extends its gratitude to the Educational Institutions, Communities, World Wide Fund for Nature - India; CASA, Broadleaf, Pur Project, Chamong and Goodricke Tea Companies, Twinings and Jal Seva Charitable Foundation India, Mariwala Health Foundation, Lok Chetna Manch, ICIMOD, European Outdoor Conservation Association, Darjeeling and Kalimpong Municipality; GTA; Forest Department, Government of West Bengal, MoEFCC, SIRD, Sikkim, Swachh Bharat Mission, Sikkim; GB Pant Institute, Zero Waste Himalaya, Integrated Mountain Initiative and Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative, EccoFemme, Muse Foundation, for their solidarity and partnership.

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