

## DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS RESOURCES - INDIA

### Summary of Activities

January 2015

#### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

*The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. –Amelia Earhart*

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#### 1. CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER's MESSAGE

Harsharan Kaur

The temperature remained chilly through January but the activities in DIR kept the staff warm. Just some of the things that went on this month were: Open Day, Lohri celebrations, Vitamin A distribution launch, and a new intern joining our ranks. The response to the Open Day was very positive from both the HPs and the community. Misconceptions about DIR were cleared up and a deeper understanding of DIR's activities was created. It was good for me to interact with the community at the DIR Center in this manner. We were formally introduced and the different staff members and their responsibilities were made clear to the community. Also some of our projects that they were not aware of were brought to light and possibility of new ones were raised by the audience. We now plan to hold such an event every year so that we can make sure we have an active and engaged community that can come to senior staff and discuss issues in the area.

The NIPP program continues to be a focus for me. We continued to distribute Iron Syrup and deworming tablets but also made these children priority in the Vitamin A launch. There has been an improvement as 46% of the children in the program gained weight in comparison to just 31% last month. With a doctor helping part time and a nutritionist soon to return we will be able to make a bigger improvement by the end of next month and hope to see some children graduate out of the program.

Category	# of children
Red	266
Yellow	418
Green	770

This month saw an improvement in numbers from the last with a drop in 10 from the red category. This is a positive movement which gives us hope that our efforts at DIR are contributing to the community. We're working on gathering more data on these categories based on gender as we feel that the bias towards male children is hampering these numbers. This month the data collected shows there are 16 female and only 7 males in the priority category. The sex ratio in India and especially in Punjab is skewed towards the male and female foeticide is rampant. Our focus will now be aimed towards improving the health of these girls.

## 2. NUTRITIONAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY PROJECT (NIPP)

Intern Halisia Hubbard, with Health Promoter Sunil, and CEO Frederick Shaw

This program has targeted approach whereby, each Health Promoter selects the three most malnourished children in his/her area to receive special attention. The criteria for this special attention is 3 or more months continuously in the Red category of the growth chart or a weight below the priority line of the growth chart. Each HP will take on 3 children from their area and then nurture them until they have gained weight and are in the yellow section of the growth chart. Once one child has gained weight another will take her/his place therefore there are always 39 children in NIPP, this month from the grand total of 266 children who are in the Red. We are proud to announce that this month 3 children gained weight enough to be in the yellow category in impressive feat as many of these children fall in the priority zone when they begin the program.

Age group	% of NIPP children
0-12 months	3
13-24 months	15
25-36 months	23
37-48 months	44
49-60 months	15

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
<b>% of Priority children who made a weight GAIN</b>	36	47	39	31	46
<b>% of Priority children whose weight status remained UNCHANGED</b>	50	40	46	62	41
<b>% of Priority children who had a weight LOSS</b>	15	7	10	5	10
<b>% of Priority children who WERE ABSENT from area</b>	0	5	5	2.5	3

A majority of these families we are discussing fall under the poverty line and hence cannot provide enough nutritious food for children. The cheaper food tends to be the simple and lacking in nutrition or junk food such as a bag of crisps or candy. Therefore, altering such nutritional status depends heavily upon behavioral change more than any other factor, for example we are working on counseling against junk foods and offering alternative solution. This is a slow process, since altering the mindset of a person can take time however with the increasing respect DIR is gaining from the community, the more change we see.

In this program we have tackled one of the most difficult problems there is where the improvement of young children's health is concerned. We set about getting every Priority child de-wormed as soon as possible then we distribute Iron Syrup to these children with the aid of the government dispensary as and when is needed. In the table above you can see the gains that these children have made far outweigh the losses. Slowly but surely we are changing the fixed mind-sets of the parents in this difficult area

## 3. MOTHERS' HEALTH

Ms. Sangeeta -Health Promoter

This month there were 19 births; 11 girls and 8 boys. The same results as the month before, these are great results as more girls are born into our community. We once again hope it will continue in coming year.

We are very happy to report there were no deaths, still borne or miscarriages. All but one deliveries occurred in hospitals and 18 went well. Unfortunately one of the children died 2 hours after birth due to a thyroid problem with the mother. This happened after all the required antenatal exams but unfortunately was not prevented. All other mothers and babies are healthy and happy.

Last Month	Delivery	Left	New	This month
93	-19	-7	+21	88

## THE SCHOOL WITH A DIFFERENCE

Meenakshi Chauhan – Teacher



DIR's 'School With A Difference' focuses on trying to teach valuable skills such as mathematics, English and Hindu through fun and play. Our children are from 2 to 6 and a half years old and at the moment number 77. We are currently pushing for teacher training in order to give our children the best possibilities.

This January our children performed at our Lowrhi function in front of friends, family and other guests. They sang a few songs and enjoyed some healthy snacks for their efforts. The parents and students left happily after enjoying food, chai and dancing.

This month we have been able to place 5 DIR school's graduates in to St. Stephen's and SD Public where we believe they'll do well. We hope to be able to report more graduations to public or government schools

in the months and years to come.

## 6. INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY

### Switching and Products

(Banita – Health Promoter)

Several of the women who have taken the tailoring class, now make products at home using fabric we provide, and are getting paid, per item, when their products pass our quality-control inspection. They make cloth purses, re-usable gift wrapping for a bottle of wine, cloth cases for i-Pads, salwars, etc. For the most part we send the products overseas where they are marketed in US, France, and Switzerland. A new product we are trying this time, thanks to Maya Shaw's help, are heavy scarfs. These seem to be the rage in the U.S. and we have sent a sample installment of 10 scarfs to be sold and check the markets for such items. We are looking to shift our products and try to tailor towards the youth of America. We will run this as a trial and see if these are viable profit making fund raiser.



### Beautician Training Center

(Sunil Vidla – Health Promoter)

This month saw the end of the first 6 month beautician training course started with the help of Ms. KhushbuThapa, which meant that this month their examination took place. The owner of Innox, Neelu Madam, generously sent two of her staff to judge the examination and gave special tips and fine techniques to help them improve the knowledge they have. In the examination only 1 of the 3 girls present passed the exam, she will be given a certificate for her efforts. Now as is custom she will be helped by DIR staff to secure a job in a local beauty parlor, we her and the rest of the girls all the best for the girls as they continue honing their craft.

## 7. IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME

Ms. Sarita –Health Promoter

DIR-I has collaborated with the government-run immunization program every Wednesday morning (in the DIR Centre) to provide free immunization for a number of years. A total of 177 shots were administered to children this month, details of which are as follows:

<i>SHOTS</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Dose</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Dose</i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Dose</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	4	18	17	39
<b>DPT</b>	4	18	17	39
<b>DPT-B</b>	18	-	-	18
<b>TT</b>	11	6	-	17
<b>TT 10 yrs.</b>	10	-	-	10
<b>Measles</b>	22	18	-	40
<b>BCG</b>	1	-	-	1
<b>Pentavalent</b>	13	-	-	13
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	<b>177</b>

## 8.D.O.T.S.

Mrs. Meenakshi- Senior Health Promoter

At the end of last the month we had 17 patients with Tuberculosis and this month we have not received any new patients, a promising sign. This month we had 6 patients complete their course of treatment successfully, we now have to hope that they stay healthy and do not relapse. The number of patients who completed this month is partly down to the hard work, dogged dedication and moral support that our Senior Health Promoter Meenakshi has put in to ensure that patients continue their treatment. We'd like to take the time to congratulate her and her patients.

Unfortunately we must also mention the death of one of the TB patients who despite taking the course of treatment unfortunately has not made it. This results in a total of 10 patients who will continue the program



Following is the distribution of these patients in different categories and what each means:

Category I – All new patients whose pulmonary smear is positive for Tuberculosis Bacilli or those whose pulmonary smear is negative but are seriously ill, plus patients with extra-pulmonary Tuberculosis are in this Category. This month, we have **eight** patients in this category.

Category II – These are old Tuberculosis patients who had either defaulted from the treatment at an earlier stage and have re-started the treatment or those who have again contracted the disease after being cured, plus those who had not been cured even after completing a full prescribed course. This month we have **two** patients in this category.

## 9. PERSONNEL ACTION, VISITORS, EVENTS

Mr. Dave Fathers

### Resignations:

- This month saw the departure of Mr Arun Gupta who after a year of working with DIR has decided it's time to take the opportunity to travel and see those near and dear. He will be missed by all of the staff and we would like to thank him for his work this year as DIR went through a transitional period in terms of senior personnel.

### Promotion:

- Two of our HPs Mrs Sarita and Sangeeta have begun helping to work on the financial aspect of DIR at the bustee alongside Harsharan (COO). They take the time to look over the books which is a valuable skill to learn. This increase in responsibility is demonstrative of the hard work and conscientious nature the two have shown over the last few months. They are making a valuable contribution and we'd like to thank them for their work.

### Addition:

- At the beginning of this year Dave Fathers, an intern from the UK, joined our program. He has been a valuable addition to the team in a time of very few resources. He has worked hard on the monthly reporting system and is already creating new forms for SWAD as well. His enthusiasm and dedication are remarkable as he is making contributions where possible and learning a lot from the "invaluable work" done here.

### Visitors:

- **(1)** Mr. MP Singh a retired commissioner of income tax attended our Lohri function with his family as a guest of honor.
- **(2)** Mr. C S Reddy a longtime friend of DIR also attended the Lohri event as our guest of honor. We are thankful to the two of them for taking the time to visit us here.
- **(3)** Mr. Ajeet Singh a good friend of DIR who has been very generous with his time and contacts also attended our Lohri function. A week or so later he came and visited us once more in order to see how the day to day schedule of DIR-I was run. We are very grateful to Mr. Singh for his generosity in his time, contacts and funds

### Events:

- Another notable accomplishment of this month has been the Karate skills of our field coordinator Sanjeev. He competed in The 2<sup>nd</sup> North India Open Karate Championship, Nawashaar in the beginning of January and received a silver medal for his endeavors. His aims are high as he practices each day so we hope to share more of success in the future.
- Open Day was hosted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January. We invited active members of the community to see DIR and all of its activities; from the daily routines of the HPs to the different facets of DIR and explained its situation in terms of finances and donation. This event was taken up to dispel some of the rumors surrounding DIR's activities and funding and to improve community involvement all aimed towards a future expansion. This event was a success as these community members were later seen supporting DIR in front of other members of the community. These members also shared the problems they were facing in the colony some invaluable inputs that we take seriously.



- This Lohri DIR put on an event for the new born girls. The festival celebrates the coming of the new and the custom has been to celebrate new marriages and the birth of a son. DIR has been trying to do its part in improving the sex ratio in the area by highlighting this evil and specially inviting new born girls and their mothers to this occasion. The celebrations went well with our guests of honor being M P Singh and CS Reddy. We began the event with speeches from our VIP guests and our COO Harsharan Kaur. Followed by the typical Lohri customs: lighting of the fire, eating of popcorn and peanuts (along with other snacks) and,as you'd expect, lot of dancing. This event was given good coverage in the Times of India, a huge positive of an already rewarding event as we plan to spread the good work of DIR further.
- DIR launched it's Vitamin A program at the end of January. DIR linked up with the NGO Vitamin Angels in order to reduce Vitamin A deficiency in children under 5. We began the launch with a demonstration and talk at our office in Janta colony. A number of mothers and children came to learn about the new capsules that we'd be giving to their children twice a year and to receive the 1<sup>st</sup> dose. A total of 31 children received the vitamin A drug that day. A successful launch to a life altering addition to DIR's health programs. The entire population of 1575 serviced by DIR staff will be administered Vitamin A by the 10<sup>th</sup> of February.

